

## Races, expo at 'Snowshoe the Bear'

Maybe pushing the event back a few weeks will make for better snow conditions when the 5th annual "Snowshoe the Bear" is held Saturday, February 25.

Snowshoe racing and demos, live music and more are on tap at the event, which traditionally has been held the first weekend in February, beginning at 10 a.m.

More than 350 racers—most of whom are first-timers—will trek easy-to-follow 5K trails and more challenging 10K races into the snowy forest from the Village's south end near the corner of Pine Knot and Village Dr. as part of Southern California's only snowshoe race, and one of the largest in the country. While the snowshoers disappear up Big Bear's southern ridge, eventually reaching the courses along 2N08, spectators will enjoy exhibit booths, climbing wall, kids race, demos, product-sponsor giveaways and live entertainment. An awards ceremony follows.

The event is open to all ages and skill levels; last year even a dozen dogs went out. In fact, beginners are encouraged to sign up to get a feel for the easy-to-do sport and the majority of participants are generally first-time snowshoers. It's all about enjoying snow, sun, trees and friends at your own pace, whether you're out with the dog or taking aim for the fastest times.

"If you can walk, then you can snowshoe," says Paul Romero of Team Sole, which presents Snowshoe the Bear in conjunction with sponsors including the Events Resource Office, *Competitor Magazine*, Hammer Nutrition, Big Bear

Vacations, North Shore Trading Co., FRS, Elemental Herbs and High Gear. Participants may bring their own snowshoes, try free demos or rent. Local stores including Goldsmith's Board Shop (909-866-2728) have rentals with poles available from \$15, as do Bear Valley Bikes, TC Ride Shop and many Sports Chalet and REI locations.

Prizes are awarded to top finishers in men's and women's categories and each registrant gets a raffle ticket. Online 5K registration costs \$25, \$45 for the 10K, and for race day registration from 7-9 a.m. add \$10 to each. The kids race is at noon and is free, right in the Village with lots of good opportunities for photos. Pre-event check-in is at Nottingham's Friday, Feb. 24 with live music at 8 p.m.

Snowshoe the Bear is the first of four events that comprise the "Conquer the Bear" high altitude multisport challenge. Other competitions include the July 7-8 Big Bear Paddlefest, the huge Tour de Big Bear mountain bike event on August 4, and Endure the Bear endurance trail run on September 8.

Get ready for "Snowshoe the Bear" during a full moon snoeshoe on Tuesday, Feb. 7. Meet at 2N08 and Knickerbocker at 5 p.m. for the two mile jaunt after dark suitable for all levels with shadows all around. Let the moon guide you through the forest for an awesome snowshoe experience! Bring your own hot or cold beverage to enjoy. (909) 866-7020.

[www.BigBearToday.com](http://www.BigBearToday.com)



Racing, music and expo are all part of "Snowshoe the Bear" on Feb. 25

## Snowshoe treks, eagle talk at Center

Celebrate America's national symbol, head into the National Forest on snowshoes or just explore Discovery Center's wooded grounds in your sneakers during February programs at Big Bear Discovery Center.

The annual **Bald Eagle Celebration** at Discovery Center is on Saturday, Feb. 11, as Forest Service biologists present a fascinating slide show on the beautiful birds that winter in Big Bear. There's informative handouts for adults and kids, plus a visit by a live bald eagle, Aries, courtesy of Moonridge Animal Park. The program is from 1-2:30 p.m. and costs \$5, \$3 ages 12 and under.

Discovery Center often has a spotting scope focused on birds across the lake that makes it easy to spot eagles as well. Plus volunteer for the monthly eagle counts (story page 3) and biologists will give you a map showing where to find them.

Popular **Snowshoe Tours** continue each weekend as naturalists lead guided tours out to play in the fluffy stuff. Explore snow-covered trails in search of signs of winter wildlife while enjoying winter recreation at the same time. It's amazing how quiet the woods are when they're blanketed by snow, which acts like a sound

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