

Quest to name peak after South Tahoe's Ryan Shreve

By Kathryn Reed

Peak 9441 is listed on maps just like that, with no other name.

Mike Shreve is on a mission to name the Desolation Wilderness peak Mount Ryan after his son who died in 2003.

In 1992, when the South Lake Tahoe father and son were on a Boy Scout backpacking trip, Ryan asked what the name of the peak was. 9441, its elevation, is what U.S. Geological Survey maps call it.



Mike Shreve, holding an SIS brochure, at the top of what he would like to be Mount Ryan. Photos/Provided

Eleven years later, the day before Ryan's memorial, Shreve and his son's best friend Mitch Underhill hiked to Echo Peak.

"It was snowing lightly. Mitch looks to the west. He said,

'What is the name of the peak to the right with no clouds and in the sun?'"

It was Peak 9441.

"Let's call it Mount Ryan," Underhill said.

It's an arduous process to get peaks named something other than what they are labeled, especially with the 1999 Wilderness Act as a deterrent. But that is not slowing Shreve. He has the endorsement of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. In July he will take his cause to the USGS meeting.

In the mean time, Shreve is collecting signatures on petitions from people who support his idea. He will be asking all those who participate and watch the annual Ryan Shreve Memorial Firefighters Race at Sierra-at-Tahoe on March 15 to endorse his idea.

Education about SIS

Most of Shreve's focus since his 24-year-old son died after a wakeboarding accident on Folsom Lake has been to educate whoever will listen about Second Impact Syndrome.

"That second impact the brain expands again and has nowhere to expand in the cranial cavity," Shreve explained. "There is only one option and it goes south into the lower portion, the brain stem region."

This often leads to strokes because the blood flow into the brain has been limited.

The Ryan Shreve Head Injury Awareness Foundation was created in the 1997 South Tahoe High School graduate's name in hopes of limiting the number of deaths like his. The biggest fundraiser is the ski event at Sierra.

Money goes mostly to the printing costs of the SIS brochure.

Last August the California Interscholastic Federation requested brochures for the 1,650 high schools in the state.

The brochures were first created in 2004. It was a collaborative effort with El Dorado Hills Fire Department, where Ryan Shreve was a firefighter and paramedic, the county's Emergency Medical Services, and Dr. Terry Murphy who at the time was president of the EMS Medical Directors of California Association.

At last year's ski race, enough money was raised to print 20,000 brochures.

Shreve says the awareness of SIS has grown substantially since Ryan's death. He said it was a one on a scale of 1 to 10 in 2002 and is at a 10 today. He attributes this in part to high profile deaths like Sonny Bono and Natasha Richardson, as well as the numerous concussions Steve Young sustained during his career with the San Francisco 49ers.



Ryan Shreve

The SIS brochure says about 50 percent of reported SIS cases end in death. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are a minimum of 300,000 sports related concussions annually.

The ski event

The fundraiser is at Sierra because this is where Ryan grew up skiing. He was on the Buddy Werner team in the mid-1980s and skied at Sierra while on the STHS ski team all four years.

The categories include skiing, snowboarding and the 3-inch hose relay. It's open to firefighters, paramedics and their families. And the racers must be wearing their firefighter turnouts.

"Those things are bulky. That is what makes it all the more fun," Shreve said.

Competitors come from as far away as Santa Cruz.

For the relay, teams of three race against another team carrying a fire hose.

"When you get two good teams coming down the course, it looks like Chinese serpents coming down," Shreve said.

The race is March 15 at 10:30am next to the halfpipe at Sierra.

For more information about naming Peak 9441 to Mount Ryan, email mshreve@edhfire.com.