

# Conquering 'brown pow' in Tahoe's backcountry



Getting wet and dirty are all part of the fun. Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

**By Kathryn Reed**

TRUCKEE – Four-wheeling is often a mix of going faster for the adrenaline rush and slowing down to take in the scenery. This excursion was no different.

One of the best parts is that guide Sean Field knows this terrain better than most because he grew up in Tahoe City exploring the mountains in every season, in practically every possible manner. Now the three-time X Games skier is slaying “brown pow” as he shares this part of the world with anyone who wants to spend about three hours in the backcountry in a UTV – utility terrain vehicle.



Prosser and Stampede reservoirs from the trail. Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

So much dust kicks up it's necessary to lag behind a bit as his taillights disappear around a corner. For someone with off road experience (none is required to rent a UTV) I was pretty pokey until my passenger essentially said there would be no photos at the pace I was going.

What makes these Can-Am Commander 1000cc machines different than an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) is that driver and passenger sit side-by-side and it's a normal wheel instead of like a

bike. The suspension is outstanding – better than a 2002 Wrangler on similar terrain.



Most of the route is through the tall pines in the Tahoe National Forest. Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

The company's motto is: "We guide, you drive." It's perfect. It would be easy to get lost as one dirt road starts to look like the next. Using a tree as a marker isn't likely to get you back to the trailhead when you're in a forest.

Cass Walker is Field's passenger; she adds to the experience by making sure guests are staying hydrated and have snacks at select stops. The wipes to clear the accumulated dust from exposed skin and sunglasses were welcome along the way and at the end of the expedition. Sunscreen, bug spray and Advil are in the glove compartment.



Sean Field is sharing his love of the outdoors with people who might not otherwise be able to see these locations. Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

Field knows when to slow down, when to stop – where that Kodak moment is. And there are plenty. But that doesn't mean there is a lot of stopping.

This adventure is about driving the bumpy U.S. Forest Service roads, going through some water, getting super dusty and grinning with glee.

At one outlook Stampede and Prosser reservoirs are visible, with Boca barely noticeable. Beyond that is the Carson Range and the backside of Mount Rose.



Wildflowers are just starting to pop in the Truckee area.  
Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

“Skiing definitely taught me a lot about these mountains,” Field says as he imparts tidbits about the area. His exploration started in the winter and now continues with summer pursuits.

A pristine meadow which is the headwaters for Prosser Creek comes into view. This is the perfect spot to take in all the scenery, including the Pacific Crest, before turning around. Few signs of civilization are visible, making one feel so removed from everything; and feeling so small in this lush, vast terrain that almost looks like a painting.



Incredible vistas are the reward of having a guide lead the way. Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

Field had done almost every sport the Sierra is known for before getting into rock crawling.

“I consider it a tool to access the backcountry,” he told *Lake Tahoe News* on a recent trek out of the Prosser OHV area near Truckee. “I almost got bored going by myself. It’s more fun with people.”

That is how Tahoe Off Road came into being. After securing a permit with the Tahoe National Forest he started offering tours in May.



The ride is about a 1,500 foot elevation gain. Photo Copyright 2018 Carolyn E. Wright

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### Notes:

- More details are on Off Road Tahoe's **website**.
- Season – May-October
- 20-mile round trip
- Add-ons like lunch are available
- 2 2-person vehicles, 1 4-person vehicle
- Open 7 days a week
- 2 tours a day