

Parking for backcountry users being addressed

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, El Dorado County, and members of Tahoe Backcountry Alliance are partnering to create a coalition to maintain and enhance public access for winter backcountry skiing and snowboarding.

Nearly a dozen agencies are convening this week to begin a comprehensive conversation about roadside access to some of Tahoe's more important backcountry skiing locations.

While backcountry skiing has been growing in popularity, parking and access to popular peaks have become increasingly challenging. That issue surfaced this month when a Caltrans project to reduce soil erosion and stormwater pollution on seven miles of Highway 89 between Emerald Bay and Meeks Bay displaced some on- and off-road parking used by the backcountry skiers.

To make up for that lost parking, TRPA and Caltrans approved a project revision to install a 25-by-180-foot paved pullout just south of D.L. Bliss State Park, and California State Parks offered to provide plowed winter parking at the D.L. Bliss State Park Visitor Center.

TRPA said it will review upcoming water quality improvement projects around Emerald Bay that Caltrans has already received permits for to ensure that maintaining or enhancing parking areas for backcountry access is considered in those highway plans.