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Snowmobilers cited in Lassen park 'high marking'

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Three men were cited for competing in a contest called "high marking" on mountain peaks at Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Rangers said that Andrew Ellis Pratt of Fall River Mills, Shasta County, and Andrew Ellis Pratt Jr. and Timothy Edward Pratt, both of Eureka, Humboldt County, were cited with trespassing on Saturday for riding snowmobiles in the park's backcountry and federally designated wilderness areas.

The Pratts were suspected of high marking, a contest among snowmobilers to see who can get to the highest point before sliding back down a mountain slope.

The three were observed near Mount Diller and Brokeoff Mountain by a park backcountry ski patroller. A California Highway Patrol helicopter crew and park rangers were dispatched and apprehended the suspects, according to a park press release.

Most of the park's 106,372 acres is managed as natural areas, including 75 percent of the park that has been designated as wilderness.

"Illegal snowmobile use in the park creates a significant intrusion to the beauty, peace and solitude for which the park was established to protect," said state Park Superintendent Darlene M. Koontz.

Although the park remains open all year, access in the winter beyond the developed areas of Manzanita Lake and the Kohm-Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center is limited to ski and snowshoe travel.

Punishment for illegal snowmobile use could include a maximum fine of \$5,000 and up to six months incarceration.

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