

Mountain Manager Summary 2022. - 'The Season of Promise'

Below is a brief overview of how the season went from an operational perspective.

Preseason & Staffing:

Lead up to the 2022 season went really well. A planting project, lots of work parties, and a reasonable amount of maintenance was complete. Additionally, a new snowmaking pump was confirmed for purchase, and ordered. This was to allow the expansion of our snowmaking system, and to remove flow restrictions when temps are cold enough. Significant road repairs were necessary following the 2021 July rain. Significant on field repairs were required following the December 2021 rain.

Staffing was much easier for this season, mainly down to the boarders being reopened again. Staffing began in January, and there were no major hurdles with securing the workforce. Compliance, and sign offs were all complete well in advance. This paid dividends later on. Work continued with our DoC concession renewal. This included a cultural assessment that was generally supportive.

Opening:

June snow. On the 9th of June a large SW flow moved up the country. Packed with moisture we were in for a big few days. Lasting around 5 days in total we received anywhere from 1m-3m of snow across the hill. After the storm cleared, we began work to clear the road, and compacted the main trails. It was very quickly clear we had more than enough snow to open. A decision to try and push for an early open was made, and was successful by the 24th June.

Large crowds and great revenue followed.

July.

Once induction for the general staff was complete, we were into normal operation for the start of the school holiday. The rest of July was very successful. Spirits were high. No significant snow events. A couple of rain events. H&S, and R&M were both in good order. Covid entered the workforce right after induction. This caused some headaches for 3 weeks, but ultimately did not affect operation.

August.

40cms of fresh snow kicked off August. A true test for our team with Sunday demand, but we managed to get open. The following week saw the completion of terrain park, and all lifts spinning again. We were into a really settled period. Great conditions, staff training and rosters complete. Happy days.

Then the heavens opened. Starting the 15th of August, a large tropical plume of water hit the upper south. For 5 days, rain and wind lashed the ski area. Around 30-60mm of precipitation per day. With temps ranging from 6-9degrees. This destroyed our snow pack below Tower 6. Leaving the base area almost bare of snow.

Without writing a novel, I will summarize what happened next. A decision was made to try and reopen. This meant supporting the staff financially, and firing up the snowmaking for the first time of the season. A limited budget and date were agreed upon to achieve this opening. We rebuilt the ski area, and reopened 2 weeks post rain event. This all came down to 3 cold nights of snowmaking. The new pump provided ample water flow. A total of 3 weeks closed.

September:

We reopened on the 4th of September. And no one showed up. The next week was deathly quiet too. The committee and I convened. Due to, a very fragile snow pack, limited terrain open, poor weather outlook, school cancellations, road disruptions, and public that had seemingly hung up their gear for the season. A decision was made to protect the clubs' profits so far, give notice to the staff, and close for the season. Rainbow closed the 11th of September for 2022.

Summary:

44 Days Open.

30 Days Closed.

Opened 24th of June.

Closed 11th of September.

Opened 2 Weeks Early

Closed 1 Month Early

9th Of July - Huge Snow

15th of August – 3rd of Sept. Closed due to Rain

A true season of two halves. A flying start, followed by the big rain. A lot of hard decisions were made this year. The staff and committee continued to show passion and dedication that ultimately made 2022 a profitable season for Rainbow.

Resignation. I have chosen to end my time at Rainbow Ski Area. All my recommendations will be penned in a separate letter to the committee.

Thank you very much to all who I have had the pleasure of working alongside over my time at this special place. It's been an incredible opportunity, and it will always hold a place in my thoughts. Rainbow is the people, and will remain as long as there is passion for this slice of paradise.

Until next time,

Sincerely,

Thomas Harry