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## Features



### Stand up paddle: Easy to learn, SUPer fun to do

Photos: Ryan Salm

*"The Nalu is one of the largest flat water events in the world and, undeniably, the most spectacular venue." - Jake Lamberth*

By Nicole Cheslock

Can you imagine a more stunning locale than Lake

Tahoe to experience stand up paddling?

Most mornings, there is barely a ripple visible on the surface of the lake. Stand up, glide forward, take in the mountain backdrop with its' peaks and valleys, paddle up to massive granite boulders, look through the clear waters of Tahoe and sometimes you'll even see schools of little fish before your gaze settles on the lake's bottom. When the wind picks and a storm blows in, surf.

Four years ago, Marcus Tingle stood on the lakeshore, where he spent most of his childhood, and realized this "Alpine Caribbean" offers idyllic conditions for flat-water paddling. He said to himself, "SUP's going to go nuts up here."

Today, his shop in Kings Beach, Adrift Tahoe, celebrates the Polynesian spirit with stand up paddleboard rentals, sales and special events. It's one of the few dedicated SUP venues that offers a welcoming surf shop feel just steps from the lake and Adrift Tahoe's recently launched Thursday race series offers a fun way to sample racing and the growing SUP community.

This weekend's Ta-Hoe Nalu Paddle Festival will bring hundreds of paddlers and thousands of spectators to Kings Beach. If you're a skilled paddler, race against the pros. If you want to experience the magic of paddling for the first time, get a lesson from an expert paddler during this year's SUP Experience.

Jake Lamberth, the event coordinator for Ta-Hoe Nalu, used to race motocross. He severely injured his ankle in a competition and during rehabilitation a friend in Hawaii turned him onto SUP. He hasn't looked back since because it's been so exciting to be part of an escalating grassroots phenomena.

"Everyone wants to be a surfer or experience surf culture but everyone doesn't live near the ocean," he says explaining one of the catalysts behind the exponential growth in SUP.

And, it's easy to learn and fun to do. Whether you're in elementary school, enjoying retirement or somewhere in between, if you can stand, you can paddle. It won't take more than a few minutes or hour to feel comfortable on a board.

#### Come one, come all

Thirty paddlers competed in the first Ta-Hoe Nalu race in 2007. This year, hundreds will paddle, including world-class surfers and paddlers, some going for a piece of the \$20,000 in prize money. The high level of competition in some of the races doesn't mean the events are not for you. Most people will participate in the festival to have a great time on the water, set personal records and engage in friendly competition. That's the joy of SUP – it's accessible to all able-bodied adults and children. The proof is in the sales – some North Tahoe shops have already sold out of boards.

Lake Tahoe local Jay Wild will join other top paddlers including Danny Ching, Chuck Patterson, Jim Terrell and Byron Kurt in the elite level races. At Ta-Hoe Nalu, you can hear some fascinating stories from these true adventurers and accomplished athletes. Just ask Patterson about his long ocean paddles (for a preview, check out "Me, my shark and I" on [www.chuckpattersonsports.wordpress.com](http://www.chuckpattersonsports.wordpress.com)).

### Ta-Hoe Nalu Paddle Festival

#### Aug. 12

**5 p.m., Registration party at Jake's on the Lake**

**8:30 p.m., showing of "Tahoe SUP Catalina," Jake's**

#### Aug. 13, Kings Beach

**9 a.m., Open race, 5 miles**

**11:30 a.m., Grom Race**

**1 p.m., Elite Lap Race (Men 14' ft, Women 12'6" class)**

**6 p.m. and 8 p.m., "Stand Up Paddle Movie," North Tahoe Event Center**

#### Aug. 14, Kings Beach

**9 a.m., Distance Race, 10 miles**

**11:30 a.m., SUP Experience class**

**1 p.m., Four-person relay**

Also, expect to see strong performances and finishes by Karen Wrenn, Brandi Baksic and local Lel Tone.



#### **Ta-Hoe Nalu**

The events kick off at 5:30 p.m. on Friday with a registration party at Jakes on the Lake, followed by an 8:30 p.m. showing of "Explore Catalina Island," a movie that shows Whitney Wall, Dave Defoe and Ronnie Ayres (Tahoe SUP paddlers) excursion from Redondo Harbor to Catalina Island. The action really picks up over the next two days.

All levels are encouraged to take part in the Open 5 miler at 9 a.m. on Aug. 13 (\$50). At 11:30 a.m. children (12 years old and younger, \$25) will launch for the Grom Race, and pros will show their strength and skill during the Elite Race Men's 14' ft and Women 12'6" class 6-mile lap race at 1 p.m. This event in particular offers incredible opportunities for spectators.

At 6 and 8:30 p.m., catch a premiere of "A Stand Up Paddle Movie" at the North Tahoe Event Center (\$10). It's an hour-long documentary about the beginning of SUP including profiles of today's top paddlers with inspiring footage from Hawaii and California.

On Aug. 14, demo boards and paddle as part of Experience SUP (\$30 includes demo board, paddle, instruction, guided tour, T-shirt and lunch).

"Ta-Hoe Nalu Experience are events that invite the public to learn how to paddle by introducing the individual to the world of stand up paddling and instruction by qualified SUP athletes," explains Ta-Hoe Nalu founder Ernie Brassard. "The Ta-Hoe Nalu Paddle Events have always been fun race venues for all levels of ability, age and gender ... Ta-Hoe Nalu wants invites all to experience and learn from some of the best SUP athletes in the industry.

"The Ta-Hoe Nalu SUP Experience allows individuals to become a part of this exciting sport."

Also on Aug. 14, catch the 10-mile distance race at 9 a.m. and four-person relay at 1 p.m. The wind will determine the length of some of the races. Many of the races include divisions for SUP, prone and Outrigger Canoes.

Race registration fees include an event T-shirt, lunch and raffle tickets. Lunch tickets provide access to a tantalizing spread of good food including preparations by Jake's on the Lake, North Hawaiian Grill, Peluso's Pizza and Kona Brewery, among others.



#### **SUP 101**

Of course, it's important to have a strong, efficient stroke. You can gain firsthand experience and get tips from the pros during Ta-Hoe Nalu.

If you're seeking performance, equipment matters. It's worth taking the time to try out different boards in different conditions based on what you want from your board and from yourself.

With so many brands, shapes and styles available, it's difficult to know which board is best. Here's the skinny as I learned from Tingle. Longer boards tend to glide further after each stroke, while shorter boards are apt to turn more easily and be lighter (easier to transport). Paddle a 12'6" or 14' board with a displacement hull if you want to go fast. The next level up is a piercing hull with hard rails from tip to tail. Boards are getting lighter (think carbon fiber). If you're less concerned about speed and keen on catching waves, look into a surf-style board with a planing hull and rocker.

It's all about having a good time: Experience SUP today.

**Ta-Hoe Nalu ("hoe" is the Hawaiian word for paddle and "nalu" means water) attracts the top paddlers in the world and novices seeking a fun spectator sport and their own SUP experience. For more information, visit [www.ta-hoenalu.com](http://www.ta-hoenalu.com).**

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