

A geography lesson about the Sierra Nevada region

By Guy Rocha

On a Reno television weather broadcast, the weatherman referred to the Sierra Crest and then images of peaks in the Carson Range were displayed in the background. The Sierra Nevada crest line, nevertheless, is west of Lake Tahoe in California. In fact, virtually all of the Sierra Nevada is in California. What's wrong with this picture?

Most geoscientists would tell you that the Carson Range is a spur of the northern Sierra Nevada and perhaps 80 million years old. The appendage begins in the south at Carson Pass in Alpine County, Calif., skirts Lake Tahoe – a much younger geologic feature – in a northward arc into Nevada, and ends just south of the border town of Verdi in Washoe County, some 52 miles in length (71 percent in Nevada and 29 percent in California). The Carson Range, including Job's Peak, Job's Sister, Genoa Peak, King's Canyon, Slide Mountain and Mount Rose (the highest point in the Nevada portion of the range at 10,776 feet), serves as a majestic backdrop for the Reno/Carson City/Carson Valley metropolitan area. The highest point in the Carson Range is Freel Peak at 10,881 feet on the border of Alpine and El Dorado counties in California and south of South Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story