

Save Mt. Timothy Ski Area - March, 2018

Mt. Timothy Ski Society has operated Mt. Timothy Ski Area since 1995, taking over control of the ski operation from previous community members. Mt. Timothy opened Dec. 1987 and has provided quality ski and snowboard opportunities to the South and Central Cariboo for thirty years. Over this time our ridership has increased, but not at the rate of inflation and regulatory requirements. The businesses and the local governments have generously supported our hill over all these years, but the Society has reached the limit of its fund-raising abilities and Mt. Timothy cannot remain in operation unless we can secure a foundation of dedicated funding through local government recreation funding. We are aware that Mt. Timothy falls outside the recreation tax areas, but we feel that this must be addressed – we serve a large area of the Cariboo, and are an important component of attracting and keeping families in our communities.

Facts: 2017/2018 season

- approximately 5500 skier visits, not including schools
- 549 school youth, and 151 accompanying adults
- schools cancelled due to weather and road conditions – 235 youth and 48 adults
- schools served included Lillooet , Big Lake, Tatla Lake, Canoe Creek, Alexis Creek, Canim Lake, Williams Lake area (10), and 100 Mile House area (2)

Mt. Timothy raised over \$115,000 in the fall of 2017, which allowed us to retire some outstanding debts and prepare for the coming season. Due to a lightning strike on the chair lift during late fall maintenance, and then a lack of snow in December we could not open until January 6, 2018. The revenue lost over the Christmas holiday period is approximately \$84,000 or about 27% of our annual revenue. This was one of the latest openings in our 30-year history.

Increasing regulations require that we modify the two carpet lifts (essential to beginner and school programs) at approximately \$10-12,000 each this summer. Our snow cat for grooming is almost 10 years old and needs to be replaced, perhaps by an annual lease of newer equipment. The cable on both the T-Bar and the chair lift are due to be replaced in the foreseeable future (the T-Bar, which has been useful during any chair-lift issues, including cold or windy days, has been mothballed for two seasons). This will be a major expense in the neighbourhood of \$70,000.

For the coming season there will be approximately \$90,000 worth of maintenance and repairs required to be ready to open in December 2018. Season pass sales usually generate about 80%

of this amount, with half coming in September. Therefore there will be no money available for necessary summer work, to supervise and maintain a presence on the hill, or to recruit a new and qualified hill manager. Presently Mt. Timothy general manager is finishing a yearly contract for \$55,000 or approximately \$28/hr for a highly responsible position requiring specialized training and certification. These qualifications are increasing annually . We have been fortunate to secure hard-working and qualified individual for what we are able to offer.

In the summer of 2016 Mt. Timothy directors held four meetings run by Gail Wallen, a professional facilitator, to prioritize ways and means of reducing costs and maintaining core services. The following season Mt. Timothy made a small operating profit, although almost no amount was paid on outstanding loans and operating credit. Cost savings were achieved in part at the expense of better hill grooming, and of maintenance and care of machinery and buildings.

The directors of Mt. Timothy Ski Society have been working for years to fund raise and keep our hill in operation. The ability to do so on an ongoing basis has ceased. We are appealing to the various levels of government in our area to find a way to support this ski area with dedicated funding that will allow the Society to have enough funds to prepare the hill in the summer months, to operate safely and reliably in the winter season, and to be able to offer a stable and adequate wage or contract to attract qualified management to run this business. Forecasting our annual revenues and expenses, and realizing that years of cutting costs to the bone has left many items depreciated and in need of repair or replacement. We feel that **an annual base funding of \$300,000** would allow Mt. Timothy to operate and to gradually upgrade worn-out infrastructure and to hire competent qualified personnel. Without some solid financial backing the Society will have little option except to close the hill and turn all assets over to our creditors and the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations as per our constitution.

Points to consider:

- the businesses on the Cariboo have been exceedingly generous in support of Mt. Timothy for many years, but constant fund-raising by donation cannot continue
- Mt. Timothy no longer qualifies for Rural Dividend funding or for the Gaming Grants, which previously have assisted us
- the road access to Mt. Timothy is used by the public, by school groups in school buses, and by users of radio facilities. Winter plowing and sanding is done by Mt. Timothy and not funded in any way by Ministry of Transportation
- the Cariboo Regional District, the District of 100 Mile House, and the City of Williams Lake have made numerous grants to assist Mt. Timothy. This is gratefully acknowledged. However it is impossible to budget or hire staff based on grants; our yearly operating costs must be met with secure funding
- Mt. Timothy is an important recreation facility in our area. It is constantly emphasized by realtors when promoting the Cariboo. Young families and professionals looking to our communities are attracted to a local and affordable ski hill. Mt. Timothy donates tickets to be included in the Tick-Tock-find-a-Doc packages.
- Mt. Timothy is aware of the funding available to ice arenas, swimming pools, playing fields, artistic venues in our area. We have tried to operate outside of such funding, but can no longer continue to operate on this basis.
- Mt. Timothy creates local jobs and purchases. Annual labour costs are approx. \$225,000; most of the remaining \$225,000 is spent locally
- In 2013 & 2014 Mt. Timothy logged blow-down and mature trees, realizing \$58,000 and \$56,000 net. This helped cover costs and losses for those years and paid some past debt. These logged areas have added to the skiable terrain. Mt. Timothy has applied, and been turned down, for some additional logging within our controlled access area.
- In 2015 and 2016 we experienced very warm and early spring weather in the towns (snow cover and conditions remained good on mountain). Lift revenue dropped \$66,000 below average these seasons.