

Bryce Mumford wins 200-mile Iditarod qualifier



Photo by Ellen Morris Bishop

Brett Bruggeman, 46, of Great Falls, Montana, and his team race from the starting line in a heavy snow for the Eagle Cap Extreme 200-mile event. Bruggeman, a two-time winner of the event, took second place in the 2017 event, finishing one minute behind Bryce Mumford of Preston, Idaho, who finished the course in 35 hours and 35 minutes.

Mushers fight poor weather — on and off ECX course

Ice coated most of the route; some struggled just getting to the event

By ELLEN MORRIS BISHOP
For The Chieftain

The 13th annual Eagle Cap Extreme brought 24 mushers to Wallawa County — 10 to run the 200 mile, Iditarod-qualifier course, six for the 100-mile race, six for the two-day 62-mile POT race, and two entrants in the Junior's race for mushers under the age of 18.

Just getting to the race was an adventure. Snow, freezing rain, and closed roads made the mushers prove their mettle just to reach the starting line.

Although race conditions were predicted to be ideal, the weather's turn for the worse on Tuesday coated much of the course with ice.

Biting winds with hurricane-force gusts built deep drifts, obscuring the trail and forcing dogs to flounder in deep snow. Mushers rated the course extremely challenging.

"I learned," said musher Gabe Dunham, "why they call it the Eagle Cap Extreme."

The premier 200-mile event winner was 36-year-old musher Bryce Mumford of Preston, Idaho, with a time of 35 hours and 35 minutes on the icy, drifted course. Mumford won the red-lantern last year — the musher's traditional award for last place.

Double Arrow Clinic Veterinarian and ECX Director Randy Greenshields gets checked out himself at the Enterprise vet check.



Photo by Ellen Morris Bishop

Bryce Mumford, 36, of Preston, Idaho, and his team cross the finish line in a time of 35 hours and 35 minutes in the 200-mile Iditarod-qualifier event of the Eagle Cap Extreme.



RACE RESULTS

200 Mile Race - 12 Dogs

1. Bryce Mumford 35:35
2. Brett Bruggeman 35:36
3. Mark Stamm 35:46
4. Laurie Warren 35:48
5. Jennifer Campeau 48:37
6. Neil, last name unknown 51:04
7. Brenden Jackson 52:05
8. Jason Campeau 52:43

100 Mile Race - 8 Dogs

1. Clayton Perry 22:52
2. Bino Fowler 22:54
3. Gabe Dunham 24:52
4. Steve Madsen 24:59

2 Day Pot Race

31 Miles Each Day - 6 Dogs

1. Morgan Anderson 7:53
2. David Hassilev 8:20
3. Jane Devlin 8:23
4. Connie Starr 10:06

Cascades ski patrol has been rescuing since 1970s

By CAITLIN MORAN
The Seattle Times

SNOQUALMIE PASS, Wash. — Dylan Currie knows what it's like to get into trouble in the backcountry.

About a decade ago in British Columbia, on Currie's very first day of backcountry skiing, another group of skiers set off an avalanche from above that partially buried one of his partners, causing him to break his leg. While the other group went to get help, Currie used basic first-aid skills to stabilize the injured skier and attached ski poles to his backpack so his partner could hang on and ski out behind him on one ski. They reached a road, where rescue crews were waiting, about two hours later.

Currie's partner recovered, and, as far as avalanches go, their ordeal had a favorable outcome. But for Currie, the experience was a wake-up call, and he decided to pursue more medical and emergency training.

"It was kind of like, 'Oh wow, that's what can happen out here,'" he said.

Today, Currie is part of the Cascade Backcountry Ski Patrol, a group of 70 volunteer ski patrollers who cover out-of-bounds areas around the Central and North Cascades. On a typical winter weekend,



Caitlin Moran/The Seattle Times via AP

In this Dec. 11 photo, Cascade Backcountry Ski Patroller Chris Stoll, right, leads a group on a ski tour near Snoqualmie Pass, Wash. The Cascade Backcountry Ski Patrol is a group of 70 volunteer ski patrollers, who cover out-of-bounds areas around the Central and North Cascades.

at least a dozen radio-carrying patrollers are available at Stevens and Snoqualmie passes to assist with emergencies involving skiers or snowshoers. In their backpacks, they carry much of the same first-aid gear that's available to patrollers at inbounds ski areas: medical tape, gauze and splints for stabilizing broken bones.

But rescuing someone in the backcountry isn't always as simple as loading the victim into a rescue sled and skiing down to the base area. Professional medical help can be several hours or even days away, so backcountry patrollers are also

equipped with the gear and skills to make an improvised sled or hunker down for a night in the snow.

A group of cross-country skiers started Cascade Nordic Ski Patrol in 1976 with the support of the U.S. Forest Service. Jonathan Olds, whose father was a patroller at Hyak (now Summit East) in the 1970s and '80s, was first drawn to the Nordic patrol because it was seen as a counterculture alternative to the inbounds crew. He joined in the early '90s.

"It's a way of contributing and doing something you love doing," he says.

What lies beneath the sea

Some visitors to the North Coast describe them as "little fingers" on the beach. Others describe them as "plastic pickles." Their name in Greek means "fire body." In Australia giant pyrosomes can grow to 90 feet and could consume a human being. In a sense they are like a Frankenstein monster of hundreds of animals coming together to make one organism.

"They're all over this year for some reason," Tiffany Boothe, administrative assistant at the Seaside Aquarium, said early this month. "As soon as I saw one I picked it up and put it in my bucket and brought it to the aquarium."

"Pyro" is the Greek word for fire and "soma" means body, Boothe said, and are known for their brilliant bioluminescence — pink, yellow or bluish — and are not typically seen along Seaside beaches. Like jellyfish, they cannot survive when air gets in their lungs.

A field guide, "Tidepool and Reef," by Rick M. Harbo, presents a fascinating array of sponges, mollusks, sea stars and tunicates. According to Harbo, tunicates are "encrusting colonies of distinct individuals in a stiff gelatin-like tunic."

Orange social sea squirts — their real name — divide asexually to form numerous rounded individuals that often cover intertidal and subtidal rocks. Other species like the stalked hairy sea squirt, the sea peach and sea pork, are found encrusting rocks, barnacles and shells. Pyrosomes are classified as a colonial tunicate, a member of the only group of chordates — animals possessing a dorsal nerve chord — able to reproduce both sexually and asexually, with hundreds of animals coming together to make one organism.

While author Harbo writes that tunicates are not edible, Boothe said turtles and sunfish consider them a "delicacy."

"It's not necessarily something whales and dolphins are going to find delicious," Boothe said. "I've heard dogs are eating them — that's not a great thing, but they're not poisonous."

Like sea cucumbers, "When you squeeze them, water shoots out," Boothe added. "They're very confusing little creatures. I don't like talking about them."

Davidson Current

Visitors to our beaches in winter never know what they might find, whether it be a sea lion, bloated gray whale or even a salp, a transparent invertebrate that looks like aspic.

"In the summer we have a current that comes down from the north that cools our water down," Boothe said. "In the winter, the Davidson Current comes up and warms our water up a little bit, so we tend to stay at the same temperature all year round."

According to the Oregon Coastal Management Program, the Davidson Current begins 600 feet below the surface in Baja, California. In winter, southwesterly storms drive the Davidson Current's warmer, saltier flow northward along the coastline 6 to 12 miles per day, displacing currents offshore, even at the surface.

If winds change, warm weather animals may be stranded in cold water.

Results are apparent on our beaches. Over the past year and a half, at least five sea turtles washed to shore dead on arrival.

Last winter two olive ridleys, Thunder, which washed ashore in Gearhart, and Lightning, in Pacific City, were malnourished, hypothermic and comatose — but still alive.

A U.S. Coast Guard escort and rehabilitation team transported the turtles to San Diego's SeaWorld. Sadly, Thunder was discovered floating in her rehabilitation pool a few weeks later, but Lightning continues to receive care.

Curator of fishes Mike Price said Lightning remains in SeaWorld's care, rehabilitating in a 12-foot deep, 90,000-gallon holding pool along with two other rescued olive ridley turtles.

Sea turtles — olive ridleys, green turtles and leatherbacks — may continue to wash to Seaside's sand beaches this winter, putting the aquarium on "sea turtle watch."

"They don't have to die," Boothe said. "They can just get stressed out."

'Marvel!'

Like the western snowy plover, which leaves its subtle nest among 19 acres of Gearhart dunes, the message may be to pay close attention to the world under our feet, what Seaside naturalist and photographer Neal Maine calls "a carpet of living phenomena."

"These are living, dynamic systems," Maine said at a December lecture celebrating Haystack Rock. "They're just not as conspicuous as some systems like fish in the stream or elk coming across the meadow."

In a year dedicated to the 50-year anniversary of Oregon's Beach Bill, Maine said he hopes to help recast Oregon beaches as an ecosystem and "reconnect the beaches to the landscape." He suggested citizen-level efforts to expand the discussion on beaches.

With General Manager Keith Chandler, Boothe is among those leading that effort as the Seaside Aquarium continues to foster education and awareness.

While she's yet to collect any live pyrosomes, she goes exploring every day so visitors "know what we're finding on the beach and talking about."

And if you're lucky enough to find a pyrosome, what should you do?

"Marvel!" Boothe said. "They're kind of cool!"

R.J. Marx is The Daily Astorian's South County reporter and editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette.

SKI REPORT

Spout Springs
Tollgate, Ore.
CLOSED

Anthony Lakes
North Powder, Ore.
New snow: 14" since Sunday
Base: 66"
Conditions: Excellent, with light wind

Ski Bluewood
Dayton, Wash.
New snow: 3"
Base depth: 58"
Conditions: Machine groomed soft snow

Ski Fergi
Joseph, Ore.
New snow: Some
Base depth: 86" on top
Conditions: Open Saturday and Sunday

Mt. Hood Meadows
Government Camp, Ore.
New snow: 2"
Base depth: 86"
Conditions: Groom is packed powder. Off piste is skier-packed pow.