

Lake Tahoe not the only region in search of snow

By Marnie Hunter, CNN

Lane Kommer should be skiing this week. Instead he postponed a trip to Colorado because the snow situation just isn't looking good.

"We've been keeping a close eye on the weather the last few weeks and keeping our fingers crossed, hoping for some good snow and it just got to the point where we decided it's better to reschedule and pay to change our plans than to go out there and be disappointed," said Kommer, who was planning to fly from Dallas to meet up with friends at Beaver Creek Resort. Now they're planning to go in February.



Heavenly has concentrated its snowmaking efforts farther up the mountain.

Photo/LTN

It is a decision faced by skiers and snowboarders across the United States as ski resorts scramble to make the snow that Mother Nature isn't providing. December 2011 yielded the 11th least extensive snow cover in the United States in the past 46 years, according to climatologist David Robinson, a professor

in the geography department at Rutgers University.

Weather patterns are moving in and out too quickly and nothing is locking in to produce significant snowfall, he said.

“It doesn’t look like there’s going to be huge improvement the next two weeks and we’re getting halfway through winter by then. But still, hope springs eternal for late January into early March. One would expect that we’re going to see at least some interruption in this progressive fast-moving pattern,” Robinson said.

Any snow would be a welcome change for the Lake Tahoe area straddling California and Nevada, where odd spring-like weather has plagued snow seekers. Base snow averaged about 14 inches at seven area resorts on Thursday, with summit averages of a little more than 19 inches. The annual average summit snowfall at one of the resorts is 350 inches.

Revenue at Lake Tahoe resorts over the peak week between Christmas and New Year’s was down 20 percent to 30 percent after a tremendous ski season across the United States last year, according to estimates from the National Ski Areas Association.

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