

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/18/2024 5:47:54 AM

First name: Kyler

Last name: Knowles

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

While I've moved away (at least for now), the Walla Walla Valley and the mountains that surround it will always be home. And Bluewood Ski Area will always be fondly remembered as one of the most influential gems of the area. My family were regular season pass holders from the time I was 5, and by age 8 I was on the Bluewood ski team (circa 1998). I rode the Skyline lift a dozen times a day, twice a week, all winter long. Year after year I rode the horse-pulled trailer through the parking lot, hike the stairs in ski boots, and ate the burger+fries with a big smile. Nowadays I'm not a regular local, but I still make it up a time or three each winter and relish the memories of the place, and appreciate what it still continues to be.

Bluewood's growth, in contrast, has been quite modest over the past 20 years. They have significantly improved the outbuildings, offering yurts for a quick bite or hot chocolate, and also giving the Ski Patrol and Ski Team better facilities at the summit and base. And the renovations to the Lodge (since the current ownership took over) have been excellent. They have made Bluewood even more inviting, now that I have a young family, while keeping the "Ma & Pa" ski area charm (compared to the large, sterile Corporate feel that many of the larger ski resorts provide). Yet, despite what they've been able to accomplish, it's obvious they would love to do more, and an upgrade main lift is the obvious (and biggest) project on which to focus.

I remember dreaming of a high speed lift back in these days, some 20+ years ago. The Skyline lift, through all its 'time of old' charm, is slow, and it always has been. On busier days (often around holidays), the lift line gets long and the small ski area charm begins to fade. This has always been the case, even back in the 1990s. The current lift is limiting in the experience that Bluewood is able to offer. As you wait in line for the slow, diesel engine to putz the triple chairs up the mountain (a >15min ride), you begin wondering if it isn't a better idea to take a longer drive to the larger ski resorts in the Cascade or Rocky Mountains, which boast much more and nicer facilities, yet lack the small town charm of a place like Bluewood. A high speed lift would improve a longstanding issue, without changing its fundamental culture, offering, or impact to the surrounding forest.

Other ski areas (like Mission Ridge, outside Wenatchee) have thrived after installing a high speed lift, and I wish the same for our special Bluewood Ski Area. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope you too support the Master Plan proposed by Bluewood Ski Area management.