

Winter returns for Carson Pass snowshoe



Rosemary Manning makes her way along a snowshoe trail at the Carson Pass. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

CARSON PASS – Sometimes it's not about the destination.

At least that was the philosophy we embraced when we didn't make it to our desired end point. Arriving in a blizzard not knowing exactly where we were going was bound to have that outcome.

But what this trek two weeks ago proved is that exploring the outdoors of the greater Lake Tahoe area is more about the journey and friendship.

Rosemary and I plus our four-legged companions left South Lake Tahoe where there was no sign of nasty weather. By the time we arrived at Carson Pass we were in a different world.

Visibility was limited, the snow was coming down horizontally and there was no trailhead sign.

We had been told to park on the right side of Highway 88, just beyond the main parking lot for the trail that leads to Winnemucca Lake, Round Top and other destinations. But what we weren't told is that the trail required us to walk down the road a bit. While we knew the road to Woods Lake was just down the road, we were under the impression we could get to the trail from where we parked if we just crossed the highway.

We tried. We failed.



AJ explores a mini snow cave.

We started our snowshoe by following those who had been there before us. And we headed to the right, which we at least knew was the correct direction. But it didn't take long before it was a dead end.

Circling back, we found a path that eventually met up with the main trail out of Carson Pass.

It was eerie and beautiful at the same time. The trees seemed dense compared to a day when the sky is blue and sunlight is coming through. Snow pelting our faces was like a constant exfoliation.

We come to a wide-open space where backcountry skiers are

schussing through the fresh snow.

Behind us we see Caples Lake in the distance.



A backcountry skier enjoys freshies.

We are losing our trail that those ahead of us had made. We don't see those people or even know if they had been out that morning. Now the wind and snow is coming down in such a way that the imprints from our snowshoes are disappearing.

It's time to turn around. Even though we are not far from Winnemucca Lake, it didn't make sense to go forward considering the nasty weather was deteriorating.

By the time we reach the car we are soaked. It's raining now – and we're at 8,500 feet. It's been one of those winters. But what a joy to finally experience winter.