

Waterhouse provides lines for adventure seekers



A flat Grass Lake is the easy start and finish for Waterhouse. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

With 1,800 vertical feet to ride and features built into the environment, no wonder Waterhouse is such a popular destination for skiers and snowboarders.

Even better for them it's not much of a hike from the vehicle to where the climb begins.

The eight of us (four humans, four canines) aren't into back country adventures of that kind, but we did explore this terrain last weekend on snowshoes – a first for all of us.

After traipsing across Grass Lake it's all uphill. Waterhouse (9,497 feet) and Powderhouse (9,380 feet) are next to each other. When facing the mountains from Grass Lake, Waterhouse

is to the left – our desired destination. They are both popular with skiers/snowboarders.

Always be aware of snow conditions. The freeze, thaw, fresh layer cycle can create variable conditions in the Sierra. The Sierra Avalanche Center is a good resource for information.



A snowboarder finds natural jumps down Waterhouse.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's one of those routes without a route, so to speak. Plenty of people (snowmobilers, hikers, snowshoers, skiers with skins) had gone before us, but still we weren't always sure which path to choose. Some lines went straight up, others zigged, and sometimes we chose to zag.

The beauty of being surrounded by all those pines in all of that snow was breathtaking – or maybe it was the steep terrain

taking our breath away. Mother Nature's splendor never gets old. And on this warm late winter day short sleeves could be worn.

A group of snowboarders crossed our path. When they told us it was probably another 90 minutes to the top we decided we'd had enough for one day. This was like a scouting mission to know how much time we'd need to complete the trek and see the conditions for ourselves. Maybe it would make a good summer hike.



Blue-green-white – the natural beauty of playing in the Tahoe area. Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go west on Highway 50. Go left onto

Highway 89 in Meyers. Park at the top of Luther Pass; there are several cut outs to make it safe. Walk across Grass Lake and start the climb.