

Outdoor gear sales slip as millennials drive shift in habits

By Dan Elliott, AP

DENVER — Sales of outdoor equipment are slipping as millennials drive changes in U.S. consumer habits by favoring clothes and sporting goods that are less specialized and more versatile, analysts say.

Industry retail sales totaled \$18.9 billion from December 2016 through November 2017, down 6 percent from the previous 12 months, according to NPD Group, a market research company that tracks trends in two dozen industries.

The company announced the numbers this week as manufacturers and buyers gathered in Denver for the Outdoor Retailer and Snow Show, the industry's biggest winter marketplace.

[Read the whole story](#)

Anderson returns to top of X Games podium

By Karen Price, Team USA

Jamie Anderson of Meyers crashed on her first run in the slopestyle snowboarding competition at X Games in Aspen, Colo., on Friday, but the reigning Olympic queen never stays down for long.

Anderson came back and threw down a second run that included a big front side 720 and cab double cork 900 to score 94 points and overtake teammate and reigning X Games champion Julia Marino at the top of the podium.

The most decorated slopestyle snowboarder in X Games history now has five gold medals and 14 overall at the competition, finishing on the podium in every single X Games slopestyle event she's ever entered.

Read the whole story

Mammoth introduces monthly membership ski pass

By Jack Foersterling, Powder

In today's day and age, nearly our entire lives are based on monthly subscriptions and memberships. From streaming music and movies on Spotify and Netflix to your gym membership or unlimited data plan you just got for your phone, everything is based on the pay-per-month model. Now, Mammoth Mountain is looking to offer the same for skiers.

This year, Mammoth introduced their "Work + Play Membership" for \$99 a month. With their membership, members receive a 2017-18 California Season Pass (which includes lift access to Mammoth, June Mountain, Big Bear, and Snow Summit), additional lift access at Mammoth and June Mountain through January 2019, a Mammoth Bike Park Pass for summer 2018, and unlimited access to the Fort, Mammoth's new coworking spaces that debuted this season.

Calif. putting Sierra Nevada trees to work

By Julie Cart, CalMatters

This is going to be a big year for one of the state's smallest agencies.

As California redoubles its efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, officials are rooting around for new ways to meet the state's goals. Included in their plan: recruiting billions of redwood, oak and pine trees to help diminish planet-warming gases by pulling carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

It's a major pivot, from regulating harmful emissions solely from factories and cars to calling on nature to pitch in. Officials say 2018 is the moment for the state to harness, and fully measure, the role forests can play in addressing the pressing problems of wildfires and the dangerous releases of carbon that occur when millions of forested acres burn. Both issues are accelerating in alarming, parallel lines.

A good bit of the work will fall to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, one of 10 conservancies within the state's Natural Resources Agency.

The group—two dozen multitasking scientists, biologists and planners in a nondescript office park in Auburn, an old gold-rush town in the Sierra foothills—was born in 2004 with a mandate nearly as vast as the region. Like the state's iconic coastline, the Sierra Nevada mountains are a defining feature

of California, rising sharply to dizzying elevations, topping out at Mount Whitney's 14,500 feet, the highest peak in the lower 48 states.

The range, tracing the spine of the state across 22 counties from the Oregon border to deep inside the Mojave Desert south of Bakersfield, holds most of California's forested land and is the source of 60 percent of the state's drinking water.

The conservancy is charged with restoring the Sierra's environmental and economic health, on a modest \$4.5 million annual operating budget derived entirely from the environmental license-plate fund. The bulk of its work, such as facilitating research and making grants for forest and watershed restoration projects, is paid for with state bond money.

The group has no bulldozers or chain saws; it's largely a clearinghouse and planning entity. But its casual work space lacks the stuffiness of Capitol offices: jeans and hiking boots substitute for Sacramento's skinny suits and wing-tip shoes. Even with an already full to-do list, executive director Jim Branham says, the organization is ready to take on an expanded role policing carbon in the region's forests.

"There is a sense of urgency," Branham said.

The Sierra forests are overgrown and susceptible to both fire and pests, Branham noted. Last year was the most destructive fire year on record, and the state and national forests within California's boundaries are strewn with 129 million dead trees, felled by flames, disease and insects. Years of drought, disease and dead wood fed the infernos. The extent of forest loss could not have been foreseen, Branham said.

"Some of the best scientists in the world have looked at this and didn't come close to predicting what happened," he said. "Our worst fears were nowhere near what actually happened. It's been far worse."

It's the conservancy's unique job to fashion a response appealing to a mosaic of land owners—including the federal government, whose land is included in the conservancy's brief. The federal component alone is a contentious issue for some of the three-quarter-million Sierra residents.

The sprawling Sierra, its deep forests studded with icy blue lakes, is not just a geological divide but also a political one. Towns tucked into these foothills and mountains are often deeply conservative and proudly self-sufficient.

Some residents are of the opinion that government—Sacramento and Washington alike—is already too present in their lives and businesses. The California Farm Bureau was on record opposing the establishment of the conservancy. When the Legislature created it, some locals looked askance at what they anticipated would be yet another bureaucratic agency bossing them around.

Doug Teeter was among those residents. Teeter, who is on the Butte County Board of Supervisors, said increasing limits on the use of off-road vehicles and other recreation on federal lands had caused him to harbor anti-government views. When it became his turn to sit on the conservancy's 16-member board, he was skeptical.

"I was hesitant," he said, fearing the influence of outside environmentalists would impose their will on the region.

But while the agency often conceives of and oversees projects, it does not have the staff to undertake them, instead funding local, state or federal agencies and groups. When it became clear that the conservancy's focus was clearing out forests and shoring up watersheds, Teeter was won over. The agency has doled out \$60 million in grants since its inception, rather than hand down edicts, and that has gone a long way to win over locals, he said.

"My community has been a big recipient of SNC grants," Teeter

said. Grants to Butte County have gone to restoration of natural streams, the thinning of forests for fire safety and a wastewater project in the town of Paradise, near Chico. "I see the on-the-ground effort that the conservancy has made in our community. Money talks, and people listen when they want that money."

The Sierra had a once-booming economy as the center of the gold rush and timber cutting, but those industries are in the rearview mirror. Today, people are hurting. Branham, who has been running the conservancy since its inception and is sensitive to local sentiment, found a way to marry the needs of the forest to the economy. He made a strategic decision to achieve results by bringing together groups historically indisposed to sitting at the same table: county officials, timber companies, environmental groups and federal land managers.

Lacking the regulatory teeth to force landowners or counties to act, the conservancy took a soft-power approach, acting as a broker to champion projects that either employed local businesses or boosted the region's economy through forest clearing or watershed projects.

Restoring forests is "a tremendous economic driver" Branham said. "That's the other part of our mission. It puts people to work and produces material from, the forest. It was a pretty nice fit to say this ecological restoration initiative across the region serves to make the environment healthier, but it can also serve to make the economy work better."

The scope of the conservancy's mission narrowed after the devastating 2013 Rim Fire, which raged for more than a year, burning a quarter-million acres of forest in the central Sierra. That fire made it clear the conservancy could not mend every broken place in its portfolio.

Since then, Branham said, the agency's work has focused more

on forest thinning to minimize fire threats and sustain healthier trees, which stabilize slopes that store valuable water underground. That work clearly dovetails with the state's interest in using forests to capture carbon emissions and finding ways to reduce the significant carbon release that accompanies massive wildfires.

The conservancy has recently partnered with CalFire, the state firefighting agency, which is turning over \$5 million in proceeds from the state's cap-and-trade system for reducing harmful emissions. The money will pay for forest and watershed restoration around Lake Tahoe that is expected to create multiple benefits: Clearing crowded forests allows more healthy trees to grow, take in and store carbon in the ground and stabilize soils that hold water.

"I applaud the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's work to increase the amount of carbon captured by our forests," said state Sen. Bob Wieckowski, a Democrat from Fremont who chairs the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. "The more we can rely on our green infrastructure and let nature help us to mitigate climate change..., the better off we will be."

But even the most generous of grants, welcome as they are, don't go a long way across a vast landscape. A \$25 million grant from a state water bond was greeted with excitement but tempered by the enormity of the Sierra itself.

"We thought, 'Awesome, that's, uh, ... one ... dollar ... per... acre,'" said Brittany Covich, the agency's outreach manager.

More money and political will may be available this year, from more cap-and-trade revenue and funding directed by the state Air Resources Board to manage greenhouse gases. Projects those funds could pay for are in the planning stages.

Branham has been around long enough to know that the political spotlight seldom lingers, and the important thing is to act quickly.

“My experience with these issues is sometimes those opportunities close quicker than you would expect,” he said. “It’s a matter of how much can we do.”

Study: Humidity contributes to snowpack’s loss

By Mike Wolterbeek

The future of snowpack and water resources in the American West now has another variable in the equation for water managers – humidity, which can actually increase snowmelt even on a cloudy day.

In a study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, UNR Assistant Professor Adrian Harpold and his colleague University of Utah Professor Paul Brooks show that changes in humidity may determine how the contribution of snowpack to streams, lakes and groundwater changes as the climate warms.

Surprisingly, cloudy, gray and humid winter days actually causes the snowpack to warm, increasing the likelihood of melt during winter months when the snowpack should be growing, according to the study. In contrast, under clear skies and low humidity the snow can become colder than the air, preserving the snowpack until spring.

Harpold, an ecohydrologist, and Brooks, a hydrologist and biogeochemist, looked at snowpack data from more than 400 locations around the West, from the humid Pacific Northwest to the arid desert southwest. Across that range of environments, they found dry and humid environments responded to climate

warming with episodes of snowpack loss during the winter. In humid areas, though, the episodes were primarily winter snowmelt, while in dry areas the episodes were dominated by winter sublimation – direct loss of snow to the atmosphere.

“And these effects are likely to become more intense with more warming,” Harpold said. “We found that relative humidity generally has been both increasing in the Pacific Northwest and decreasing in the desert southwest over the last 30 years, reinforcing the patterns of winter melt in the Pacific Northwest and sublimation in the southwest.”

Researchers have evaluated different mechanisms that could account for declining snowpack in a warming world: earlier onset of snowmelt, a change in melt rates and shifts from snow to rain under certain conditions. Climate change may also tweak winter humidity up in some regions and down in others. Brooks said that researchers have known that a changing climate could have major impacts on snowmelt-derived water resources.

“But it has been unclear up to this point,” Brooks said, “why some areas seem to be much more sensitive to change while other locations seem resilient.”

Cloudy, humid days reverse the cooling from both radiation and sublimation – cloud cover prevents snow from emitting energy, and condensation of water vapor on the snow releases latent heat, warming the snow. That is why a couple of humid days with temperatures right around freezing result in large melt events and even minor flooding. An extreme case of this can come on foggy days, Brooks said. Snow on dry days can “sublimate,” or change directly from a solid to vapor. This process, just like evaporation, absorbs heat and further cools the snow, slowing snowmelt.

“Up to now, future trends in winter humidity have not been a focus of prediction,” Harpold said. “Our work shows this will

be a key variable that we will have to predict under climate change.”

If humidity increases, water managers may be faced with the challenge of storing water for longer periods while mitigating mid-winter flooding. In contrast, a decrease in humidity will further stress already limited water supplies.

“Long-term planning for reservoirs, water storage and water supply systems is also key for water managers,” Harpold, whose Nevada Mountain Ecohydrology Lab is based in the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources, said. “For example, in the Sierra and Lake Tahoe you may see a yearly pattern of humid air masses moving over the region, so plans should be made with these regional patterns in mind.

“As we reach a tipping point and see our customary water storage system, the snowpack, melting more and earlier in the winter, systems that rely on snowmelt will need to be reevaluated and modified. It means that trends and patterns in humidity will be very important to the future of snowpack,” Harpold said.

Mike Wolterbeek works for UNR.

Bowman, Wise win gold at X Games

By Nick Zaccardi, NBC Sports

David Wise of Reno and Maddie Bowman of Meyers are repeating history this season and hoping that continues in PyeongChang.

Wise and Bowman, just like four years ago, won X Games titles

after becoming the first halfpipe skiers to qualify for the U.S. Olympic team.

Four years ago, Wise and Bowman went on to win gold medals in the event's Olympic debut. Can they do it again?

Read the whole story

This amphibian – loved for its legs – threatens its Calif. cousins

By Jane Braxton Little, Sacramento Bee

Quincy American bullfrogs, native to the eastern United States, are hopping around Northern California ponds, gobbling up lizards, snakes, bats and birds – anything that fits in their mouths.

Among their prey are the adults and tadpoles of endangered native amphibians: Sierra Nevada and foothill yellow-legged frogs, said Colin Dillingham, a wildlife biologist with the Plumas National Forest.

He has applied for a state permit to eradicate bullfrogs in Snake Lake, Spanish Creek and other aquatic sites in the Meadow Valley area 16 miles west of Quincy. The plan is to use nets, hooks and air guns several nights a month over three or four years.

Read the whole story

North Shore, Reno ski racers going to Olympics

By U.S. Ski & Snowboard

Olympic gold medalists Lindsey Vonn (Vail), Mikaela Shiffrin (Eagle-Vail, Colo.) and Ted Ligety (Park City, Utah), and two-time medalist Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) will lead a strong U.S. Alpine Ski Team of 22 men and women at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

U.S. Ski & Snowboard on Jan. 24 announced its selections for the U.S. Olympic Alpine Ski Team that will compete at the Games in PyeongChang beginning Feb. 9. The selections will be confirmed by the United States Olympic Committee when it formally names Team USA this Friday.

The team includes 22 athletes who qualified for the team through one or more top-three finishes, top five finishes, and top 10 finishes, and then World Cup points. Qualification included 2017-18 FIS World Cup races through Cortina, Italy, and Kitzbuehel, Austria, on Jan. 20-21.

The alpine team will have its first Olympic competition on Feb. 11 with the men's downhill. The women will kick it off with the giant slalom on Feb. 12.

Team facts

The winningest female ski racer of all time Vonn won Olympic gold in downhill in Vancouver in 2010, but was sidelined with an injury and did not compete in Sochi. She is coming back with a vengeance, on a hunt for Olympic gold once again. Vonn will be competing in her fourth Olympics. She finished second

in both the downhill and super-G Olympic test events in 2017. Vonn has been named the first international PyeongChang 2018 Games ambassador. She's won 79 World Cup races in all five disciplines of alpine skiing – downhill, super-G, giant slalom, slalom and alpine combined – in her career.

Shiffrin is arguably one of the most dominant athletes in world sport competing today. She won the 2016-17 overall and slalom FIS Ski World Cup titles, and currently leads the 2017-18 overall, slalom and giant slalom World Cup standings. She became the youngest woman in U.S. history to win a World Championship and the youngest athlete in history (male or female) to win an Olympic gold medal in Sochi. Shiffrin has a hat-trick of World Championship gold medals in slalom – 2013, 2015 and 2017.

Known as "Mr. GS," two-time Olympic champion Ligety underwent back surgery in January 2017, causing him to miss the rest of the 2016-17 season. The YongPyong Alpine Centre is a special venue for Ligety as it is the home of his very first World Cup giant slalom victory in 2006. He won his first Olympic gold in 2006 in the alpine combined in Torino, then again in his main discipline, giant slalom, in 2014 in Sochi.

Weibrecht grabbed the 2010 Olympic super-G bronze medal, and then in 2014, produced a truly inspirational run to claim silver. Nicknamed "Warhorse," he has a knack for performing when it matters most – on the big stage.

The U.S. men's American downhill racers are a strong and tight group of athletes. Veteran Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) suffered a knee injury in 2017 and is making a strong comeback for PyeongChang. In the 2016 Olympic test event, Nyman finished third in the downhill. Promising young talent like Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) – who will make his Olympic debut – as well as Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah), also look to make their mark.

Just 10 months after a significant knee injury, Laureenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) has made an impressive return to competition and continues to have her eyes on the prize in PyeongChang.

Resi Stiegler (Jackson, Wyo.) clinched her spot on a third Olympic team. Her father, Austrian Pepi Stiegler, was an Olympic Gold medalist in slalom in Innsbruck in 1964.

Young up-and-comers Breezy Johnson (Victor, Idaho), and Lindsey Vonn Foundation ambassador Jackie Wiles (Aurora, Ore.) also look to make an impression in PyeongChang.

2018 U.S. Olympic alpine skiing team

Men's alpine

Bryce Bennett, Squaw Valley

Tommy Biesemeyer, Keene, N.Y.

David Chodounsky, Crested Butte, Colo.

Ryan Cochran-Siegle, Starksboro, Vt.

Mark Engel, Truckee

Tommy Ford, Bend, Ore.

Jared Goldberg, Holladay, Utah

Tim Jitloff, Reno

Nolan Kasper, Warren, Vt.

Ted Ligety, Park City, Utah

Wiley Maple, Aspen, Colo.

Steven Nyman, Sundance, Utah

Andrew Weibrecht, Lake Placid, N.Y.

Women's alpine

Stacey Cook, Mammoth Lakes

Breezy Johnson, Victor, Idaho

Megan McJames, Park City, Utah

Alice McKennis, New Castle, Colo.

Laurenne Ross, Bend, Ore.

Mikaela Shiffrin, Eagle-Vail, Colo.

Resi Stiegler, Jackson, Wyo.

Lindsey Vonn, Vail, Colo.

Jackie Wiles, Aurora, Ore.

Nevada snowboard maker a consistent top seller

By Noah Bond, KOL0-TV

Did you know one of the snowboard makers recognized as best in the world is in Northern Nevada? Online professional magazines consistently rank Smokin Snowboards at the top.

The snowboard making company has earned awards like “best park board.”

The company started because of one man who moved from the East Coast to snowboard.

“I moved out to Lake Tahoe in 1990. I was one of the first pro riders to move out west and that’s what got me into snowboarding,” said President and CEO of Smokin Snowboards Jay Quintin.

Read the whole story

**Veterans, newbies to
represent U.S. in**

snowboarding

By U.S. Ski & Snowboard

One of the most successful snowboard teams in the world will bring a star-studded lineup to PyeongChang, South Korea. Following final selection events this past weekend, U.S. Ski & Snowboard announced the selection of 26 athletes who will compete at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

Included on the 2018 U.S. Olympic Snowboarding Team is two-time gold medalist Shaun White (Carlsbad), three-time Olympic medalist Kelly Clark (Mt. Snow, Vt.), and Sochi gold medalist Jamie Anderson (Meyers). The selections will be confirmed by the United States Olympic Committee when it formally names Team USA this Friday.

"The 2018 U.S. snowboarding team is led by three of the best snowboarders of all time in Shaun White, Kelly Clark and Jamie Anderson. Add in some of the best young talent in the world with Chloe Kim, Red Gerard, Ben Ferguson, Chris Corning and Hailey Langland, and we have the best U.S. team we have ever had," Mike Jankowski, halfpipe, slopestyle and big air head coach, said.

Snowboardcross and parallel giant slalom athletes qualified from select World Cups this past season. Halfpipe and slopestyle athletes qualified through a process that included the Toyota U.S. Grand Prix and the Dew Tour, with the team being recognized after last weekend's finale.

The PyeongChang Opening Ceremony is set for Feb. 9. The U.S. Olympic snowboarding team will have its first competition on Feb. 10 with men's slopestyle qualifiers.

- Team facts:

- 17-year-old Chloe Kim, who has Korean parentage, will be looking for her first Olympic gold medal. She is a

three-time X Games gold medalist.

- White will be returning to his fourth Olympic Games. He has gold medals from Torino 2006 and Vancouver 2010.
- Anderson will be looking to defend her gold medal from Sochi 2014.
- Kelly Clark will be looking for her second Olympic gold, and her fourth overall Olympic medal. Clark will be attending her fifth Olympics.
- New to the Olympics, with six combined X Games medals, Julia Marino and Hailey Langland will be looking for their first Olympic podiums.
- 17-year-old Red Gerard will be heading to his first Olympics as one of the youngest athletes in PyeongChang. The only younger athlete on the U.S. snowboarding team is Hailey Langland.
- The most decorated snowboardcross athlete and snowboarder in history, Lindsey Jacobellis, looks to add more Olympic medals to her collection, having won silver in 2006.
- Nick Baumgartner has a podium from the Olympic test event in Korea and is a solid medal contender. He battled back from injury this season and made the big final in the last selection event, showing his speed is increasing as the Games approach.

2018 Olympic snowboard team

Men's snowboard slopestyle/big air

Chris Corning, Silverthorne, Colo.

Redmond Gerard, Silverthorne, Colo.

Kyle Mack, West Bloomfield, Mich.

Ryan Stassel, Anchorage

Women's snowboard slopestyle/big air

Jamie Anderson, Meyers

Jessika Jenson, Rigby, Idaho

Julia Marino, Westport, Conn.

Hailey Langland, San Clemente

Men's snowboard halfpipe

Ben Ferguson, Bend, Ore.
Chase Josey, Hailey, Idaho
Jake Pates, Eagle, Colo.
Shaun White, Carlsbad

Women's snowboard halfpipe

Kelly Clark, Mt. Snow, Vt.
Arielle Gold, Steamboat Springs, Colo.
Chloe Kim, Torrance
Maddie Mastro, Wrightwood

Men's snowboardcross

Nick Baumgartner, Iron River, Mich.
Jonathan Cheever, Saugus, Mass.
Mick Dierdorff, Steamboat Springs, Colo.
Hagan Kearney, Telluride, Colo.

Women's snowboardcross

Lindsey Jacobellis, Roxbury, Conn.
Faye Gulini, Salt Lake City
Meghan Tierney, Edwards, Colo.
Rosie Mancari, Anchorage

Men's parallel giant slalom

Aaron Muss, Rumson, N.J.
Michael Trapp, Hyannis, Mass.