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News

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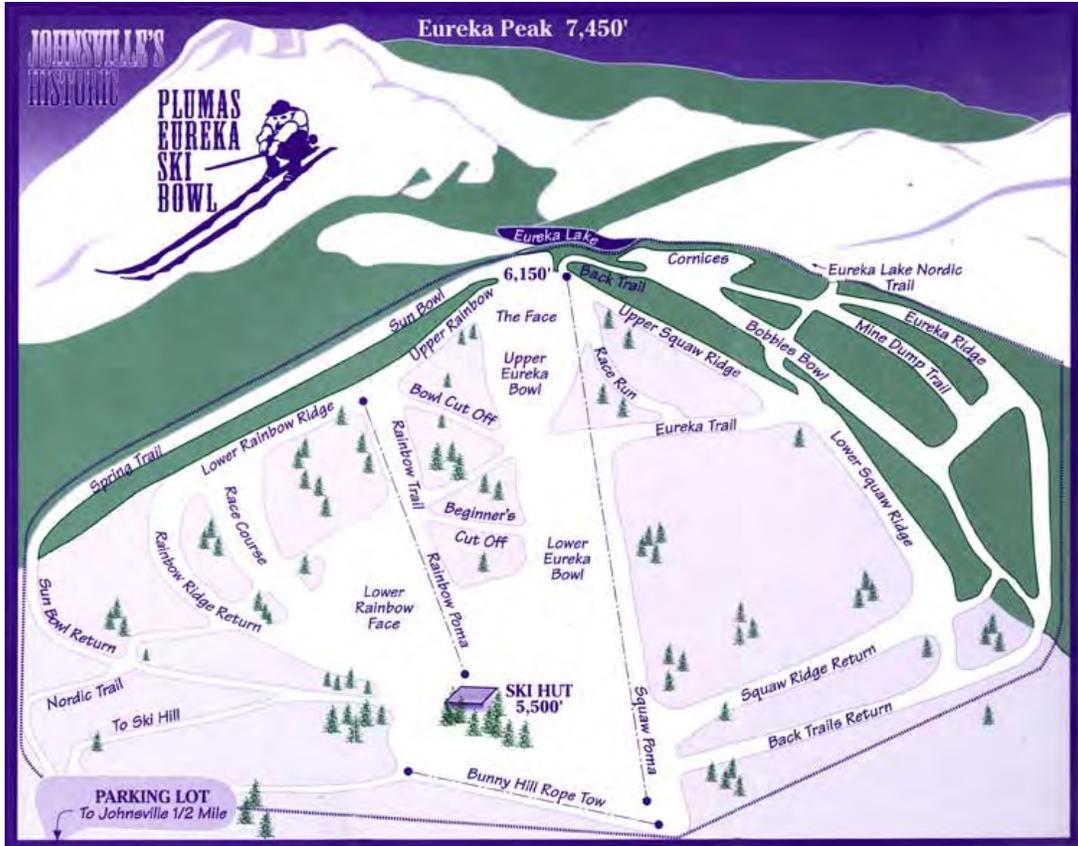
December 22, 2025 | David Arsenault



There's just enough snow Dec. 14, 2024, to ski near Intorf Lodge at the Johnsville Historic Ski Bowl. Photo by David Arsenault

For the first time in more than two decades, the Plumas Ski Club has a functioning ski lift at the Johnsville Historic Ski Bowl. In a return to the ski bowl's historic roots, the new lift is a rope tow, located along the former Rainbow Poma lift.

If there is enough snow, PSC will hold three community ski days in 2026, said vice president Don Fregulia, a fourth-generation Johnsville local who has served on the ski club board since 2007.



Map courtesy Plumas Ski Club

## Where skiing was born in the Americas

The ski bowl is located in Plumas-Eureka State Park, where history, nature and modern culture integrate. Nestled in the mountains between Johnsville and La Porte, this is the birthplace of ski racing and sport skiing in the Americas, according to PSC. By 1863, Gold Mountain, now known as Eureka Peak, had a ski run with 2,600 feet of vertical descent above the then-thriving mining town of Johnsville.

PSC has operated the ski bowl since 1955, starting before the area became a state park in 1959, said president Greg Hinds. Hinds, who lives in Graeagle, grew up near Johnsville and has served on the PSC board for 10 years, he told *The Plumas Sun* in a phone interview. The ski bowl had up to four functioning rope tows in the early years, and by 1975 had added two Poma lifts, which ran until 2001.

The ski bowl became home to the Historic Longboard Revival Series ski races in 1993. Hinds coordinates the event with the help of a community of volunteers, and it has become a popular fundraiser.

Hinds is also a world champion of the Longboard Revival Series, winning three championships in the last four years. The first time Hinds made the podium was in January 2019, when, he reminisced, he placed second to the writer of this article by a narrow margin. That, however, would never happen again. The longboard race results, going back to 1861, can be viewed on the PSC [website](#).



2025 Longboard Revival Series men champions, from left: Dave "Kamikaze" Carmazzi, Greg "Slack Bottom" Hinds and Leo "Cheddar Cheddar" Kusener. Photo courtesy Chris Coughlin



2025 Longboard Revival Series women champions, from left: Abby "Calamity Abby" Marshall, Rachel "The Rascal" Bauer and Gina "Hot Knife Thru Butter" Luciano. Photo courtesy Chris Coughlin

The longboard races have missed only four seasons in two decades: 2007, 2014 and 2015, due to a lack of snow; and 2021 due to the COVID epidemic. Given enough snow, the 2026 Historic Longboard Revival Series races will be held Jan. 18, Feb. 15 and March 15.

### **Affordable community-based skiing**

The ski bowl has been a popular local institution for decades, offering Poma and rope tow access to the central ski bowl, and providing a jumping-off point for backcountry skiers bound for the higher peaks on weekends throughout the winter.



The area around the Intorf Lodge is a popular sledding destination as enjoyed by Angela and Blake English, of Quincy, on Nov. 30, 2024, thanks to all of the work that the Plumas Ski Club has done to maintain vegetation and infrastructure at the ski bowl. Photo by David Arsenault

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Eureka Peak was a popular backcountry skiing area, said Dan English, of Quincy, who managed the ski bowl from 1985 to 1991. “It cost only \$1 to get a ride up the Squaw Poma to access backcountry areas higher up,” said English. Most of the ski bowl operations were supported by volunteers and the community, but the manager and some lift attendants were paid by PSC. On Saturdays the hill might support hundreds of skiers.

PSC began a school ski program in 1959. In the late 1960s, when English was a child growing up in Keddie, Saturday buses picked up kids in the Portola and Quincy areas and brought them to the ski bowl. The youth ski program ran until the ski bowl closed in 2001.

Feather River College also had a student program on Wednesdays, which helped keep the ski bowl open on a weekday. Hinds also recalled skiing there as a child on the Johnsville Junior Ski Team, but by the time he was 12, the ski bowl was closed and the team had to drive to Tahoe.

The ski bowl facilities needed so many repairs that in 1998 the PSC turned ski hill operations over to the Gold Mountain Foundation. The hope was that a chairlift would be installed. Gold Mountain operated the ski bowl until March 2001. When it closed in 2002, the operational rights were turned back to PSC. The ski bowl remained open to visitors, including backcountry skiers and snow boarders, sledders and cross-country skiers, but lift and lodge operations were at an end.

### **Resilient, resourceful and collaborative community**

PSC became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1953 and since then it has developed, maintained and operated the historic ski bowl — a testament to the community spirit in Plumas County.

After reacquiring the operational rights to the ski bowl, PSC started building its capacity with fundraising and partnerships toward a goal of eventually reopening. In 2013, the club purchased the Mainline two-person chairlift from Palisades Tahoe (formerly Squaw Valley) with limited grant funding, but it became too difficult to install and render the lift operational, said Hinds. The organization was able to parlay the purchase into an opportunity, raising \$60,000 by auctioning off restored chairs from the historic lift in 2023 and 2024.

The Longboard Revival Series has become so popular that proceeds from the event added another \$40,000 to PSC coffers. Those funds were used to purchase and install the rope tow — the only affordable lift option for the small organization. In November, PSC also held the first of what it hopes will become an annual ski swap. The event raised \$1,000 and added donated gear to the collection, which is intended to be used as rental gear.

The rope tow was successfully tested in March 2025, but for most of last winter the snow level was higher than the Intorf Lodge, said Hinds. He noted that the average snow level seems to rise each year, limiting the number of days the ski bowl can open. Snow level may be the primary factor limiting fully reopening the ski bowl, he added.

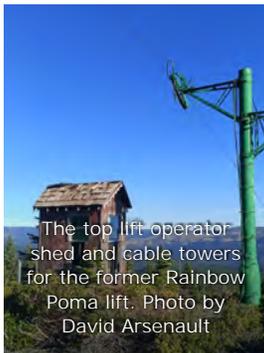


A snowboarder rides the new rope tow on March 22, when it was tested. Photo courtesy Chris Coughlin



The ski bowl is used by people of all ages and abilities on March 22, rope tow testing day. Photo courtesy Chris Coughlin

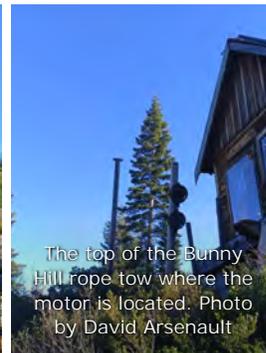
Hinds said California Division of Occupational Safety and Health's Amusement Ride and Tramway Unit tested the rope tow this winter and approved it for operation. The Cal OSHA inspection is required each season and costs about \$1,000. PSC will be able to afford the liability insurance cost to run the rope tow this year, Fregulia said. He has also been a longboard racer for more than 25 years, having been enthralled with the sport since he saw the first revival race in 1993. He has been instrumental in making the race events the success they are today, said Hinds.



The top lift operator shed and cable towers for the former Rainbow Poma lift. Photo by David Arsenault



The new rope tow uses posts from the former Rainbow Poma lift. Photo by David Arsenault



The top of the Bunny Hill rope tow where the motor is located. Photo by David Arsenault



The Squaw Poma lift now remains as a historical artifact. Photo by David Arsenault

PSC does not have a current ski hill operating agreement with California State Parks. However, the club can hold community ski days with a special use permit, said Fregulia. Three such community ski days are

planned for Saturdays in 2026: Jan. 31, Feb. 28 and March 28. The events will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Food and beverages will also be available. "The PSC is very committed to making the community ski days a success this winter and we need volunteers to help with the events," said Fregulia.

### Fulfilling the PSC mission

All this represents major progress in the PSC's stated mission to raise funds by sponsoring community events "for the continued maintenance and eventual reopening of the historic ski bowl." In 2010, a committee established several goals for the ski bowl to be sustainable in the long term. Almost all have now been at least partially achieved, said Fregulia.

In the past decade, fundraising, volunteer efforts and partnerships have allowed the PSC to install a new generator for the Intorf Lodge, build a new groomer shed, renovate the bathrooms, dig a new well and install spigots for potable water access, replace the deck on the Intorf Lodge using wood salvaged from the Dixie Fire and construct the new rope tow. In the short term, the ski club hopes to implement a vegetation management plan developed in 2020 to maintain ski runs, and to extend electricity to the bathrooms.\*

[Bathroom Electricity done 2025](#)



The recently renovated Intorf Lodge, originally built in 1965. Photo by David Arsenault



The false summit of Eureka Peak above the Johnsville Historic Ski Bowl at Plumas-Eureka State Park. Photo by David Arsenault

"It takes a community," said Hinds. The organization is seeking volunteers for the PSC Functioning Ski Hill Committee, especially volunteers to provide support for the community ski days, longboard races and other fundraising events. More information and ways to get involved are posted on the PSC [website](#).