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Contact:
Kim Clark, General Manager (kim@bluewood.com)

Bluewood announces $4.5 million development, expansion plan

DAYTON, Wash.—New and enhanced lifts, a snowmaking system at the base and a more robust power generation system are among improvements happening at Bluewood in a $4.5 million development and expansion plan slated for the next three years.

"This is the most exciting set of upgrades at Bluewood since we opened more than 40 years ago," says Kim Clark, Bluewood's General Manager. "The development plan, which is already underway, will keep our familiar hometown vibe on the mountain while providing even more features and fun for everyone. For months now, we've been working on planning, engineering, permitting and other steps for the projects ahead this summer."

"We're thankful to the Bluewood ownership group for being fully committed to the expansion plan, which will bring greater enjoyment to skiers and riders for years to come," Clark says.

Highlights of the three-phase development and expansion plan include:

Phase 1 (2018-2021)
Total: $1.3 million

- A snowmaking system to help build up the base area and extend the ski season (installation planned for fall 2021).

- Additional parking lot with shuttle service to the lodge to handle overflow parking on the busiest days (contingent on agreement with landowners).

- The Hub, a building that houses the rentals and lessons departments (completed in 2020).

- Base Yurt by the lodge, for prepurchased ticket pick up (completed in 2020).

- The Yurt at Sun Spot, located at the summit, for snacks, drinks and breaks (completed in 2018).

- Two Prinoth snowcat machines for optimized trail grooming (added in 2018 and 2021).

- Two Easy Rider conveyor/surface lifts in the beginner area (installed in 2018).

Phase 2 (pending review and approval by the U.S. Forest Service)
Total: $2.1 million

- New or modified Skyline Express lift to the summit.

- Autoloader on the Skyline Express lift for easier, more consistent loading.

- New power generation system that is more efficient, quieter and supplies electricity for all lifts, lodge and outbuildings.

Phase 3 (pending review and approval by the U.S. Forest Service)
Total: $1.1 million

- A new lift to Vintner's Ridge, a 200-acre section of the mountain that is currently accessed by hiking or snowcat service only.

BETTER TREE AND GLADE SKIING

Starting this summer, as part of a forest health program in the Blue Mountains, the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will assess the types and health of trees in certain areas of Bluewood, thin out dense sections and remove diseased trees. This work will continue during off-season months for several years.

"We really appreciate our partnership with Bluewood," says Aaron Gagnon, Walla Walla District Ranger of the Umatilla National Forest. "Their continued commitment and collaboration has been key to providing enhanced recreation opportunities for our communities, while also working with us to improve forest health surrounding this area."

Clark adds: "U.S. Forest Service expertise and management will greatly improve tree and glade skiing at Bluewood. We're grateful to the U.S. Forest Service for their partnership in making outdoor recreation and the mountain experience even better for everyone."

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Bluewood is located at 2000 North Touchet Road, Dayton, in the Blue Mountains of southeast Washington. At 4,545 feet above sea level, it sits at the second-highest base elevation of all ski areas in Washington State. There are 24-plus trails, four lifts, and the average snowfall is 300 inches per year.

Image downloads
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