

Reno's Guldemon 3rd in slopestyle at Mammoth

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN – Hometown boy Brandon Davis led a U.S. sweep in slopestyle at the first U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix of the 2016 season Thursday at Mammoth Mountain.

Davis (Mammoth Lakes) topped the field with a pair of 1260s, as Eric Willett (Breckenridge, Colo.) was second and Chas Guldemon (Reno) was third. Thursday was originally slated for just slopestyle qualifications, but due to an incoming storm the qualifications and finals were held all in one day.

"It means the world to me," Davis said of the win in front of a hometown crowd. "I just felt so comfortable being here at home surrounded by all my friends and family and I just couldn't have asked for it to go a better way."

The American women also fared well, with two U.S. team members earning spots on the podium: Jessika Jenson (Rigby, Idaho) was second and Karly Shorr (Milford, Mich) was third. Anna Gyarmati of Hungary took the victory.

Jenson rode with solid style, stomping back-to-back 540s on the jumps to earn the second spot on the podium.

Other top-finishing Americans: Ryan Stassel (Anchorage), fifth; Chandler Hunt (Park City), sixth; Nik Baden (Steamboat Springs, Colo.), seventh; Chris Corning (Arvada, Colo.), eighth; Eric Beauchemin (Grand Blanc, Mich.), ninth; Hailey Langland (San Clemente), fourth; Hailee Mattingley (Sandy, Utah), fifth; Kirra Kotsenburg (Park City,), sixth; Ty Walker (Stowe, Vt.), eighth.

Skier pushes snowboarder off Colo. chairlift

By Chuck Hickey, CW-2

ASPEN, Colo. — A skier threw a snowboarder off the chairlift they were riding at Aspen Highlands on Sunday, the *Aspen Times* reported.

Seth Beckton of Aspen told the newspaper the skier was a white man in his late 20s or early 30s who took offense to a seemingly innocuous comment by the snowboarder as they rode the Loge Peak chairlift.

Beckton said he fell face-first 20 to 25 feet but landed in a “large pocket of snow” and was not injured.

[Read the whole story](#)

Working to lessen climate's impact on mountain streams

By Krista Langlois, High Country News

If you've ever dreamed about fishing in the West, chances are you've pictured something like the South Fork of the Flathead, an achingly beautiful turquoise river tumbling over multicolored pebbles and wending through the deep forest of northwest Montana.

Wade Fredenberg is among the few lucky enough to have grown up fishing there, and his childhood recollections read like a passage from Norman Maclean's legendary book "A River Runs Through It". Fredenberg was a farm kid, and summer mornings, after rising at 4 a.m. to fix an irrigation pipe, he and his Uncle Art would sneak off in a robin's-egg blue 1959 Chevy Apache to stalk bull trout in the deep pools of the Flathead. Later, stacking hay bales in the hot sun, Fredenberg would remember those moments, imagining that instead of stacking hay he was stacking bull trout as long as his arm, their flanks the color of the river.

Fredenberg is now a U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologist, and the gleaming 20-pound bull trout of his youth are increasingly rare. The trout have been devastated by mining pollution, agricultural runoff and non-native fish, and surviving populations are threatened by rising stream temperatures. Yet while their trajectory from abundance to scarcity is a story we know all too well, Fredenberg and his colleagues believe that new research can turn the narrative around – not just for bull trout, but for other cold-water fish species across the West as well.

Read the whole story

Mountain festival embraces outdoors at Tahoe

The Alpenglow Mountain Festival is a bi-annual, nine day celebration of human-powered mountain sports, events, clinics, equipment demos, presentations, film and more.

Exploring some of the best activities Lake Tahoe has to offer,

the event is the only mountain lifestyle event in North America that is mostly free and community-centric. It runs Feb. 20-28 on the North Shore. Backcountry ski touring, snowshoeing, and yoga highlight the event.

The event includes film, presentation, and equipment demos. The Alpenglow Mountain Festival is geared toward beginner and intermediate mountain enthusiasts.

The complete events schedule is **online**.

The other Kirkwood ski area going strong



Kirkwood cross country is expanding programs.

By Susan Wood

KIRKWOOD – Based on the reaction of skiers and snowshoers venturing this year to the land of deep snow and simple needs, it's almost as if the one trail not open at the start of season at the Nordic center should have been.

Ecstasy, one of four black-diamond trails, is the operative word to describe how those who love the human-powered winter sports feel about the crisp, soft and plentiful snow conditions at the Kirkwood Cross Country and Snowshoe Center after the last few years of drought.

The 2,000-plus acre ski area, which started inconsistently in 1972 and full time about five years later, looks a lot different this year compared to the last three winters. The snow completely covers the 24 trails and beyond, and the cats and groomers are out in full force – working eight to 10 hours on most days and 18 to 20 after snowstorms.



The Upper Kirkwood Outpost trail has magnificent views.

But even inside, one may gather it's a new year just from

going into the lodge to buy lift tickets and merchandise. The holidays were bustling with visitors and locals wanting an escape from downhill skiing and a look into nature's back door. The Nordic center averages 20 guests a day and peaks at three times that when the place is hopping. Still, it's easy to escape here.

With only the wind in the trees and the occasional bird chirping, it's hard to imagine another world across Highway 88 where party music and riders whooping it up over the snow conditions represent the norm.

Albeit satisfied with recent conditions, Debbi Waldear – the Nordic center's director and a champion racer – remained cautiously optimistic about the booming start of the winter season.

"Everybody's pretty cautious how winter's going to go," she told *Lake Tahoe News* last month.



Laura Cabral makes skate skiing look effortless.

Most of the trails were set right at Christmas.

In her 35 years of working there (her tenure as old as today's

lodge), Waldear has seen it all. She recalled how in the prior year snow came early, then completely dried up. She referred to staying open last year as “miraculous,” with the meadow (one of two trails allowing canines) and one upper trail to offer her guests. In winter 2013-14 Kirkwood was only open between January and April.

And this is why the owner, Vail Resorts, diversifies the locations of its ski areas.

“When they have bad years, they have other resorts to rely on,” she said of the Colorado-based ski giant.

This season California is king.

And there are a few new features this year to make Nordic enthusiasts of all ages feel like a queen.

A “Kiddie Kilometer” is groomed for the youngsters.

“It’s pretty popular. We get a lot of people renting sleds and pulling their kids,” she said.



Debbie Waldear has been the face of Kirkwood’s Nordic center for years.

Guests seeking a double reward of exercise and food can now partake in the “soup and shoe” – but not in that order. The \$35 package, which is slated every Sunday afternoon, includes an easy-going snowshoe hike followed by hot soup at the Kirkwood Inn located next door.

"Snowshoeing is really taking off," Waldear said, while watching customers filing out of the lodge and onto their skis and shoes. She estimated about 40 percent of the business involves walking with claws.

"We tell people you can be an expert in 10 steps," she said of the ease in learning.

Waldear encourages her customers to enjoy the outdoors every step of the way, herself relishing her office per se because "not many people can say they manage a ski center" for a living.

"Where you headed?" Waldear asked Jaime Levy of Oakland at the trailhead.

Levy replied that she sought intermediate terrain, and Waldear urged her to check out Jobe's Jaunt. The popular route is sprinkled with signs providing the history of Snowshoe "John" Thompson's 20-year mail runs from Placerville to Genoa, which he started in 1856 carrying a 90-pound bag on 11-foot skis with a balancing pole. The 90-mile journey presumably took him through the Schneider Trail system of El Dorado County.



A special route has been created for youngsters.

In the spirit of Thompson's three-day solo journeys, Levy insisted she would find some peace and quiet.

"I like the idea of being by myself. I engage with people a lot (all other days)," she said.

Nordic Center employee David Wise can relate. The South Tahoe High School graduate and former ski team racer traded the cerebral for the physical, leaving an engineering degree from the concrete jungle at MIT for an escape back to Tahoe's natural environment.

Wise, 23, is very encouraged by this year's ski conditions and has noticed a surge in his age group taking up skiing.

All ages take the Bay Area ski bus up for the day at 4:30am for \$85 and get dropped off at the Kirkwood Mountain Resort downhill area. From there, some cross country ski across the meadow to access the upper trails. Others take the shuttle hopper from one area to the other.

Mark Becksteadt, a Kirkwood second homeowner from Los Altos, is skipping the meadow this year. He noticed the flat area where many take their dogs skijoring was getting crowded. He brought his skate skis over to the main lodge to hit the Agony trail to skate ski.

Laura Cabral of Santa Clara was working on her skills on the learning track located at the bottom of the trailhead.

She cautiously worked on the smooth motions, enjoying having the track to herself. There's definitely a learning curve with skate skiing, characterized by quad burns with short, skinny skis.



Veronica Tan of Singapore
taking lesson.

“I’m trying out my moves. I took a lesson six years ago and struggled,” Cabral said, adding how jealous she is of a friend who’s mastered the sport. “She skies in a jog bra.”

Veronica Tan of Singapore just wanted to get the hang of staying upright on skinny skis. She took a lesson offered by the Nordic center in the hopes of remembering her former snow days living and going to college in Minnesota.

The Kirkwood Cross Country and Snowshoe center offers beginning and skate lessons, as well as ski skills and tour packages for \$58 a day. Equipment rentals cost \$27, the going rate of the ski pass.

The ski area hosted a Winter Trails Day on Jan. 9 and has scheduled full moon snowshoe treks on Jan. 23 and Feb. 20. Sunset seekers can view the colors on guided hikes on March 5 and 12.

Genoa hosting two history talks

Rangers from Mormon Station State Historic Park in Genoa will be giving two free guided history talks coming up.

Mormon Pioneers in Nevada is the topic of the Jan. 23 talk. Mormon pioneers were some of the first people to settle in Nevada. This talk will cover the history of Mormon settlement in the northern and southern regions of Nevada.

The other talk, Nevada's Historic Trails, is Jan. 24. Nevada is the driest state in America, while also being the seventh largest state by total land area. This made navigating across the state a tricky journey for many early pioneers. This historic talk will cover a brief history of three major historic trails through Nevada. These trails include the California Trail and Pony Express Trail in the northern part of the state, as well as the lesser known Old Spanish Trail in Southern Nevada.

Both talk starts at noon inside the wagon shed at Mormon Station State Historic Park. Meet at the museum.

Controlled burns in basin next week

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, California State Parks and the California Tahoe Conservancy may continue prescribed fire operations beginning Jan. 19.

To view a map with project locations and details, go **online**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

Before conducting prescribed fire operations, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Full moon hike at Washoe Lake

Washoe Lake State Park is offering a full moon hike along the Deadman's Creek Trail on Jan. 23.

People will get to explore the park by the light of the full moon on this moderate, one mile, round-trip hike to the gazebo overlooking Washoe Lake.

Participants should wear sturdy hiking shoes, wear warm clothes and bring a flashlight.

Meet at the Washoe Lake State Park Maze Parking Lot at 5:30pm. Take Exit 44 off of Interstate 580, drive four miles north on Eastlake Boulevard and the park's entrance is on the left. Turn left past the fee booth and it is the first parking lot on the right.

This hike is free after the park's entrance fee of \$7 per vehicle; there is a \$2 discount for Nevada residents.

For more info, contact Kim Zuch at 775.687.4319 or washoelake@hdiss.net.

USFS giving free tours at Heavenly

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's Ski with a Ranger at Heavenly Mountain Resort begins Jan. 22.

Tours are every Monday and Friday beginning at 1pm, last approximately one-hour and continue through April 1, weather permitting.

Participants must be intermediate level skiers/boarders or above and provide their own lift ticket. No reservations are required. Attendance is on a first-come, first-served basis and participants should meet at the top of the Heavenly gondola.

These conservation education programs are offered to educate the public about the mission and role of the Forest Service in ski area management, to improve public understanding of natural resource processes and issues, and to promote environmental literacy and stewardship. Programs are led by U.S. Forest Service Conservation Education staff and volunteers, and operate through a cooperative effort between Heavenly Mountain Resort and South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, contact Reanna Suela at 530.543.2656 or rsuela@fs.fed.us

State Parks, CTC exchanging land in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – State agencies are in the process of swapping land on the South Shore in an effort to be more efficient.

“Our hope is the public won’t notice anything,” Marilyn Linken, supervisor of the Sierra District of California State Parks, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The California Tahoe Conservancy is giving nine parcels totaling about 79 acres to State Parks. Twenty-seven acres will become part of Washoe Meadows State Park and 52 acres will be added to Lake Valley State Recreation Area.

This land is in Meyers. The swap is expected to be finalized by fall 2016.

In a separate deal the Conservancy will be receiving parcels in the Rubicon area of the West Shore from State Parks. That should occur in the spring or summer.

No money is being exchanged.



The change in ownership is a result of the 2012 California Budget Act that tasked the CTC and State Parks with finding a way to better manage state land. By having each agency own parcels that are contiguous instead of randomly isolated, it makes things more efficient.

In the future the Conservancy intends to transfer its rights/ownership/responsibility of Van Sickle Bi-State Park near the state line to State Parks. However, just as when that park opened in 2011, State Parks is in no financial position to take over that South Shore park, even with Nevada State Parks' help.

The other parcel State Parks will inherit from the CTC is the Cascade property near Emerald Bay. That, too, is being held up because of the Parks' finances.

The property near Lake Tahoe Golf Course, which is part of the recreation area, was supposed to go to State Parks decades ago based on a settlement agreement from the mid-1980s. No one from either state agency could explain why it took so long for the exchange to come to fruition.

Linken said the acreage being absorbed by State Parks will be treated the same as the land already categorized recreation and parks.

Washoe Meadows still doesn't have a master plan governing the uses there. Litigation is stalling that process.