

Becker Peak – short trek for big views



Frozen Echo Lakes from Becker Peak. Photo/Richard Matera

By Kathryn Reed

Crevasses and the refraction of light have Echo Lake looking like it is mirroring a sky filled with puffy cumulus clouds. It's as though a pale blue marker has been used to draw circles on the white sheet of ice.

From our vantage point atop Becker Peak and then walking along the ridge, Echo Lake is mesmerizing.



Kae, AJ the dog, Richard, Carol, Stan, Sandy, Sue, Corine, Donna and Craig almost to the top.

Nine of us spent last Sunday snowshoeing to the top of Becker Peak – elevation 8,391 feet.

Snowshoeing this year has required seeking out higher elevations because it's only dirt at lake level. And while some were in shorts and others in short sleeves, the snowshoes were definitely needed. Snow even covers the road leading into Echo Lake.

A late morning start was ideal so the snow had some give to it. Almost everyone used poles, which was good on the steeper sections – for the ascent and decline.

The worst part, at least in terms of exertion, is turning off the road and heading straight up to the ridge. We made the left directly across from the Berkeley Camp and by a few no parking signs.

Some in the group advised that it's better to start a little farther up the road during hiking season to avoid what is bushy terrain without snow.



Becker Peak
Photo/Kathryn Reed

There's plenty of snow now so those bushes are not visible.

If the route up does not take your breath away, the views on top of the ridge are bound to. Flag Pole, Angora Peak, Dicks Peak, the back of Mount Tallac, Jakes Peak, the Angora burn area and Lake Tahoe all spill forth in an array of winter beauty.

And while it would be possible to call it a day at this point in terms of scenic beauty, the views only get better.

Even though Craig was correct to say the hard part was over, there is still some climbing to do.

I have to say I was glad to be with people who had done this trek before. Even though other snowshoers had laid down a trail before us, their route was a bit sketchy at times. Some said there was no way to get lost, but I'm also of the belief there is a first for everything.

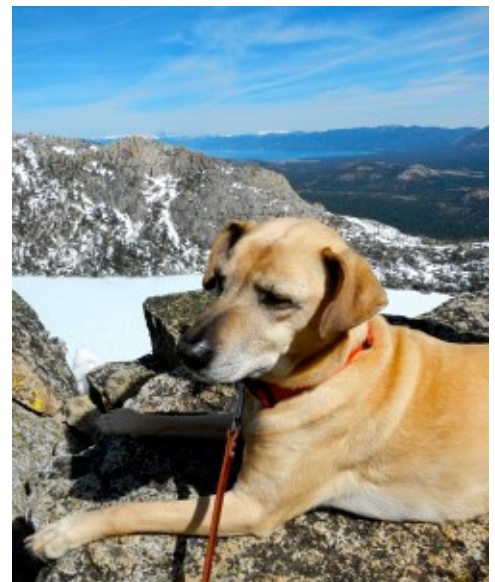


Carol, Donna, Corine and
Craig snowshoeing through
the wilderness.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Not too much farther and we see the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe
on our left and a frozen Echo Lake to our right.

We get to what could be another stopping point where there is
an incredible expansive view of Echo Lake. We pause long
enough for photos before making the final ascent up to Becker
Peak.

The peak itself is a pile of large rocks. Off come the
snowshoes so we can scramble to the top. Even AJ the dog is
able to make it up to the top. We sit there a bit, having a
bite to eat, taking in the views and putting layers back on to
ward off the nippy wind.



AJ with a frozen Echo
Lake in the background
and Lake Tahoe in the
distance. Photo/Kathryn
Reed

It's 360-degrees of pure Sierra serenity.

Skiers are along the edge of Echo Lake. Talking Mountain from this vantage point looks like it would be easy to reach.

We climbed about 1,000 feet to get to this point. It's about 4.5 miles round trip. We chose a lower route back that provided more views of Echo Lake and Lake Tahoe.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west over Echo Summit. Turn right on Johnson Pass Road. Parking is to the right.

A sno-park pass is required from Nov. 1-May 30. They may be obtained online.