

Beauty of Tahoe unfolds after short 'shoe



Views are the reason to hike or snowshoe to the ridge above Echo Lake. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

A short jaunt up to the ridge above Echo Lake was a much needed reminder of just how gorgeous this area is. Sometimes it's easy to take the beauty of Lake Tahoe for granted when one is immersed in daily life.

It's been such a strange snow season that last Sunday was the first time I snowshoed all winter, um spring.

Stripped down to short sleeves – two of the five on the outing were in shorts – it was a glorious day. Not a cloud was in the sky. A cool breeze greeted us as we hiked farther on the ridge.

It's amazing how in less than 1½ miles we had a spectacular view of what seemed like the entire basin. Mostly, though, it was the South Shore that spilled forth. At that elevation it was a good reminder of how we really do live in a forest and

not a concrete jungle.



Leilani, Donna and Sue make their way up the trail.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

On this particular day the road to Echo Lake was wide, matted down and easy to walk without snowshoes. Two in our group had been there just a couple weeks before when it was a different world because of the fresh snow; with snow a couple feet deep and much more of a workout.

We passed by the frozen lake, crossed the dam and headed up to get to the point where we'd get that view. Others, though, had stopped to play on Lower Echo Lake – cross country skiing and skate skiing.

Once across the dam we all had our snowshoes on.

We opted to head toward Flagpole Peak (elevation 8,363 feet) a bit. From the point we turned around we could look down on some of the devices used for avalanche control above Highway

50.

It's the 360-degree views that make this such a great jaunt. And it's relatively easy, and at just less than 3½ miles round trip, it should be done every year.

Besides seeing Lake Tahoe in the distance, there are iconic peaks like Freel and Becker scratching the sky.



A frozen Echo Lake with Becker Peak above it and skate skiers on it. Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Getting there from South Lake Tahoe:

Go west on Highway 50 to the top of Echo Summit. A short way down, turn right on Johnson Pass Road. Follow the road to the Sno-Park area. (Pass required and must be purchased before arrival.) Cross road and begin trek on road to Echo Lake.