

## Public Abstract

First Name: Susan

Middle Name: Prillaman

Last Name: Stevenson

Degree: PhD

Department: Architectural Studies

Adviser's First Name: Ronald

Adviser's Last Name: Phillips

Co-advisor's First Name:

Co-advisor's Last Name:

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Title: Place Advocacy at Snowshoe Mountain Resort: A Case Study of a Destination Ski Resort

Snowshoe Mountain Resort in West Virginia is a popular ski resort in the southeastern region of the United States. The resort is unique among ski resorts because the mountain services are located at the top of the mountain instead of the base of the mountain. As Snowshoe continues to grow both in size and popularity, the management at Snowshoe will need to make decisions about further expansion that will simultaneously protect the beautiful natural environment, satisfy visitors' requirements for lodging, amenities, and services while not losing the sense of history and charm of both the mountain and the surrounding region.

This study, using qualitative research sought a greater understanding of why Snowshoe was so special, a greater understanding of the assets of the resort property. A thorough review of qualitative responses to an open ended question about the clients' perception of the image of Snowshoe Mountain Resort resulted in the understanding that the importance of Snowshoe existed less tangible assets.

Snowshoe Mountain Resort is a restorative environment that allows people to recharge from work and home related stress. Respondents expressed feelings of place attachment to Snowshoe as well. Grounded theory analysis resulted in the development of a new theory of Place Advocacy. This theory offers an explanation of the behaviors that result from the human/environment relationship that is created through place attachment and restoration. Place Advocacy includes behaviors of more and longer stays, referring and bringing people to the place and having feelings of belongingness, ownership and protection for the recreation based restoration environment.