Ski report: Morning starting off windy

Upper lifts at Heavenly and Squaw are starting the morning on wind hold.



The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a wind advisory for Lake Tahoe until 8 tonight, with 2- to 3-foot waves possible.

Rain and snow are in the forecast for the next three days in the Tahoe basin.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Research in Antarctica to come to life at Sierra Nevada College

By Stephen Ward

When a stone skips across water, tiny imprints diffusing from the contact point are often the only indication it was ever there. These ripples, caused by turbulence, help scientists gauge the flow of water in an area and the ensuing environmental impact.

By applying this method of measurement to glaciers, a more

probing study can be conducted.

This was one of the primary foci of Alexander Forrest's research during his three-week study of McMurdo Sound in Antarctica. The study was an international collaboration between research teams in New Zealand, Canada, United States and France.



Alexander Forrest

Forrest is a post-doctoral researcher at the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village.

Along with turbulence, Forrest investigated different temperatures and the mixing processes around the Erebus Glacial Tongue by using an autonomous underwater vehicle, or AUV.

Instead of being limited to a two-dimensional scan of the glacial tongue, the AUVs allow scientists to gather a more sophisticated perspective of the water by measuring horizontally.

"The (AUVs) allow researchers to characterize the environment in ways that have never been done before," Forrest said. "It provides us with a much bigger picture. Not only is it a technological breakthrough, but an environmental breakthrough as well."

Forrest went on to compare the new technology with the more

traditional methods.

“Now, instead of dropping a censor and pulling it up, we can measure 50 to 1,000 feet out from the same hole,” he said.

The results, which Forrest said are in the initial stages of being processed, will hopefully provide researchers with clues to the collapse of sea shelves, which make up 50 percent of Antarctica’s coastline.

The project was one of many in Forrest’s catalog of fieldwork at subzero temperatures. He has been on five polar campaigns, including trips to the Canadian High Arctic region, Iceland and the Arctic Ocean near the North Pole while conducting research at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

“You know, working in minus 30- to minus 40-degree (Fahrenheit) temperatures is generally hard,” Forrest said, “but one of the amazing things about being out on the McMurdo Sound is the scenery, like the 4,000 meter peak of Mount Erebus.”

The 33-year-old scientist initially proposed the investigation in Antarctica with UBC research staff about a year ago. UC Davis was connected to the study when he began working at the facility in August 2010.

Forrest will give a presentation on the research project entitled “Flying Under the Big Ice: Robotic Submarines Under Arctic Ice” on tonight at 6pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences.

Tree farms benefit environment

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Cut down a tree. It’s good for the environment.



“We’ve been telling people that for years,” said Jane Harris, but she would say that.

Her family has operated Harris Tree Farm in Pollock Pines for half a century.

Now she has some environmental movement support.

The Nature Conservancy is campaigning for people to use real Christmas trees, not the manufactured kind, as a way to lower our carbon footprint.

“The Nature Conservancy is all about trees,” said Frank Lowenstein, Climate Adaptation Strategy Leader for the organization. “They clean our air, they clean our water.”

Even when you cut them down?

Read the whole story

Snow park permits on sale

California snow parks are on sale for the 19 areas on the Sierra, which include 10 near Lake Tahoe.

This is the first year they can be purchased online. A $1.95 service fee is charged for each online purchase, as well as a mailing fee for seasonal permits. Permits are $5 daily or $25 for the season.

Each locale is essentially a parking lot cleared of snow to provide access to snow activities..

For more information, call (916) 324.1222.

Holland wins snowboardcross World Cup opener

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Snowboarding

Five-time snowboardcross Winter X Games gold medalist Nate Holland of Squaw Valley started the season off with a win in the opening World Cup in Lech Monday night. Holland led a string of four U.S. athletes into the top 15.

Holland, who went into the final rounds seeded fifth, pulled out his fourth career World Cup win along with taking the overall points leader yellow bib for the first time. Holland, having won the first World Cup of the season, will head into Tuesday's race wearing yellow as the overall World Cup points leader.

"This is the first time I've ever had the yellow bib – I'm the

points leader," said a tired Holland after clinching the victory under the lights. "Tonight I finally got the yellow bib and hopefully I can hold onto it longer than one night because we are racing tomorrow."

After posting a successful protest in the quarterfinals, Holland put the pedal to the metal topping both the semi final and final rounds. Holland beat out a tough field in the finals edging out Canada's Tom Velisek for the win.

"In the final heat I was in third place in turn one. Everything just started clicking and I started making passes," said Holland of his winning run. "Half way down I passed into first and at that point I knew those guys were behind me and I just pinned it to the finish line."

With conditions superb, Holland took full advantage of the course filled with long straight sections and good turns building confidence for the remainder of the season.

"I've always been a confident rider and traditionally within my riding I usually start getting my results mid season – towards the end of the season," explained Holland. "This last year and this year I've been able to start pulling some results earlier in the season and I'm happy with that. I have to contribute a lot of that to my fall training."

Shaun Palmer of South Lake Tahoe advanced to the semifinals but did not qualify for the final round, finishing sixth, while Jayson Hale of Sierraville was 11th and Jonathon Cheever of Saugus, Mass., 14th, not moving past the quarterfinals round.

In the women's race, Canada went one-two while U.S. Snowboarding's Callan Chythlook-Sifsof of Alaskda finished 12th.

There were six USA riders competing in Lech, with the remainder of the team training at a special early season camp

in Telluride, Colo., prior to next week's Visa U.S. Snowboardcross Cup World Cup.

The men and women will be on course again Tuesday for another race in Lech.

Official Results, World Cup, Lech am Arlberg, Austria, Dec. 7, Snowboardcross

Men

1. Nate Holland, Squaw Valley, CA

2. Tom Velisek, Canada

3. Mario Fuchs, Austria

4. Dan Csokonay, Canada

5. David Speiser, Germany

—

6. Shaun Palmer, South Lake Tahoe, CA

11. Jayson Hale, Sierraville, CA

14. Jonathon Cheever, Saugus, MA

—

41. Mick Dierdorff, Steamboat Springs, CO

Women

1. Dominique Maltais, Canada

2. Maelle Ricker, Canada

3. Yuka Fujimori, Japan

4. Deborah Anthoniozz, France

5. Marie Ramberger, Austria

—

12. Callan Chythlook-Sifsof, Girdwood, AK

Ski report: Barely a cloud in the sky



It’s a glorious day in Lake Tahoe. Time to call in late for work.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Birders sought for Tahoe basin eagle count

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is looking for volunteers with or without experience to coordinate the annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey on Jan. 7 from 9am until noon.

There are 26 stations located around the Lake Tahoe Basin that need to be filled as soon as possible. Interested participants

should respond no later than Dec. 23. For more information, contact Rena Escobedo at (530) 543.2733 or email rescobedo@fs.fed.us.

The count is part of the National Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey that was initiated by the National Wildlife Federation in 1979. The LTBMU is working in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is coordinating efforts in the West this winter. The results of the count will be combined with those from elsewhere in the state and across the nation to generate an index (an indirect measure) of bald eagle populations across the U.S.

Nevada State Parks spends $1 mil. on recreation trails

The Nevada Division of State Parks has awarded nearly $1 million for outdoor recreational trails projects throughout Nevada.

Projects include motorized and non-motorized trails projects, building new trails, maintaining old trails and educational efforts. Getting children and families outdoors is an objective of State Parks and its recreational trails program.

The Federal Highway Administration funds the program.

The following projects were awarded in 2010:

* Pine Nut Mountain off-highway vehicle trail maintenance and signs in both Carson and Douglas Counties

* Sand Mountain OHV trail rehabilitation, maintenance and signs east of Fallon

* Shoshone OHV signs and trail building west of Austin

* Trail assessments on trails in 14 state parks

* Community Garden/The Greenhouse project in Carson City

* Tahoe Rim Trail Association guide training

* Nevada Outdoor School Outdoor Ethics education and OHV training used statewide

* Daggett Summit trail, a part of the Tahoe Rim Trail.

Ski report: Afternoon powder day

By afternoon it is likely to be a powder day on the slopes of Lake Tahoe, according to Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.



Here is Fong's ski report for Dec. 6.

The storm is expected to subside later this morning. A wind advisory for Lake Tahoe is in effect until 10am by the National Weather Service in Reno.

Jitloff boasts second best U.S. finish in GS at Beaver Creek

By U.S. Ski Team

BEAVER CREEK – Reigning World Cup giant slalom champion Ted Ligety of Park City brought the Colorado crowd to their feet Sunday with a stunning Audi Birds of Prey GS victory, 0.80 over Norway's Kjetil Jansrud. Austrian Marcel Hirscher was third.

"It's nice to have this kind of support from the home crowd," said a beaming Ligety, marking his third podium at Beaver Creek in the last five years. "I've been close a lot of years and it feels awesome to finally get it."

With family, friends and two busloads of young racers from the Park City Ski Team in the stands, Ligety produced an incredible first run, putting him 0.36 ahead of the field. Americans Bode Miller and Warner Nickerson, both of New Hampshire, and Tim Jitloff of Reno also made the second run with Jitloff finishing 23rd, Nickerson 24th and Miller 27th after losing all his speed in a patch soft snow at the top of the course

"Conditions are the best I've ever seen at Beaver Creek, hands down," said Jitloff. "I feel really comfortable here. I think we're getting around to having five guys that are consistent in the world cup. A lot of credit goes to our coaching staff and they way we've prepared."

Just minutes before the second run, Ligety was cheered on by teammate Lindsey Vonn in an impromptu phone interview with Beaver Creek race announcer and World Championships downhill medalist Doug Lewis over the Red Tail stadium speakers.

Official Results, Audi Alpine FIS World Cup, Beaver Creek, Dec. 5, Giant Slalom

1. Ted Ligety, Park City, UT, 2:37.67

2. Kjetli Jansrud, Norway, 2:38.49

3. Marcel Hirscher, Austria, 2:38.91

4. Romed Baumann, Austria, 2:38.94

5. Askel Lund Svindal, Norway, 2:39.04

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23. Tim Jitloff, Reno, NV, 2:41.13

24. Warner Nickerson, Gilford, NH, 2:41.19

27. Bode Miller, Franconia, NH, 2:46.35

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DNQ: Tommy Ford (Bend, OR), Will Gregorak (Longmont, CO), Nolan Kasper (Warren, VT)