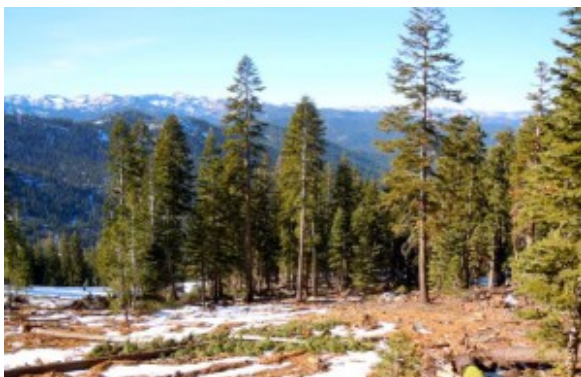


Study: Climate change threatens Winter Olympics

By Dominique Mosbergen, Huffington Post

Russia's Sochi, Canada's Vancouver, France's Chamonix, Japan's Nagano and California's Squaw Valley all have one thing in common: These former and future Winter Olympics venues are each known as prime sites for cold-weather sports, and as breathtaking havens for sporting enthusiasts. But according to a new study, these winter wonderlands are now under threat from climate change and soon may no longer be cold enough to play host to elite winter sports competitions like the Winter Games.



Northstar on Dec. 20, 2011.
Photo/LTN file

Researchers at Canada's University of Waterloo and Austria's Management Center Innsbruck say that if global warming continues at its current rate, only 10 of the previous 19 Winter Olympics host cities will be cold enough to reliably host the Games in the 2050s. By the end of the century, that number could drop to a dismal six. "The cultural legacy of the world's celebration of winter sport is increasingly at risk," said Professor Daniel Scott, a Canada Research Chair in Global Tourism and lead author of the study, per a media release. "Fewer and fewer traditional winter sports regions will be

able to host a Olympic Winter Games in a warmer world.”

Troublingly, even if the world takes steps to reduce carbon emissions and therefore lessen the impact of global warming in the coming years, the researchers said that the number of cities that could host the games in the middle and end of the century will still fall dramatically (see the infographic below). By the 2050s, at least four Winter Games venues – including Sochi, this year’s host city – will be too warm to host the competition, even if active steps to curb global warming are taken.

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