WILDERNESS IMAGE

Sierra Skies

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White Mountain (37.3803°N, 118.1520°W) is the third tallest peak in California, sitting at 4344 m (14,252 ft). These photos were taken by members of the 2018 SEAWARD altitude research study¹ on their way to Barcroft Station, a research laboratory built in 1951 on a lower saddle of the peak at 3798 m (12,470 ft). Barcroft Station is part of University of California Los Angeles' White Mountain research station and is host to facilities and laboratories for various types of research. It hosted Nobel laureate George Smoot during his research on cosmic background radiation and still serves as the site for current studies on altitude's effect on human physiology. The round-trip hike from Barcroft Station to the summit is approximately 24 km (15 mi) with 1051 m (3448 ft) elevation gain and stunning views along the way. On the drive up, peakbaggers and altitude enthusiasts should consider stopping at the Patriarch Grove, home to some of the highest—and largest—bristlecone pines in the world. Even the drive up the unpaved road to the trailhead can reveal the impressive vistas of the Sierras.

Led by Dr. Grant Lipman, the 2018 SEAWARD study investigated day of ascent dosing of acetazolamide for the prevention of acute mountain sickness (AMS). The double-blind, randomized, controlled trial brought participants to Barcroft Station and compared the incidence of AMS in participants initiating acetazolamide on the day of ascent and those who took the initial dose the night prior. One hundred four participants were included in the analysis. Day-of-ascent acetazolamide yielded a 9% greater incidence of AMS (48% vs 39%, 95% CI 12–30) compared to acetazolamide initiated the night prior to ascent.¹

Reference

1. Lipman GS, Jurkiewicz C, Winstead-Derlega C, Navlyt A, Burns P, Walker A, et al. Day of ascent dosing of acetazolamide for prevention of acute mountain sickness. *High Alt Med Biol.* 2019;20(3):271–8.