Young people shunning national parks

By Outdoor

A recent CNN report by “Inside Man” Morgan Spurlock found that although America’s national parks drew a record 292.8 million visitors in 2014, the National Park Service is having trouble attracting young people.

Spurlock reports that the number of visitors under age 15 has dropped by half in the past 10 years. Visitors to Denali average 57 years old, and Yellowstone’s average guest is around 54.

Bob Roney, a retired Yosemite ranger, told CNN that the problem is younger generations are too plugged in for the outdoors.

“People want modern conveniences,” he said. “Young people are more city oriented and tend not to be wildlands oriented.”

Read the whole story

Devotion to exercise sets retirees apart from their parents

By Michelle Fay Cortez, BloombergBusiness

Bob Hemm, a 93-year-old retired chemical engineer, still

drives his Mercury Milan and tutors fourth-graders in reading and math at a school near his home in Springfield, Va. Four years ago, at the cusp of 90, the widower remarried.

Where does all of his energy come from? Exercise, says Hemm, specifically a three-times-a-week aerobics class, one that he occasionally leads.

“I’m going to do it as long as I can,” he says. “I figure that’s what’s keeping me alive.”

Science suggests he’s right. Exercise has been proven to help the heart, strengthen bones and the brain, and improve mood and balance. A half-hour a day of physical activity, even in 10-minute increments, boosts life expectancy by almost four years, according to a 2012 National Cancer Institute study of 650,000 people.

“Exercise is the only thing – and you should underline that – that helps everything associated with aging,” says Janice Schwartz, a professor of medicine at UC San Francisco. “And anyone can do it.”

Read the whole story

How skiing went from the Alps to the masses

By Andrew Denning, Atlantic

Triple gold-medalist Alpine skier Jean-Claude Killy of France, O.J. Simpson, and Chevrolet executive John Z. DeLorean sit at a table, while Hunter S. Thompson takes notes from the side of the stage. This might read as the tortuous setup to a

particularly hackneyed joke, but it’s the punchline. Such was the scene at the 1969 Chicago Auto Show, where this trio touted the virtues of the all-American Chevy Camaro.

But one of these things was not like the other. Simpson, fresh off his Heisman Trophy-winning campaign at the University of Southern California, was known for his charm and affability, making him an ideal pitchman. DeLorean, widely regarded as a brilliant engineer, had a non-conformist, counter-cultural public persona that positioned him as the future of Chevrolet. So what was a 25-year-old from the French Alps doing with these two American icons, hawking a special edition “Killy Z-28 Camaro”?

The answer lies in the changing role of downhill skiing in the postwar decades, which transformed Killy from a relative unknown into a celebrity with lucrative global endorsements for Chevy, Schwinn Bicycles, and Head Skis, among others. To Thompson, Killy was emblematic of the changing fortunes of the global middle class.

Concerted efforts by public officials and private businessmen intersected with broad economic trends in the decades after World War II to transform skiing into a mark of middle-class status and a motor of economic development – first in the European Alps, and then in mountain ranges around the world.

Read the whole story
The Beekley Family Foundation
This transformation proved shocking to those who popularized the sport of skiing at the turn of the century. Archaeological evidence of skiing dates back to 6,000 B.C., and for the vast majority of their history, skis were a utilitarian means of locomotion in snowy environments. Norwegians pioneered leisure skiing in the mid-19th century, and the sport rapidly became a marker of national identity that distinguished them from their Swedish overlords. Socially elite skiers first took to the Alps in the last decades of the 19th century, seeking

diversion during prolonged winter stays at Alpine resorts. Skiing was one winter leisure option among many, and early skiers were mocked as “plank-hoppers” by their fellow tourists, who favored activities such as ice skating and tobogganing. Many preferred to ski at night to escape the derision of Alpine inhabitants. And yet, by the dawn of the 20th century, skiing had emerged as a popular leisure option, marked by its unique blend of speed and appreciation of nature.

USFS to train bike trail crew leaders

TAMBA will be hosting a U.S. Forest Service-approved crew leader training course the weekend of April 11-12 in South Lake Tahoe.

The Forest Service has stringent training requirements for volunteer crew leaders to ensure the safety of volunteer crews. This training may also be accepted by other land manager agencies.

First Aid and CPR certification is also required of crew leaders. It is not included in this course, but will be offered separately.

There is no cost for TAMBA volunteers (contact TAMBA for the discount code), and $40 for others.

The class is limited to 20 people. Register online.

Jitloff captures 6th national title

By USSA

SUGARLOAF, Maine – Giant slalom specialist Tim Jitloff (Reno) threw down on bumpy snow at the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships to take his third national title in a row ahead of first run leader Tommy Ford (Bend, Ore.).

Former University of Utah racer and current Team Geronimo member Nick Cohee (Gardnerville) took third.

“It was fun,” said Jitloff, who was a favorite going into the race. “We’re all really tired here, but anytime you can come back and see little kids who want to be doing what you’re doing is huge. That’s what these are all about.”

Jitloff was second after the first run behind Tommy Ford, who was going for his ninth national title. Ford put down a solid second run, but couldn’t hold first place – bobbling a bit on the on the last face. This was Jitloff’s sixth U.S. Alpine Championships win.

Jitloff’s season had its ups and downs. He took a couple of top 10s in World Cups, but it wasn’t quite what he had hoped. For the man who competes closely with Ted Ligety in training, he couldn’t keep up when it came to race day. But he still kept a good attitude – looking for the next race, the next result.

“The last two races I had at the end of the year on the World Cup did not go how I wanted it to go, so I was a little bummed out,” said Jitloff about his DNF in Kranjska Gora and a

disappointing 19th in the World Cup Finals. “If I can end the year on a win—a national title—that’s always awesome and something to be proud of.”

Behind the podium, Mark Engel (Truckee, CA – U.S. Ski Team) put down the fastest second run, finishing in fourth place. David Chodounsky (Crested Butte, Colo.) was fifth. Hig Roberts (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) took sixth, Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) seventh, Jack Gower of Great Britain eighth, Seppi Stiegler (Jackson Hole, Wyo.) ninth and Michael Ankeny (Deephaven, Minn.) was 10.

No trail – no problem on snowshoe trek

By Kathryn Reed

KIRKWOOD – Destination – unknown. Trail – none. Wow factor – off the charts.

Some of my most memorable moments have been when I had no idea where I was going. The journey, the discovery, the not knowing what lies ahead – it can be adrenaline pumping, mesmerizing and almost always comes with a story to tell.

This sense of adventure enveloped us as we forged through the woods on virgin snow earlier this month.

Craig broke trail for the four of us. A view – that’s his big thing. And he delivered.

The day started with Plan A having to be scrapped because the south-facing ascent was all dirt. We wanted a snowshoe. Back in the truck and up the road a bit we went before we pulled

over on the other side of Highway 88 to be on a north-facing route.

It’s not supposed to be this difficult to go on a snowshoe in early March, especially near the Carson Pass.



Snowshoeing into the wilderness near Carson Pass brings dynamic views. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Early on we had to cross a stream. I don’t trust my balance, especially with wearing a small pack that has snowshoes dangling off the back. Donna was gracious enough to get a picture of my back side as I crawled across. Fortunately, the other 12 crossings were not a big deal and allowed me to remain upright.

It didn’t take long before we came across a mini waterfall that in some ways seemed out place on this trek.

We kept seeing this tall black peak that none of us had noticed before in all the times we had been in this area. The map told us it was Black Butte, elevation 9,031 feet. We headed in that general direction.

Snow consistency varied throughout the route – from powdery to

heavy to crunchy to deep.

Not only did we not see anyone on our way up, there were no other tracks. It was as though we had been transported to the middle of this perfect oasis. It was one of those days that will be hard to top.

We kept going up. It was not a difficult ascent. The views were always picturesque. Red Peak seemed to be constantly behind us. Eventually Caples Lake, too, was visible when we turned around.

The rocks gave the area personality. They should have been under snow, especially the ones we passed on our way up.

Lunch was on an outcropping of rocks at 8,740 feet. Black Butte was directly to our right.

It was like a tease just sitting there – so close and yet so far. Another day, perhaps without snow, we'll reach the top of Black Butte. It was only 2.5 miles to get to our lunch spot. In all, we went 5.7 miles.

Instead of retracing our steps, we went over the other side of the rocks toward Woods Lake where we saw tracks from cross country skiers. The lone person we saw that Sunday was on skis by the lake.

A little glissading was in order, but it wasn't necessary. It just added to the fun.

We gingerly scampered across a small section of Woods Lake. At the time it was frozen, with just a little melting around the edges. I'm sure now three weeks later based on the warm weather we've had the conditions are much different.

Then it was time to follow the creek back to where we came from. More beauty.

It was just one of those magical days in the greater Lake

Tahoe area when you can’t imagine living anywhere else.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go west on Highway 50. Turn left onto Highway 89 toward Hope Valley, turn right onto Highway 88 at Picketts Junction. Park on the left where it says Woods Creek Fishing Access. Then start walking. We were not on the road long. Good luck.

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Important to leave young wildlife alone

Spring is a busy time of year for wildlife. Bears, deer, birds and bobcats as well as dozens of other species emerge from winter ready to fill their bellies and raise their young. Because of this increase in wildlife activity, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reminds people to leave young wildlife alone if they come across them. The improper handling of young wildlife is a problem in California and across the nation, especially in spring.

Healthy fawns may lay or stand quietly by themselves in one location for hours while their mother is away feeding. Once a fawn is removed from its mother, it can lose the ability to survive in the wild. The same danger applies to most animals, including bears, coyotes, raccoons and most birds.

Dave Cook, a rehabilitator with Sierra Wildlife Rescue in El Dorado County, says his organization receives about 60 fawns a

year, mainly between June and July, from people who believe the animals have been orphaned or injured.

It’s also important to remember that wild animals carry ticks, fleas and lice, and they can transmit diseases to humans, including rabies and tularemia, so it is best to leave the responsibility for intervention to CDFW personnel or permitted wildlife rehabilitators. In addition, it is illegal to keep orphaned or injured animals for more than 48 hours in California.

Expect to see smoke from controlled fires

The U.S. Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations in several locations around Lake Tahoe on March 30, weather permitting.

Operations may take place in Blackwood Canyon between Tahoe City and Tahoma, on the south side of Meeks Bay, on Gardner Mountain near South Tahoe High School and off Gardner Street, on Luther Pass near Grass Lake, at Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly and on the East Shore near Logan Creek Drive. Operations may last through the next several weeks as conditions allow.

Each operation follows a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may

continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. Agencies coordinate with state and local county air pollution control districts and monitors weather conditions closely prior to prescribed fire ignition. They wait for favorable conditions that will carry smoke up and out of the basin.

Before conducting prescribed fire operations, agencies may post road signs around affected areas and make email or phone notifications. The Forest Service updates the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6.

LTWC rehabbed bear emerges from hibernation

By Ann McCreary, Methow Valley News

Along with many of Washington's black bears, Cinder has emerged from hibernation at an Idaho rehabilitation center where she spent the winter, preparing for her return to the Methow Valley.

She is reported to be making continued progress in her recovery from severely burned paws she sustained as a result of the Carlton Complex Fire last summer.

"She's doing great. Her coat is looking really good. She's moving all around her enclosure and she's been climbing all round," said Sally Maughan, founder and president of Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation near Boise.

Cinder was brought to IBBR last fall after spending the summer being treated for burns to her feet, chest and face at Lake

Tahoe Wildlife Care. She was transported by private plane to Lake Tahoe after she was found, barely able to walk, in French Creek about two weeks after wildfires roared through the area.

Read the whole story

USFS sites opening sooner than usual

The weather is allowing the U.S. Forest Service to open recreation facilities sooner than normal in the greater Lake Tahoe area. Some sites in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Eldorado National Forest will open April 1.

Until sites officially open, there is no parking, trash removal or restroom facilities available.

Eagle Falls parking area, Inspiration Point, Kiva Picnic area, Tallac Point day-use area, Big Meadows Trailhead, Logan Shoals and Secret Harbor open April 1.

Baldwin and Nevada beaches open May 1.

The McKinney Rubicon Off-Highway Vehicle area, Sawmill Pond, the Sandpit OHV area, Nevada Beach Campground and Chimney Beach open May 8.

William Kent, Kaspian, Meeks Bay, Bayview and Fallen Leaf beaches and campgrounds open May 15. The Taylor Creek Visitor Center parking area, grounds and restrooms open the same day.

The visitor center and Baldwin Museum at the Tallac Historic Site will be staffed beginning May 23 for Memorial Day weekend.

Luther Pass Campground and Pope Beach open May 22.

Blackwood Canyon and Watson Lake campgrounds open June 1.

Roads in Eldorado open April 1. The roads in the King Fire Closure area will remain closed. These roads are under review for possible reopening in the near future.

The Mormon Emigrant Trail, a route that connects Highway 50 with Highway 88, also remains closed to through traffic due to snow on the eastern end.