

What is a co-op? A co-op as defined by wikipedia is "a corporation formed by members who have a common cause for a mutual benefit."

The mission statement is critical. Here's an idea to get the ball rolling:

To operate White Pine Resort for this and future generations as a summer and winter resort.

Why a co-op? Via the co-op having the 501c-3 non-profit designation, the resort can truly be community owned.

With the 501c-3 non-profit status, donations and grants now become available. Why is that important?

This has a greater chance of ensuring a perpetual entity for generations to come. No one is looking to make a return in dollar terms. With the resort being community owned the leverage of the citizens can be utilized when dealing with other entities such as the Forest Service, County, Schools, etc...

The resort benefits the community in so many ways: Economically by bringing in visitors, jobs, our kids via the club and races both High School races and club series,

*White Pine Co-Op meeting. Tuesday Feb 28, 2012
7 PM Lovatt Room, Aredale Library. Organized by
Ward Wise and Pam McCullough.*

keeps the sport going, it fits the picture of the community for recruiting purposes for teachers and businesses, etc....so many benefits of this facility one can list pages.

Don't get me wrong, I love skiing at Teton Village, but I sure miss my turns with my kids and friends at "the pine".

This is not about making money, or getting a return in financial terms, this is a community minded endeavor.

How? Like any co-op there is an initial investment that is paid off over time and an annual committment in both time and money. Is anyone a member of Bountiful Baskets? That's a co-op. Your first basket you paid an extra \$10 and then you have to work unloading the truck once every 6 months or something like that. This is the same thing.

Example: A one time investment of 1000 shares at \$1000 dollars paid off over 10 months. With the share comes an Annual Purchase Requirement by shareholders of say \$300 that goes towards the purchase of a ski pass, and a committment of 8 hours of labor.

Co-ops have lots of different committees to keep everyone involved such as: Fundraising committee, facilities committee, operations committee, marketing committee, membership committee, trail clearing committee, ski program committee, etc...

Co-ops have annual meetings that all shareholders have the opportunity to attend. Shares are limited, so that no one person can exert control. Perhaps 4 shares per family. Shares have to be redeemed and approved via the co-op. A board of Directors is elected to oversee the co-op.

A starting point of an Operational outline: Days of operation:

Four, 10 hour days, Thurs-Sunday, with volunteers running the lifts 2 nights a week for the ski club and High School Teams.

Open during Christmas Holiday - 2 weeks.

Lease out the ski shop, restaurant, summer outfitting business.

Employees:

A General Manager who can run the groomer, fix the lifts and oversee the operations.

An Admin Person to take care of the day to day books.

4 seasonal lift operators with a volunteer to give them breaks each day.

2 full-time ski patrol

The Tourism board and Chamber board will hopefully handle the marketing and advertising out of their budgets as visitors benefit us all. (again, a benefit of being a co-op as it's benefiting the community, not just one business)

SCSSA, (Sublette County Ski and Snowboard Association), would be the likely candidate to become the co-op organization since they are already a 501c-3, non-profit. A schedule O would need to be filled out and filed with the IRS and some amended by-laws and Articles of Organization filed with the State. Why the SCSSA?

The SCSSA already has: 501c-3 status, non-profit designation, a website, would save the existing ski club the insurance expense of operating at the hill, and would consolidate efforts. The club is ready for some new people to take over.

First step is to agree that this is the direction to take. Second step is to speak with the Forest Service about taking this step.

Jason Zakotnik inspects lifts we need his expert knowledge and to have a chat with him.

Third step is to meet with the current owners and zero in on the finances and specifics of the facilities. What is included? What about the lease for the communication tower? (yes).

Third step is to speak with the SCSSA and have a meeting to elect what will become the co-op Board of Directors.

Fourth step is to speak with the Wyoming Department of Securities and submit the business plan and literature on the securities - we need legal help. Mr. Stelting perhaps?

Fifth step is to get an indication of interest from the entire community on support. SERC may be able to help.

When things come together a firm commitment from people would be needed on the number of shares that could be sold before an offer is made.

We need active support from the SERC, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board, the local press and the community at large.

One of the biggest Issues to deal with:

We need to meet with the Forest Service on how to handle the condos.

I have spoken with several of the existing owners of Citizens to save White Pine and they would be able to help contribute to the Non-profit once the transfer is

complete.

My own opinion is that the biggest hurdle is in volunteer labor, not the finances. Having been involved in the ski club, it takes a lot of work.

We likely will not be able to raise the purchase price all at once, hence we will need to work out an arrangement, perhaps from the owners themselves.

We need to stay focused on the task at hand: This is about opening the ski hill for the community, nothing else.

We cannot let this community asset fall through the cracks under this generations watch.
