

## Beaver Creek 2009



Photo from [Birds of Prey Talon crew](http://taloncrew.blogspot.com/)  
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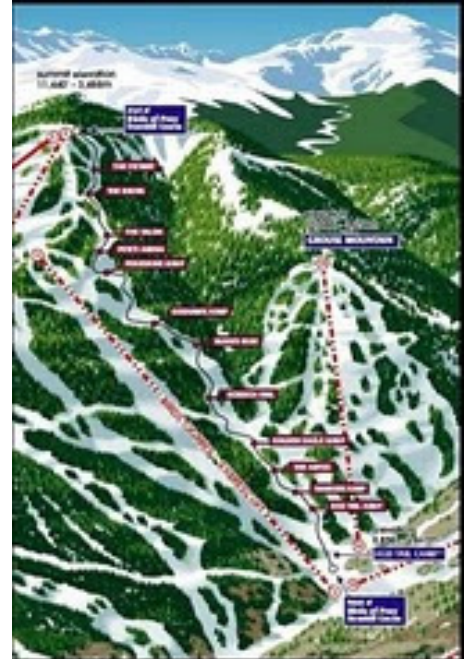
On November 27<sup>th</sup> – December 9<sup>th</sup> I had the pleasure to be in Beaver Creek for the 2009 edition of the Birds of Prey World Cup events. This year's version was a little different. There were only three races; (Super Combined – Friday December 4<sup>th</sup>, Downhill – Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup> and GS – Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>). This meant that the Super Combined was run between the Downhill training runs and the actual Downhill race. In order to deal with some of the anomalies Friday's program involved three runs (Downhill training run for those competing in the downhill, the *Downhill portion of the Super Combined and the Slalom* portion of the Super Combined)

Although there was very little natural snow, the snow making team did yeoman's work and produced an excellent track. Everyone remarked on how good the track was and on how smooth the set-up was. We were tested by 15-20cm of new snow before Wednesday's training run. Thanks to the good work of the grooming and course crews a shortened training run was held.

Switzerland's Carla Janka had quite the weekend as he won all three events. The last person to win all three was the Herminator (Hermann Meier). Certainly Carla has had a very strong start to the season. Norway's Aksel Lund Svindall, one of the crowd favorites, also did well with three 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes. Unfortunately it was not a good weekend for the Cowboys. Perhaps they were saving their energy for February.

As always, the Birds of Prey races were very well run. The crews made me feel very welcome and I learned lots, again, from them. This year I put bucket gates, corridors, and bananas into the lexicon. For those who have not been to Beaver Creek there are essentially four groups of people involved: the USSA officials, the Beaver Creek professional team, the Vail Ski Club and the volunteers (Talon Crew). Over the years they have figured out how to get everyone working together. Again the Talon Crew threw down the welcome mat and I had a great time.

Many thanks to the Talon Team for the hospitality! You went out of their way to make me feel at home. Actually I've been there enough times that I'm beginning to feel that I have tenure (hopefully). Special thanks to Steve Prawdzik for putting me up, Aron Humphrey for putting up with me and to Dick and Mary Pownall for the great evening. Also, many thanks to the rest of the gang. Again, it was a pleasure to be there and I look forward to returning in future years.



Hopefully I can convince a few other Weasel Workers to join me. As Beaver Creek is a strong contender for the 2015 World Championships it will be something to look forward to after the Olympics.

Murray Wood