



**PACIFIC NORTHWEST
SKI AREAS**

ASSOCIATION

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PRESS RELEASE

What's New in 2015-2016 at your Pacific Northwest Ski Areas

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La Conner, WA – After an unusually low snowpack during the 2014-2015 season, the Pacific Northwest Resorts are looking forward to the predicted increase in snowfall for winter 2015-2016. The predicted strong El Niño for this winter is well publicized and with history as a guide it appears it will be an increase in snowpack from last winter. The resorts have had a busy off-season preparing for the upcoming season with 'tuning up' ski lifts, day lodges, parking facilities, summer brush cutting/grooming on runs and creating a compelling array of learning programs.

First the Prediction for Winter

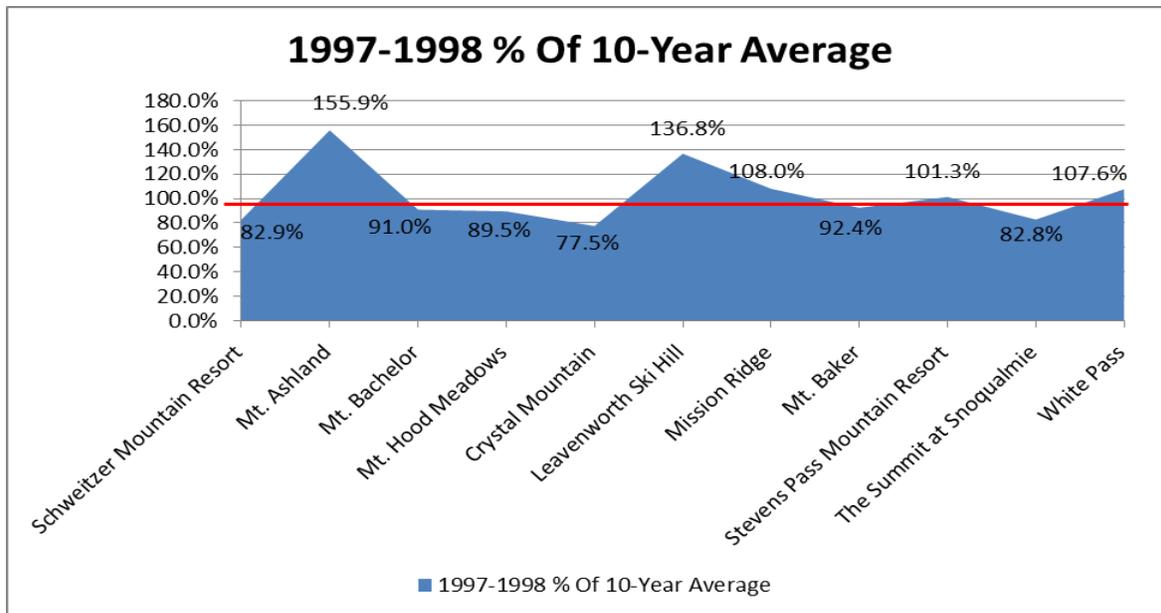
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has said "There is a greater than 90% chance that El Niño will continue through Northern Hemisphere winter 2015-16, and around an 80% chance it will last through early spring 2016". Many people are asking what does this mean for the Pacific Northwest mountains in 2015-2016.

Cliff Mass, Professor, Atmospheric Sciences at University of Washington, in his September 25 Weather Blog said "Based on past experience, strong El Niño's have their main impact after the new year, mainly making it warmer than normal, resulting in less snow pack than normal (about a 20% reduction on average). But this is HUGELY MORE than the snowpack we had last year (80% reduction)." Mass also has said in another blog "But given the last winter's historically low snowfall, skiers likely will find themselves pleased with next year's light snowfall."

Matt Zaffino, KGW Chief Meteorologist predicts "it'll be a better year than last year for most of Oregon, but with some fairly dramatic differences across the state.....From Mt Bachelor south I expect average to above average snowfall, from Mt Bachelor north, average to slightly below average. Northeast Oregon probably around average or slightly below."

Larry Shick, Open Snow Northwest Forecaster, says "A strong El Niño will tilt the weather warmer for this winter in the NW, but not as warm or consistently warm as last year. Snowfall will be about 15-25% below normal, for the season, with most of the impacts to the lower elevations."

Many forecasters are predicting winter 2015-2016 to be a record in comparison to the 1997-1998 winter. In looking back through the records we found that the Pacific Northwest ski resorts had near or above average snowfall in 1997-1998. The snowfall in that season ranged from 77% to 155% of the preceding 10-year average snowfall. Following is a chart that illustrates the snowfall averages in 1997-1998 for a sampling of resorts in the region.



The *Old Farmer's Almanac* prediction for winter 2015-2016 is "it will be super cold with a slew of snow for much of the country, even in places that don't usually see too much of it, like the Pacific Northwest. The snowiest periods in the Pacific Northwest will be in mid-December, early to mid-January and mid- to late February."

While history is not a predictor of snowfall, we can deduce that weak El Nino's are more likely to produce lower snowfall years than strong El Nino's. This past winter (2014-2015) and winter 2004-2005 produced two of the lowest snow seasons since 1997-1998 and both were considered weak El Nino's. Only time will tell what winter brings to the Pacific Northwest.

What's New in the Pacific Northwest for 2015-2016

OREGON

Mt Hood Meadows: is guaranteeing unlimited passholders at least 100 days this season, as a result of industry leading snow harvesting capabilities, thorough brush cutting and summer slope maintenance. Mt Hood Meadows opened Altitude - a mountain lifestyle store in Portland's Pearl District, in its continuing effort to connect with and bring the mountain experience to Portland area outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Meadows is diversifying its recreational offerings, adding scenic snowshoe touring, fat bikes and randonee events to its spring offerings, and expanding summer scenic chairlift and hiking operations.

Mt Ashland: performed trail grooming, lift ramp work and will be maximizing it's snow harvesting efforts to enable opening in lower snow conditions. Mt Ashland will also have more healthy food options in the Café. To improve the learning to ski experience Ashland has invested in a new fleet of kids rental ski boots.

WASHINGTON

49 Degrees North Mountain Resort: added two SMI snowmaking fan guns plus 10 acres of snowmaking to improve coverage at the base area, beginner slopes and teaching area. In preparation for the 2016-17 season an additional 30 acres of snowmaking on 3 major runs will be added as a new well system. Additionally, infrastructure improvements will come on line, including a 500,000 gallon mid-mountain reservoir. The Sunrise Basin area of the resort has also seen lots of action this summer with the development of a new base area. For 2015-2016 there will be two new runs in the Sunrise Basin and, until a permanent lodge can be completed, a pair of cozy yurts connected by a deck at the base of the Sunrise Quad. In addition, construction of a new parking lot with capacity for 50 additional cars will be adjacent to the Yurts.

Stevens Pass Mountain Resort: completed multiple slopeside and base area improvements with the intent to create a better, season long snow surface. Stevens Pass has upgraded their learning program with the "Learn-In-3 Guarantee". The Ski and Snowboard School guarantees guests will be ready for intermediate slopes in three lessons or enjoy unlimited lesson packages until skiers/riders reach an intermediate level and complete the program. Each day includes lesson, equipment rental (including helmet) and a beginner lift ticket. Additionally, package participants will receive four any day, any time lift tickets, a voucher to purchase a 2016-17 Everyday Season Pass for just \$199 and other perks upon graduation.

Ski Bluewood: is offering an unprecedented price cut for lift tickets – for example, this season a full-day adult lift ticket at Bluewood will cost \$39, including tax, compared to last season price of \$47.56, including tax. Bluewood has also added eight bonus ski days with a Wednesday through Sunday operating schedule during the months of January and February.

Mt. Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park: with state funding of \$1.5 million from the last legislative session, a great deal of work has been completed to repair and update the lodges and move forward with plans to construct a new guest services building at the resort. The Main Lodge features a new roof and flooring throughout the main level. Lodge 1, which is open to the public on weekends and holidays, has undergone a complete overhaul with new entrances allowing for improved access from the parking lot, and new restrooms on the lower level. New flooring, energy-efficient windows, and other updates have modernized the entire building. Lodge 1 serves as home base for Spokane Parks & Recreation's Therapeutic skiing program, as well as the Spokane Ski Racing Association.

IDAHO

Schweitzer Mountain Resort: began construction of a new summit lodge in July 2015. The 13,000 sq. ft., 3 story summit lodge will offer a venue for on-mountain dining and relaxation with a full service restaurant & bar, cafeteria, lodging accommodations, space for group functions and a new home for ski patrol dispatch. Completion is anticipated for the fall of 2016. For this upcoming season the internet infrastructure has been upgraded. A switch from copper to fiber optic lines and installation of new antennas will increase bandwidth resort wide. For youth 5 to 12 years old a new Winter Break Ski Camp will be offered during Dec 21-24, 2105 and/or Dec 28-31, 2015 this winter. A completely new fleet of adult Alpine rental equipment with brand new Rossignol Experience skis is ready for this upcoming season. The trail crew has completed brush cutting in the Outback Bowl with work being done on G3, Lakeside Chutes run-out, lower Snow Ghost, and Quicksilver runs.

Lookout Pass Ski Area: a higher level of instruction is available through the Lookout Snowsports School for skiers and riders of all ages and abilities. Programs include the Senior Workshop on Mondays, Downhill Divas

for women only on Fridays and Next Level for intermediate and advanced skiers and snowboarders on Sundays. Powder Wednesdays: Lookout gets so much snow they're adding another day of face shots once again for 2015-16. In January and February the mountain will be open six days a week, from Wednesday through Monday.

Silver Mountain Resort: extensive brush cutting and increased snowmaking capabilities to help open during low snow conditions. On the mountain a fresh remodel of Mogul's lounge at the Mountain House lodge. The terrain based teaching techniques continue to be added to the ski school to make it easier to learn how to ski or snowboard. The Flexible 5 day learn to ski or board package – rental package, lift ticket and lesson – is offered any 5 days between January 4, 2016 and March 18, 2016. Upon completion the guest receives a season pass for the rest of the year and 50% off the following season. The progression terrain park continues to be expanded to help introduce young and adventuresome riders to the joy of rails and air time. The Rental Shop has added new skis, snowboards and boots to the fleet. Daily operations are planned for the 15/16 season.

MONTANA

Whitefish Mountain Resort: completion of the Summit House remodel including the addition of a mezzanine level with 1,600 square feet adding approximately 135 seats and new windows providing northwestern views. Restrooms have been added to the main floor as well as an expansion of the main entry. Additionally all of the windows were replaced, and a remodel of the entire exterior including new siding, stonework, trim and lighting brings the building into a new era. As the only mountaintop restaurant in the state of Montana, the Summit House is known for its panoramic views of Glacier National Park and the Flathead Valley. Also for this season, the completion of a new Ski Patrol Headquarters building. At 800-square feet the new building is more than four times the size of the old cabin and will enable patrollers to treat minor injuries on-site instead of transporting to the clinic in the Base Area.

ALASKA

Eaglecrest Ski Area: is celebrating their 40th anniversary during the 2015-2016 season with the opening of the new Porcupine Lodge. The new lodge provides for an expansion in business operations and enhances customer service and satisfaction. The Porcupine Lodge will house lift ticket sales, Snowsports School, retail and repair shops, as well as a rental shop with direct slope side access. The Porcupine Lodge creates newly available space in the Base Lodge making way for 80 additional seasonal lockers and larger spaces for ski clubs and other mountain operations departments. Summer brush cutting and trail maintenance, as well as new snowmaking capabilities will increase production by 30% to help the mountain remain open with lower snow coverage. Also new this season, Eaglecrest has installed an electric vehicle charging station.

PEOPLE CHANGES

Mission Ridge: has made the following promotions: Tony Hickok to Marketing Manager, Brad Whiting to Mountain Operations Director and Tess Morris to Ski Patrol Director

NEW! World's Largest Ski and Snowboard Lessons

Many of the Pacific Northwest ski resorts will be joining an industry wide effort to have the largest multi-venue ski lesson and the largest multi-venue snowboard lesson. The event is on Friday, January 8, 2016 as part of the Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month.

Washington State Ski & Snowboard Museum Open

More than four years in the making, Washington's Ski and Snowboard Museum (WSSSM) is open to the community. Take a journey through time via various artifacts and exhibits and reminisce about the

characters, places, and gear of the past. WSSSM will be a “story-telling” museum together with artifact displays to supplement these stories. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday and is located at the top of Snoqualmie Pass—Exit 52 Eastbound and Exit 53 Westbound – in The Pass Life development.

For additional information on these exciting developments in the mountains, please visit your favorite mountain’s website or call the resort directly.

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The Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association is a non-profit trade association, which represents the interests of ski and snowboard facilities located in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, and California. The Association’s 35 member ski areas – most of which operate on public land – collectively host an average of 5.6 million visits annually. For additional information on Pacific Northwest skiing and snowboarding, contact the PNSAA office at (877) 533-5520, or visit <http://www.pnsaa.org> to link to the website of your favorite mountain.