

# NRRT 473 – Ski Area Management

Department of Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism  
Colorado State University

Spring, 2015

Dr. Maureen Donnelly  
234 Forestry Building  
491-2023  
[maureend@cnr.colostate.edu](mailto:maureend@cnr.colostate.edu)

Office Hours  
T/TH – 9:30-10:30

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce the student to ski area management. Emphasis is placed on understanding the various components of the ski industry, including a history of skiing and ski resorts, skiing trends, ski area operations, human resource management, environmental issues, liability and master planning, and ski area design. In addition to gaining practical knowledge about ski resort operations, students should increase their personal understanding of the ski resort industry, market trends and career possibilities.

## II. COURSE PREREQUISITES

NRRT 270

## III. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The basic goal of this course is to develop an understanding of ski area management, operations and design. The following specific objectives are addressed:

- 1) To provide students with a background in ski area management.
- 2) To generate an awareness of current and future trends and challenges for the ski industry.
- 3) To gain an understanding of ski resort operations, including human resources, marketing, skier services, lifts, snowmaking, grooming, general maintenance, energy, accounting and ticket sales.
- 4) To examine environmental issues related to ski areas (e.g. water, energy) and programs designed to address these issues.
- 5) To gain an understanding of ski area planning and design issues.

## IV. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES

Course material will be presented using in-class lectures, guest speakers, videos and field trips.

## V. REQUIRED MATERIALS AND/OR READINGS

Readings can be found under the course name on Blackboard. Additional readings are from the Web. Just click on the URLs in the syllabus to access the articles.

## VI. COURSE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- 1) All assignments are due no later than class time on the designated date.
- 2) All assignments must be typed unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.
- 3) The A.P.A. (American Psychological Association 5<sup>th</sup> Edition) format must be used whenever referencing is required for assignments given. Failure to correctly utilize A.P.A. referencing style will have a negative impact on your grade.
- 4) Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory and will constitute 10% of your final grade. Attendance will be taken during each class session. Two class absences (for whatever reason) will be allowed. The third class absence will drop your grade by 10%. For example, if you have a letter grade of “A” based on your assignments and miss 3 or more classes, your final grade for the course will be a “B”.



***A) Who invented the snowboard? B) Historically, who were the two most important influences in the snowboarding industry? Defend your response.***

### Week 3

February 3

Trends in Visitor Days / Resort Visitor Characteristics and Trends

**Readings:**

<http://www.thesnowpros.org/Portals/0/Cache/Pages/Kottke%20Fall%202014.pdf>

<http://www.snowsports.org/Media/SnowSportsFactSheet>

Becher, D. 2014. 2013-14 demographic study highlights. *NSAA Journal*. 22: 6.

***A) Bring in one article to present in class on skier/snowboarder characteristics. B) Type up two important ways in which visitors have changed over the last 25 years to discuss in class and hand in.***

February 5

Industry Issues - Introduction

**Readings:**

Belin, D. 2007. The beginner experience. *NSAA Journal*. April/May.

Finnel, J. 2008. Future Shock. *Ski Area Management*. May

Top Ski Area Executives. 2010. What Girls Want. *NSSA Journal*. 18:5.

Coffey, K. 2010. Inject New School Into Ski and Ride School. *NSAA Journal*. 17:6.

***A) Bring in one article to present in class on the 'Introduction' Issue. B) Type up and discuss 3 ways to encourage introduction of individuals into the skiing/boarding industry (for discussion in class and to be handed in).***

### Week 4

February 10

Industry Issues – Conversion and Retention

**Readings:**

Hawks, T. 2009. Model for Growth: Focus on Conversion. *NSAA Journal*. 17:5.

Fristoe, N. 2011. From First-Timers to Life-Timers. *NSAA Journal*. 18:6.

Coffey, K. 2013. How terrain-based learning amps up beginner fun. *NSAA Journal*. 21:1.

Roessing, W. 2012. Conveyors and conversion. *NSAA Journal*. 20:2.

Fristo, N. & D. Belin. 2009. Creating Lifelong Customers. *NSAA Journal*. 17:3.

Walter, C. 2008. The New Age. *Ski Area Management*. March.

Roessing, W. Boomers on Groomers. *NSAA Journal*. 16:5.

***A) Bring in one article to present in class on either the 'Conversion' or 'Retention' Issue. B) Type up and discuss 3 ways to encourage a higher conversion rate of individuals from beginners in the sport to the core. Discuss 3 possible strategies for retaining core skiers and boarders (for discussion in class and to be handed in).***

February 12

Technology of Alpine Ski Resorts: Lifts, Snowmaking and Grooming

**Readings:**

Leich, J.R. 2002. Technology of alpine ski resorts: Lifts, snowmaking and grooming. *New England Ski Museum Newsletter*

Rowan, D. 1999. A Salute to the chairlift. *Ski Area Management*. May.

Chapter 11 – Snowmaking

***A) Bring in one article to present in class on ski resort technology. B) Type up what you believe to be the two most significant pieces of industry technology throughout the years and explain why (for discussion in class and to be handed in).***

## Week 5

February 17

New Technology for the Summer Resort Visitor

**Readings:** Rowan, A. 1996. Hiking centers for profit. *Ski Area Management*. January.  
Staff Report. Taking a DevalKart slope ride.  
Frost, J. & J. McCullough. 1995. Biking trails: The ins and outs, the ups and downs. *Ski Area Management*. May.  
Devlin, I. Summer toys provide off-season thrills. *Ski Area Management*.  
Kreitman, M. Hosting mountain bike races. *Ski Area Management*.  
Olcott, D. 1999. What's that buzz? *Ski Area Management*. July.  
Matthews, D. 2005. Beyond the slope. *Ski Area Management*. January.

***For extra credit – find another summer toy for summer visitors!!! The amount of extra credit will be based upon the uniqueness of the summer toy!***

February 19

Skier / Rider Services

**Readings:** Kaplan, M. 2002. Sliding into Bigger Profits. *Ski Area Management*. September.  
Gourlay, J. Stay Tuned. *Ski Area Management*.  
SE Group. Making a good first impression. *Ski Area Management*.  
Devlin, I. 2000. Think small to sell big. *Ski Area Management*. September.  
McCarthy, M. 2010. Treating Customers Like Disney. *Ski Area Management*. September.  
Bailey, K. 2007 Dish it Out. *Ski Area Management*. May.

***A) Bring in one article to present in class on skier / rider services. B) Type up what you believe to be the two services that most affect skier / rider satisfaction. Why?***

## Week 6

February 24

Skiing Internationally – What is Happening in the Rest of the World? - ***Student Presentation***

**Readings:** To be assigned by presenters ***one week in advance of presentation***  
***Bring in one article to present in class on skiing / boarding internationally***

February 26

No Class

## Week 7

March 3

Major Players in the Industry – The Big Three and Others? - ***Student Presentation***

**Readings:** To be assigned by presenters ***one week in advance of presentation***  
***Bring in one article to present in class on one of the major or minor players in the industry***

March 5

Marketing Ski Resorts

**Readings:** <http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Editorial/Magazine-Features/E-Mail-Marketing-Gives-Ski-Resort-a-Lift-46792.aspx>

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Ski-Area-Marketing---6-Ideas-for-Snazzier-Ski-Resort-Blog-Posts&id=5014595>

<http://extanz.com/2010/01/19/ski-resorts-and-snow-reports-and-social-media-not-quite-a-match-made-in-heaven/>

[http://www.denverpost.com/ci\\_22210196/colorado-ski-and-snowboarding-resorts-using-social-media?source=infinite](http://www.denverpost.com/ci_22210196/colorado-ski-and-snowboarding-resorts-using-social-media?source=infinite)

**A) Bring in one article to present in class on marketing of resorts. B) Based on the readings, type up 1) how you feel the industry can best identify new markets or expand existing markets, and 2) what would be the best marketing techniques for the industry to use to build new and existing markets (for class discussion and to hand in).**

### Week 8

March 9 First Field Trip

**March 17-19 Spring Break**

### Week 9

March 24 Safety and Liability Issues for Ski Resorts

#### **Readings:**

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheadername1=Content-Disposition&blobheadername2=Content-Type&blobheadervalue1=inline%3B+filename%3D%22CPTSB+Ski+Safety+Act+CRS+Title+33+Article+44+Effective+July+1%2C+2006.pdf%22&blobheadervalue2=application%2Fpdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251832453525&ssbinary=true>

Donahue, R. Layers of protection. *Ski Area Management*.

Donahue, R. Getting a grip. *Ski Area Management*.

Emory, H. 1999. Lift loading accidents. *Ski Area Management*. November.

Ruhl, J. & J. Lenox. 2003. Tubing safety: A neglected dimension. *Ski Area Management*. November.

**Bring in one article to present in class on safety and liability issues at resorts.**

March 26 Marketing Ski Resorts

**Speaker:** Jen Rudolph, Colorado Ski Country, USA.

### Week 10

March 29-30 Second Field Trip

### Week 11

April 7 Environmental Impacts of Ski Resorts – **Student Presentation**

**Readings:** To be assigned by presenters **one week in advance of presentation**

**Bring in one article to present in class on environmental impacts of resorts**

April 9 Impacts of Ski Resorts on Resort Towns: Social Issues - **Student Presentation**

**Readings:** To be assigned by presenters **one week in advance of presentation**

**Bring in one article to present in class on social impacts of resorts**

**Week 12**

April 14 Resorting to Madness - Video

April 16 Avalanche Control - ***Student Presentation***

**Readings:** To be assigned by presenters *one week in advance of presentation.*  
***Bring in one article to present in class on impacts of the pine beetle on resorts***

**Week 13**

April 21 Trends in the Ski Industry

**Speaker** Michael Berry, Executive Director, National Ski Area Association

April 23 Master Planning and Ski Area Design - ***Student Presentation***

**Readings:** To be assigned by presenters *one week in advance of presentation*  
***Bring in one article to present in class on design of resorts***

**Week 14**

April 28 Final Research Presentations

April 30 No Class because of Field Trips

**Week 15**

May 5 Final research presentations

May 7 Final Research Presentations

***1) Issue and Final Powerpoint presentations***

***2) Field Trip Evaluations, and***

***3) Final Paper***

***All due May 7<sup>th</sup>!***