

A veteran snowmaker on the future of skiing

By Megan Michelson, Powder

Robin Smith, 70, got his start as a ski instructor at an upstate New York ski hill called Swain Ski Center in the 1970s. He went on to own and run that resort for over 20 years and installed the area's original snowmaking system.

When Intrawest bought Mountain Creek, an urban ski area in New Jersey, in the late 1990s, they called up Smith to run the place and help solve their snowmaking woes.

Smith, now in business development for the Italian snowmaking company TechnoAlpin, has since become one of the ski industry's most veteran snowmaking consultants and pioneers. He currently lives in Englewood, Colo.

"Robin knows how to look at your snowmaking system and quantify it," says Dennis Harper, snowmaking manager at Idaho's Sun Valley ski resort. "He'll tell you how much snow you need to make and how much it's going to cost to make your resort run."

[Read the whole story](#)

Controlled burns scheduled throughout basin

The California Tahoe Conservancy, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, California State Parks and the U.S.

Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations beginning March.

If conditions are favorable, operations may take place near Tahoe City, Glenbrook, Round Hill, Kingsbury Grade, and South Lake Tahoe. Operations may continue over the next several weeks, as conditions allow.

To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size and environmental conditions.

Does recess need coaching?

By Sumathi Reddy, Wall Street Journal

Schools across the country are revamping recess.

Some have it two or three times a day in shorter increments. Others bring in recess coaches to facilitate games. Many now have activity zones—all to encourage more physical fitness.

The shift is a turnaround after many schools in the U.S. cut back or eliminated recess due to space constraints and demands for more class time.

Read the whole story

Ganong third in super G at U.S. Championships

By USSA

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, Maine – Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore. – U.S. Ski Team) and Ryan Cochran-Siegle (Starksboro, Vt. – U.S. Ski Team) claimed the top of the podium in Saturday's super G at the U.S. Alpine Championships at Sugarloaf.

After some fresh snowfall Friday night, the course crew at Sugarloaf had their work cut out for them for Saturday's super G. Though the fresh snow and fog led to delays, it didn't seem to bother Ross – who snagged her second U.S. Championship title in super G – or Cochran-Siegle, who grabbed his first career title.

For both the men and the women, it was the U.S. Ski Team athletes who shined bright, with no big podium surprises and some really good skiing. Rounding out the podium for the women were Stacey Cook (Mammoth Lakes – U.S. Ski Team) and Megan McJames (Park City, Utah) – tying for second, 1.05 seconds off the pace, and Alice McKennis (New Castle, Colo. – U.S. Ski Team) – reigning Sugarloaf 2015 National Champion – in third. Nina O'Brien (Edwards, Colo. – U.S. Ski Team), who won the U.S. national giant slalom title in 2015 in Sugarloaf, finished fifth and won the junior women's U.S. national super G title.

For the men it was a tighter race, with Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah – U.S. Ski Team) taking second, .26 off the pace and Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley – U.S. Ski Team) in third, 0.44 seconds out.

All eyes were on Sugarloaf local Sam Morse (Sugarloaf, Maine – U.S. Ski Team) – Carrabassett Valley Academy grad and 2017 Junior World downhill champion – who ended up fourth, just 0.12 seconds off the podium. He'll walk away as top junior of the day, which is an honor not foreign to Morse.

"Being top in the country is cool – being top in the world is even cooler," reflected Morse following Saturday's super G. "To be part of the next generation of American downhillers is really exciting. I've been super fortunate to have older guys who are really friendly – they could be jerks, but instead they're always really accommodating to us – teaching us and showing us. I'm really thankful to them for making it an enjoyable process."

Ross – one of the best downhill and super G skiers in the world – remarked on how special it is to stand on the top of the podium. "I want to be the fastest skier out there, so it still does mean a lot to be able to be the National Champion and win a race," she said. "It doesn't matter if it's a FIS race or a World Cup – just being the fastest racer is really special."

Athletes praised the World Cup-like prepped surface and the good vibes that U.S. Alpine Championships provides. "It's sweet to come out to nationals to see all the kids and everyone's all fired up to see ski racing again," noted Ganong. "They've been watching us on TV all year, so they can see us now in person, and get some face time with us. It's fun to come and do one last race of the year – a fun run to end the season; no pressure."

Three-time national title holder Cook shared similar sentiments, and also took time to praise the course crew on the hill prep. "The conditions were really good today," said Cook. "I'd love to go ski it again. It was really fun to have a perfect surface like that at an event that's not a World Cup. I'm amazed by how perfect it was on the slope."

First wolf sighting in Nevada in 95 years



At least one of the Shasta pack wolves has been seen in Nevada. Photo/ CDFWS

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

State wildlife officials have confirmed the presence of a wolf in Nevada for the first time since 1922.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife announced Friday that a wolf from the Shasta Pack in Northern California crossed into the Silver State in early November, but there is no evidence that the animal was here to stay.

The wolf was caught on video near Fox Mountain, about 150 miles north of Reno, prompting an investigation by state wildlife officials.

Read the whole story

China embarking on a skiing revolution

By Kade Krichko, Powder

The sun hasn't yet made it over the dusty city skyline, but human friction offsets the morning chill as businessmen, students, and errand-runners ebb and flow to the singsong commands drifting from the concrete rafters of the Beijing subway station. Three stops down Line 13, a ski bus waits to shuttle groups of giggling teenagers to Nanshan Ski, the closest ski resort to China's capital city. On this platform, I'm struggling to find breathing room amid a city of 21 million.

Skiing is not a new phenomenon in China. The sport has been traced back over 10,000 years to semi-nomadic tribes in the country's Tian Shan Range—the first skiers in the world, according to many historians.

Yet it took until two decades ago, and the start of China's free market explosion, for the public to show interest in the sport. After years of poverty and oppression, Chinese skiing began as a symbol of prosperity and status, a Western practice in a country full of newfound wealth.

Read the whole story

Bodie becomes temporary

terrain park

Freestyle skier Cody LaPlante rattled the ghosts of Bodie as he turned the ghost town into a terrain park.

Assisted by a safety and State Parks team, LaPlante and the crew built a dream ski park within the eerie buildings this month. They traveled 13 miles via snowmobile.



More than 17 feet of snow turned Bodie into a unique ski location for Cody LaPlante. Photo/Provided

The 15-year-old who is originally from Truckee became the youngest person to stomp a triple flip on skis and was offered a spot on the U.S. Freeskiing Slopestyle Team. He expects to compete for a spot on the 2018 Winter Olympic team.

Dating back to around 1859, Bodie is frozen in a state of “arrested decay.”

“Doing interesting and urban skiing projects like this really helps progress the sport and I want to be a part of that,” LaPlante said in a statement.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

National Guard helps Mammoth with its snow

By Los Angeles Times

Hey, Mammoth Lakes, add this group shot of the National Guard to your winter scrapbook.

Burdened with removing the 44 feet of snow that had fallen this season, the village of 8,200 called in the National Guard earlier this month to help cart 4,000 tons of it away. The five-day offensive, involving 17 air and Army troops, will be just one of the many memories in this winter of monster, record-setting snows.

The SOS – shovel our snow – was issued after the village and Mono County declared a state of emergency to seek help in handling the piles that lined homes and streets.

Read the whole story

Life saving classes at South Tahoe pool

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Department is offering two American Red Cross certified lifeguard training courses.

The courses are being taught by Liz Terzian. Participants will receive knowledge and skills to prevent, recognize, and

respond to aquatic emergencies. Participants will be trained and certified to provide care for breathing and cardiac emergencies, injuries, and sudden illness until emergency services take over.

Participants must be at least 16, able to swim 300 yards continuously while demonstrating breathing control and rhythmic breathing, tread water for two minutes using the legs only, and complete a timed event.

Pre-course and swim test must be completed before first class; call 252.917-1867.

USFS wants help ID'ing priority maintenance work

Nationwide, the U.S. Forest Service want the public's help to select nine to 15 priority areas among its nine regions where a backlog in trail maintenance contributed to reduced access, potential harm to natural resources or trail users and/or has the potential for increased future deferred maintenance costs.

Region 5 manages more than 16,000 miles of trails.

Volunteers and partner groups contributed more than 178,000 hours in maintenance and repair of nearly 2,984 miles of trails last year.

Region 5 has until April 15 to submit at least three proposals to national headquarters. Those proposals will be weighed against proposal submitted by other Forest Service regions.

The selected sites will be part of the initial focus that will include a mosaic of areas with known trail maintenance needs that include areas near urban and remote areas, such as wilderness, are of varying sizes and trail lengths, are motorized and non-motorized, and those that incorporate a varied combination of partner and volunteer approaches and solutions.

The Forest Service manages more than 158,000 miles of trail – the largest trail system in the nation – providing motorized and non-motorized trail access across 154 national forests and grasslands. These Forest Service trails are well-loved and highly used with more than 84 million trail visits annually, helping to support mostly rural economies.

To provide ideas and suggestions on potential priority areas and approaches for incorporating increased trail maintenance assistance from partners and volunteers, contact Michelle Zuro-Kreimer, at 530.622.5061 or mzurokreimer@fs.fed.us .