

# GET OUT!

## Skiing into Glass Creek Meadow and up White Wing Mountain

BY ALEX ERTAUD

**B**elow the Sierra Crest, a drainage over from the hustle and bustle of the June Mountain Ski Resort, sits Glass Creek Meadow. A quiet whisper of a stream trickles through a lush meadow in the summertime, but come winter, the place is truly silent, (hopefully) covered in an abundance of snow. In late December, Executive Director Wendy Schneider, her dog Ace, and I headed from the 395, around the north side of Obsidian Dome, to ski White Wing Mountain, which makes up the southern flank of the valley the meadow sits in. Our group had chosen the peak as our objective for the day for the moderately challenging ski, the beautiful views of the Glass Mountains, and the story behind the Wilderness character of the place. It being early season, we were kept off the summit by low-tide snow levels exacerbated by winds stripping our uphill (north-east facing) slope—classic Eastern Sierra!

### GETTING THERE:

The roadside put-in makes for relatively easy access and logistics. Park on the west side of the 395 and Obsidian Dome Road (just past Deadman's Summit coming from the south). Head southwest on the obvious snow-covered dirt road. Continue as you wrap around Obsidian Dome, taking in this truly odd geologic formation, the product of an eruption around 1350—a mere decade or two into the Hundred Years' War between my Gallic ancestors and the English. But back to Obsidian Dome; continue around its south side to the Glass Creek Meadow (summer) trailhead. From there, head west along Glass Creek up to the meadow. You will soon enter the Owens River Headwaters Wilderness, which was designated as such as part of the 2009 Omnibus Bill. Friends of the Inyo was part of a coalition to lend local support to a Wilderness designation for the area, so it holds a

special place in our organizational hearts.

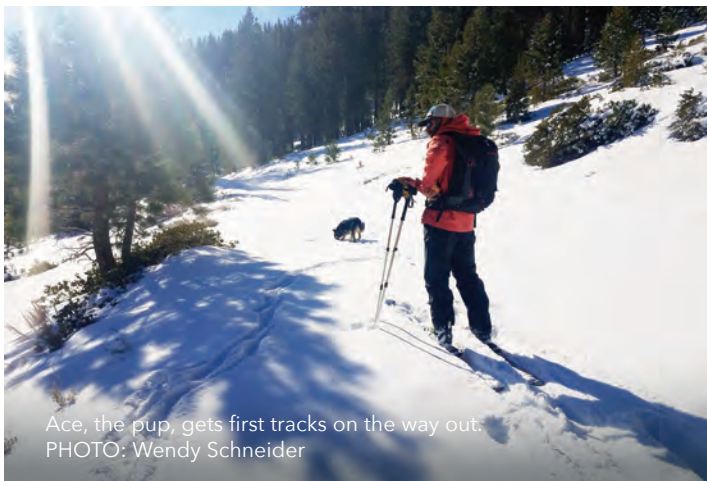
From the meadow, head up the northwest-facing slope, as it is the most gradual, with the pitch staying under 30 degrees. At the top, rip the skins and pick your descent! Options for skiing down abound—with varying degrees of spice—so pick the one where the snow looks best and shred those turns; you earned 'em! Then, retrace your skin tracks back to the 395.

### BEING THERE:

As alluded to, Glass Creek Meadow and White Wing Mountain are in the Owens River Headwaters Wilderness. In the wintertime, the Wilderness character is out in full force, with creeks muffled by snow, birds away for the season, critters hiding away to survive the harshest season they will see, and nary a human in sight. Though rare to see any critters or signs of life firsthand in the winter, it is always a treat to inspect the track the local fauna leave behind in the snow, preserved until the first big thaw. Always fun to play naturalist and try and differentiate the hare from the kangaroo rat from the vole. Bring along your field guide to be sure to have a good time.

Finally, the views from White Wing are tremendous, stretching into Nevada. You will be able to see the Sierra Nevada give away to the Great Basin, alpine give way to high-desert. This convergence of biomes is what makes life out here in the Eastern Sierra so unique, and quite a treat to see from up on high!

**TRIP DATA: 7 mi., w/ 2,700 ft of elevation gain (one way). A moderately athletic group accustomed to mountain travel can expect a 6-7 hour outing. Enjoy!**



Ace, the pup, gets first tracks on the way out.  
PHOTO: Wendy Schneider



Breaking in new boots doesn't always feel good. Alex tries to ease the pain with a short break. Photo: Wendy Schneider