

# Options for disabled adventurers on rise in Calif.



Adaptive Action Sports snowboard coach Chris Koepp gives Gary Nolte a few pointers as they head down the run. Photo/LTN file

**By Ben Egel and Brenna Lyles, Sacramento Bee**

Like most state recreation areas, Nevada County's South Yuba River Park has plenty of trails to hike on. Unlike most others, though, it also has a path to roll on.

About half of the gently sloped, 2.5-mile Independence Trail on the west side of Highway 49 has been renovated for wheelchairs, part of a statewide move to open up rivers, parks and other outdoor spaces to easier use by people with disabilities.

The accessibility push is also being taken on by private travel outfits who have designed packages for the disabled.

In its 37 years of operation, Sacramento whitewater rafting outfitter W.E.T. River Trips has accommodated people with visual and auditory impairments, as well as those with physical and intellectual disabilities. Other local

organizations let disabled adventure-seekers try their hand at rock climbing, rope courses, boating, water-skiing and four-wheel off-roading in the warmer months, as well as skiing and snowboarding in the winter.

In the settlement to the 2005 lawsuit *Tucker v. State of California Department of Parks & Recreation*, the state promised to improve parks access, including creating wheelchair-accessible trails, signs for the blind and captioned educational videos for those with hearing impairments.

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