

Ex-Kirkwood leader struggling with no snow

By Mark Warszawski, Fresno Bee

Being a ski resort owner during what some are calling California's worst drought in 1,200 years can't be a pile of soft, fluffy powder.

In May 2010, Tim Cohee fulfilled a lifelong dream by purchasing a 1,300-acre ski resort 65 miles east of Fresno. The first thing he did was restore the original name, China Peak. Then he went about fixing everything else.



Tim Cohee

Cohee brought a new level of customer service learned from decades in ski area management, including 17 years as a senior executive at Kirkwood Mountain Resort. He brought in enthusiastic new employees and reinvigorated the holdovers with fresh energy. He made the base area more beginner-friendly and gave snowboarders and freestyle skiers their own terrain park.

He remodeled the hotel and improved the food and beverage offerings. Everything from beds to burgers is better. He made the place a year-round destination by adding summer weddings, events and mountain biking.

Cohee and his small partnership group, China Peak LLC, bought

the resort from Snow Summit Ski Corp. for \$3.8 million and have since spent \$3 million more on improvements.

Midway through his fifth winter, about the only thing Cohee hasn't done is something he can't control: Make it snow.

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