

Land of the Lost

Contributed by Tyler Cohen & Riley Costello

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“Nobody goes out of bounds thinking that they’re going to get lost,” Mullin told the Rutland Herald, “but inevitably it happens and I just think it would be helpful to have a sign that says, ‘It is a crime to ski out of bounds’ ...”

According to the Rutland Herald, the bill will make it illegal to use “facilities of a ski area to access terrain outside the ski area’s open and designated ski trails (if) as a result, (the skier) must be rescued by a rescue organization.”

This bill comes on the heels of a rash of lost skiers in Vermont this season, particularly at Killington Ski Resort. From December 29 to January 9, more than 45 skiers and riders made calls to police after leaving Killington and Pico boundaries. In a single weekend, 19 called for help.

“Every person rescued was from out of state,” said Sarah Thorson, communications manager at Killington and Pico. “It wasn’t just state police looking for the skiers: Killington’s ski patrol, the Killington volunteer search and rescue, Vermont Game Wardens, and even Jeff Temple, the director of mountain operations, were called to aid in these rescues.”

According to WCAX, Killington hasn’t reviewed Mullin’s bill in detail. But Parker Riehle, president of the Vermont Ski Areas Association, told the Rutland Herald he believes Killington and Vermont State Police have been discussing a fine—he added that such legislation is “worth looking at.”

In the mid-’90s, lawmaker Vince Illuzzi introduced an amendment that would have had similar implications. It was dismissed after much public opposition, including that of Northeast guidebook author and Backcountry Icon David Goodman (BCM, Jan. 2013) and Backcountry senior editor John Dostal.

The State will hold hearings on the bill beginning during the week of February 25. Skiers and riders are encouraged to offer input.

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