

# Opinion: Mid-season check-in from Squaw

To the community,

This has literally been a historic season for our mountains and the region in terms of the nature and severity of the weather, with hurricane force winds, impressive and rapid snow accumulation, extreme flooding, intermittent and sometimes long lasting power outages, mudslides, avalanche conditions and more. From general operational challenges to very specific tragedies, this has been a winter we won't soon forget. On behalf of our entire team at Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows, I'd like to thank you for bearing with us as we continue to work hard to respond to the unique set of challenges Mother Nature has presented this winter.



Andy Wirth

With that said, I wanted to acknowledge specifically how our company is working to improve its performance. Despite factors that are materially out of our control such as sustained high winds over the mountain tops and varying snowpack layers, we are working hard to refine the intense, safety-first choreography that goes into opening these remarkable, high alpine mountains. We readily acknowledge your zeal and passion to hit the slopes and enjoy the snow, and are just as frustrated when we're unable to provide access. I can assure you that we too, are passionate about the skiing and riding

experience. While we simply cannot compromise safety as it relates to our team and guests, our intention is to open terrain as soon as conditions permit.

We are committed to continuing to make improvements across our operation by way of capital investments. An important example is our recent investment in Gazex, a remotely controlled avalanche mitigation system that uses propane gas and oxygen to create a concussive blast, triggering controlled avalanches before they can become a hazard. In addition to ski patrol efforts, the Gazex Inertia Exploders may decrease delays in lift start times, and increase the efficiency of Ski Patrol in opening the ski areas. We have invested over \$1.5 million in five deployments, and are working on plans to deploy many more across both mountains in an effort to ensure more efficient and expeditious terrain openings while not compromising on our all-critical safety focus.

We are also striving to communicate to you on a near-real-time-basis, primarily through our new app, website and Mountain Ops Twitter. For guests looking for a more in-depth understanding of our day-to-day operations, we also maintain a detailed Operations Blog. We have identified areas where we can and will improve, including a very real-time view and perspective of what winds, in particular, are doing across the top of the mountains.

Toward the goal of improving the decades old, region-wide issue of road congestion, we've been working with, if not challenging, our civic leaders in the region to develop real solutions – in the present tense – for regional mass transit and traffic congestion reduction on Highway 89. We have been actively working on in-valley “micro mass transit” for Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows with Chariot, incentivizing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) use with our POW Parking program, and improved communications via real-time road signage (along Highway 89, Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows Roads) in addition to our app.

The Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows leadership team and I remain very open to feedback and suggestions. Through many channels, we welcome feedback on your experience, whether it's related to our grooming, service or operations. We will always be open to your input, but ask that it be respectful in its construct. Our team works extremely hard to provide a great experience, and while we recognize areas where we can and will improve, it is imperative that respectful dialogue be the guidepost—predominantly with respect for the dedicated and hardworking men and women that comprise our team.

Our passion for these mountains is real and very genuine. We recognize that in the context of remarkable and historic weather circumstances, we can and will do better...by way of our commitment to review and improve our operations so we can more effectively communicate with you. This is our commitment, and we remain very appreciative of your support and understanding, and look forward to sharing many more powder days with you this season. It's not a question of if, but how far into June we will be open. And it's not a question of if, but how many lifts we will be running over 4th of July!

Warm regards,

**Andy Wirth, president and CEO Squaw Valley Ski Holdings**