

When it's too hot to ski



PHOTOS BY KEN LEVY

Bluegrass legends Tim O'Brien, above at left, and Peter Rowan play the 24th Annual Targhee Bluegrass Festival Aug. 12. Above at right, a cyclist blasts down Mill Creek Trail during the Pierre's Hole 100-mile race Aug. 6. Youngsters get to hike with naturalists and learn about environmental stewardship during Grand Targhee Fest. At right, Seth Warren prepares to answer questions from kids visiting the Elements Tour on July 18, 2010 about "Baby," a petroleum-free former Japanese fire truck he developed.



Grand Targhee offers summer rec opportunities, too

By Ken Levy

SPECIAL TO THE IBR

Music festivals, extreme race competitions, challenging biking and hiking trails and a huckleberry festival top the list of non-stop summer activities at Grand Targhee Ski Resort.

Situated on the Wyoming border with Idaho near Driggs, the resort is legendary for its 500-plus annual inches of true powder skiing in the winter.

But its summers are no less spectacular.

Driving up the curving, steep climb on Ski Hill Road from Driggs, chances are you'll come across one of the many summertime races that push extreme bicyclists and runners to their limits as they work their way up to the 8,000-foot-plus base station.

The rewards, in both directions, include spectacular views, nearly pris-

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- Ken Rider,
Grand Targhee Ski Resort

tine forests, a chance to breathe crisp, clean mountain air, and bragging rights.

"We continue to work with event promoters and host our own events that provide great venues for competitors and great variety for viewers and resort guests," said Ken Rider, Targhee's direc-

tor of marketing.

Among these is the Pierre's Hole Challenge bike race, run in early August. With 100-mile and 50-mile courses, the event drew more than 240 competitors this year to the mountain. Each lap of the race features about 4,100 vertical feet of climbing.

Top endurance racers from across the nation – representing 20 states and Canada – competed this year, Rider said.

The WYdaho Rendezvous Mountain Bike Festival drew more than 200 mountain bikers for group rides, music and games showcasing the many trails in and around the mountain. The Targhee Five Hour Mountain Bike Race was part of the late July weekend, "and looks to double its size next year," said Rider.

The Grand Teton Relay is a 12-person team running relay covering 180 miles of beautiful and challenging terrain that

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From food fests to relays, there's no off-season at Targhee

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includes Island Park, Grand Targhee and Jackson Hole in August. Rider said more than 500 runners participated this year.

The Grand Targhee Ultra Marathon runs Labor Day weekend. The fun, family-and-friends competition runs in 50-mile, 50K, 10K, Trail Marathon and Kids Fun Run. The 10K starts and finishes at the Targhee base. This year's event drew about 150 runners, Rider said.

Summer races wrap up around Sept. 10 with the Targhee Downhill mountain bike race. The highly technical race runs at just over two miles. Registration includes a barbecue and a special Spuds and Suds party on the main plaza.

Spuds and Suds celebrates the Idaho potato and local beers from Snake River Brewing, Wildlife Brewery and Grand Teton Brewing. There's a full baked potato bar and a chance to build a potato head using a real potato, and live music is featured.

Bicyclists who aren't into the extreme competition scene but who would still enjoy a ride down the mountain can park at the plaza and take a chairlift with their bikes for an afternoon ride through the forest. Bike rentals and gear and well-maintained trails and pathways await.

Hikers who prefer serene wilderness hikes can take a scenic chairlift ride to trails that offer alpine fields rife with myriad wildflowers and likely opportunities for wildlife viewing, including moose and deer.

The resort offers vacation rentals, with four slope-side lodging facilities, townhomes and condominiums and numerous lodging and entertainment packages.

Summer visitors and lodge guests will



PHOTO BY KEN LEVY

Peyton Johnson, 12, was the youngest runner in the 12-person, 169-mile Grand Teton Relay on Aug. 20. The relay covers challenging terrain through Island Park, Grand Targhee and Jackson Hole. Here, Johnson was heading down Ski Hill Road from Targhee toward Driggs.

find a swimming pool, rock-climbing wall, horseback riding, naturalist activities, massage services and an 18-hole disc golf course available on-site.

Targhee hosts two wildly popular, three-day music festivals during the summer in a breathtaking natural amphitheater, and is looking to add a third. Concertgoers wriggle in hula-hoops, pack picnic dinners and camp in on-location campsites beneath the conifer and aspen trees. Lodging packages are available all summer, with or without festival attendance.

Concert vendors offer sometimes-exotic food, ply local beers from Grand Teton Brewing Company in Victor, and offer outdoor-enthusiast clothing and gear.

In July, the Grand Targhee Fest features chart-topping legends such as Michael Franti and Spearhead, Grace Potter and the Nocturnals and Los Lobos.

Targhee's Bluegrass Festival, set to celebrate its 25th season, has hosted unforgettable performances by Sam Bush, Bela Fleck, the Waybacks and Fishing Music with Ben Winship. A bluegrass camp, where many professionals

train fledgling musicians, precedes the festival.

Parking is stiff at \$10 a day at both festivals, so those not camping or staying at the resort's lodges would do best to leave their vehicles in Driggs and ride the free shuttle, which runs every half hour, to and from the venue.

This year, the resort offered its first July 4 weekend three-day festival featuring the band Widespread Panic. It sold out tickets and campsites, with more than 5,000 attendees. It hopes to establish the holiday weekend as a fixture to its festival lineup.

"This summer has been a rocking one at Grand Targhee Resort," said Rider. "The music festivals have definitely been a highlight for the summer."

Although the resort doesn't release detailed financials, Rider said this year's festivals broke records for attendance, lodging stays, food and beverages sold and more.

Speaking of food and beverages, slope-side dining is available at the mountain's Branding Iron Grill. It offers casual and family-friendly dining with sandwiches, salad bar and Sushi Night, grass-fed beef, fresh seafood and a full bar featuring local microbrews. Lodging guests get a free breakfast buffet.

The Trap Bar and Grill serves lunch and dinner in an après-ski environment year-round. Soups, salads, pub food and beer specials top the list here, along with live music and entertainment. The bar is for the 21-and-older set, but families will find outside deck dining, Frisbee disc golf, beanbag toss and other events on-site. Live music is featured most weekends.

Targhee is also re-launching its summertime group and wedding business.