

Cross country ski becomes learning experience



Grass Lake is a haven for cross country skiers.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Keep me away from hills and groomed trails. Flat, scenic and free equals perfect cross country ski conditions.

Grass Lake was serene in late December, as it is much of the winter. The snow could not have been better. The powder was like sugar, so easy to glide through. Others has been there before us so we didn't have to break trail if we didn't want to.

Waterhouse Peak (9,497 feet) is the highest, nearest landmark. And while that may sound like it is towering, remember that

Luther Pass – where Grass Lake is – is at 7,740 feet.



Renee and Rosemary snowshoe and cross country ski through Grass Lake on Dec. 26. Photo/Kathryn Reed

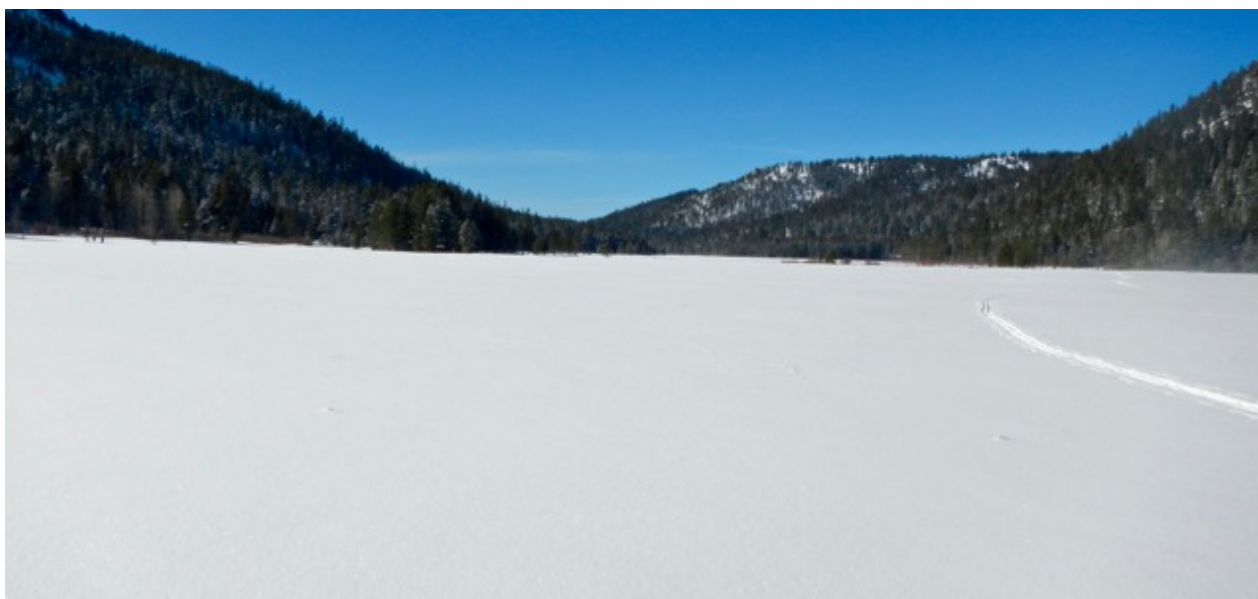
When there isn't much snow at lake level, this is an ideal place for cross country skiing or snowshoeing. Plenty of dogs were out getting exercise on this particular day, too.

When snow isn't on the ground this is a marshy area. It's not a true lake.

Even though Highway 89 is so close, it's only noticeable if you want it to be. That may sound odd, but I'm a firm believer people have the capability to tune out at least some distractions. The din of traffic is one of them.

Ironically, the three of us welcomed that traffic when we were done. You see, we committed one of the bigger mistakes while

playing in the woods. No one paid any attention to our starting point. That meant when we got back to the road we didn't know which way to go.



The expansive area is ideal for those who don't want to climb. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Rosemary was right – we needed to keep heading toward Meyers. Renee and I were on the road while she kept skiing, almost parallel to us. We got around a bend and as far as the eye could see there were no parked vehicles, just another bend. We thought we should turn around and head toward Hope Valley.

Then the three of us were on the road. It was time to hitchhike. After Rosemary got in the vehicle with the couple, their son and granddaughter (of course we didn't know this makeup or that they were super helpful at the time), I asked Renee if she got the license plate number or knew the make of the vehicle. Neither of us had those answers.

We knew Rosemary had been correct after they stopped to tell us they were going to try the other way. Then she came up in her vehicle.

I share this story because combined the three of us have lived on the South Shore for decades. We are experienced at outdoor

play in all seasons. We are normally smart women. But for some reason we weren't that Monday. It was a good reminder that communication is necessary, it's essential to look in all directions when starting off, and to have a focal point to know what to look for when returning. We were never going to be in danger based on where we were that day, but that might not always be the case.

We were lucky. This was an experience we could laugh about as we shook our heads.



AJ and Jackson have tons of open space to run in.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe go west on Highway 50. In Meyers, go

left onto Highway 89. At the crest of Luther Pass is Grass Lake to the right. There are several pullouts for parking.