

Fresno Ski Club

Skiing the Dream

Incorporated 1937



FAR WEST ASSOCIATION CLUB HISTORY RECOGNITION

“Revolution of Evolution: Keeping Up with the Times”

Submitted by Fresno Ski Club, Inc.

April 26, 2010

Prepared by members Vicki Erickson and Crissymarie King, with contributions by Bunny Bartels, Jack Pieroni, Don Anderson, Scott Knutson, Linda Renfro and Pat Mayfield

Special thanks to James Benelli, former ski instructor at China Peak and author of “Ski Tales: A History of China Peak and Sierra Summit”, published 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Revolution of Evolution: Keeping Up with the Times” Fresno Ski Club, Inc.

Founded in 1934 and incorporated in 1937, the Fresno Ski Club is one of the nation’s oldest incorporated ski clubs. The Club has reinvented itself, revolving with the ski industry and changing demographics of skiing and snowboarding, evolving into a vibrant, active social and recreational organization during eight decades of our existence.

The Club traces its origins to the early development days of our local ski resorts, Badger Pass and China Peak/Sierra Summit. The Central Valley geographic area was home to many people of Scandinavian heritage. The snowy western slopes of the High Sierras offered a perfect opportunity to introduce the sport of alpine skiing, cross country skiing and snow shoeing to the community. In the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s Club activities focused on ski racing for skill development. During the 50’s the Club evolved its interest in ski safety by establishing an all volunteer ski patrol, the “Fresno Ski Patrol” and developed standardized testing to assess and rank a skier’s skills and abilities. These early tests became a precursor to the battery of assessment tools used by today’s National Ski Patrol.

Over the years, the Fresno Ski Club has adjusted its menu of skiing, off-season recreational and social activities, and thus reinventing itself to meet its constantly changing membership profile and enthusiasms. Three times since the 1960’s the Club experienced a decline of membership numbers. Responding accordingly, the Club was resourceful in its rejuvenation. Strategies were identified to recruit and retain new members. Additional events and activities were added. Traditional functions were adjusted to meet emerging interests.

The Club currently offers a full calendar of pre-season, seasonal and off-season recreational and social activities that are designed to meet the interests and varying abilities of its members—be it ski and snowboard skills, member time and/or budget abilities. Today, the Club has a stable base of 211 members, of which many are long standing. Annually the Club takes upwards of 300 members on ski trips to local and nationally recognized destination resorts. Plus just as many members put-on-the-ritz to attend our numerous social and fundraising activities. Another 250 members participate in off-season activities ranging from day hikes and water ski ventures, to weekend wine tours. Evening meetings for the general membership are well attended, averaging 55-60 members. There is always something for each member.

The Fresno Ski Club wishes to thank the Far West Ski Association (FWSA) for the ingenuity in recognizing club history. Your request has caused us to take an introspective look at our origins, searching hidden memories and arcane resources to bring forth our story.

Our Club is proud to present to the Far West Ski Association our story of evolving in the ski revolution and keeping up with the times to assure that Fresno Ski Club, Inc. continues to be a solid, well managed organization for its members and a reliable affiliate.