

Cal student dies in climbing accident at Cascade Falls

By Steven Bell, Westmorland Gazette

A former mountain rescue volunteer plunged 150 feet to his death Saturday at one of the world's most popular climbing destinations in Lake Tahoe.

Outdoor loving Michael Machell, 23, fell at Cascade Falls after slipping while preparing for an ice-climbing trip with friends.

Greg Almos, El Dorado County deputy sheriff, said: "The way it was described to us, he was at the top preparing to set some anchors and slipped on ice."

A spokesman for El Dorado County Search and Rescue said although there had not been significant snowfall in the region, there had been a lot of ice in rural areas like Cascade Falls.

Machell was an experienced climber who had helped save lives in the Lake District of England, completing 170 rescues with the Langdale and Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team (LAMRT).

He graduated from the University of Cumbria last year with a first class honors degree in outdoor professional practice and was in the U.S. to study for a year at UC Berkeley.

LAMRT team leader and friend Nick Owen said Machell "absolutely lived for the mountains".

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