

**Glacier Summit**  
**Alyeska Prince Hotel, Girdwood**  
**October 7, 2003**

At a Glacier Summit on Tuesday, Oct 7<sup>th</sup> in the beautiful Prince Court at the Alyeska Prince Hotel, Girdwood 2020 organized an exciting seminar that promises to move Girdwood toward the vision of becoming a destination, 4-season mountain resort.

Toby Preston, Co Chair of Girdwood 2020 opened the Glacier Summit with remarks that our destiny “is not a matter of choice, but a matter of choice”. Next, Larry Daniels of Alyeska Resort and finally George Cannelos, head of Heritage Land Bank (which owns 5,000 acres in Girdwood) prepared the tone for the meeting.

With about 50 guests from the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), State of Alaska, the travel industry, local political leaders, the community and Girdwood 2020, participants “rolled up their sleeves” from 10am to 2pm to discuss realities of Glacier-Winner Creek ski development.

The 1<sup>st</sup> speaker, Michael Berry, President of the National Ski Area Association, shared his extensive knowledge of the national industry and the good news that “rider visits” to resorts have grown significantly in the past 3 yrs. After years of no growth, and in spite of effect from a national recession and 9/11 tragedy, the past three seasons have been records years, culminating in the 2002/03 season—the best ever for the United States at 57.6 million visits. Why is this? “In part”, Mr. Berry explained, “the ski industry’s success over the past several years is the result of stabilizing its alpine skier base while growing its snow boarder layer (now about 30% of all ticket sales)”.

Berry explained there were other reasons for the growth, including:

- Relaxing rules, embracing the growth of winter recreation in many forms, catering to youth, snowboarders and anyone else who wishes to recreate
- Promoting new, wider/easier equipment, focus on mountain services and quality and emphasizing the social side and unique, multi generational family opportunities of skiing
- Making lessons easier and cheaper, ski schools more accommodating, and the entire sport more accepting of new participants
- Embracing new markets, focus on entry-level participants, and emphasizing value and convenience and rewarding loyalty
- Making skiing a better value for people who aren’t on a destination vacation

Berry concluded that overall, riding (skiing & snowboarding) has a bright future as it responds to the new needs of recreators, esp. those seeking an “authentic” experience. Tony Hawk, not Jean-Claude Killy, is the new mentor for much of the growth and, from the past 3 years of data, the increasing numbers of young people snowboarding bodes well for the future.

After a working lunch, Ted Beeler of Sno Engineering, which did studies 10 years ago of the Glacier Valley, shared details of creating in the Glacier Valley a resort that could expand (thru a stages) into

- Glacier skiing during the summer (only 2 other others in North American provide summer skiing)
- Approximately 3,750 acres (4,400 vertical feet) would be dedicated to a developed ski facility
- Skier capacity would be 5,000 to 7,000 skiers per day (750,000 per winter)
- Summer visitation is expected to be approximately 320,000
- Annual gross revenues: \$74.1 million
- Employment: 900 FTE's

However, Mr. Beeler shared that more important than the ability to create development is the process—successful resorts must be supported by the community, its leaders and the developers.

Where do we go from here? An RFP for Ski Development? Maybe not. One obvious problem is that the current RFP process used by Alaska governments appears to be flawed—the Glacier Valley Development Corp. has a golf course lease with the MOA, but isn't progressing due to court delays and bureaucratic indecision. GVDC had a significant outside investor who will influence other investors who typically invest in ski products.

After group participation about the feasibility of Glacier Creek, Mr. Berry shared what he thought was needed next:

- 1) Create Consensus of Process--to successfully “sell” the project, the key players will create a shared process statement. This statement, referred to as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by the community, the State, the Municipality of Anchorage, will then give a developer faith in our process to consider developing.
- 2) Determine who will sell the Vision and Consensus.

Girdwood 2020 agreed to facilitate this next step and will call another Glacier Summit in the near future.

In closing Per Bjorn-Roli, Co Chair of Girdwood 2020, urged the participants to continue the vision started by Girdwood and Alyeska pioneers many years ago by supporting the work ahead.

Overall, with this new information gleaned from two industry experts, the incredible work done by the community with the Girdwood Area Plan, the support of State of Alaska (who owns much of the mountain slopes), the Municipality of Anchorage (via the Heritage Land Bank which owns the Valley floor), Girdwood 2020, Alyeska Resort, and leadership from Mayor Mark Begich (who is planning town meetings soon), the time is right for creating consensus and a destination, 4 season mountain resort community.