



March 4, 2025

To: CBJ Assembly

From: Eaglecrest Board of Directors

Re: Staffing, Pay Plan, and Capital Investment

Introduction

The Eaglecrest Ski Area, now entering its 50th year of operation, is a cherished community asset. It has a passionate user base many of whom use the common refrain of “Eaglecrest is what keeps me in Juneau.” However, as we start our next 50 years we have several challenges to address.

We know that our future is dependent on the installation of the gondola in order to provide year-round revenue and we are thankful for the CBJ Assembly’s commitment to this effort. While gondola anchored summer operations will provide fiscal certainty and sustainability in the long term, in the short term we still have to address our staffing levels, our pay plan, and our infrastructure needs.

Staffing

Eaglecrest has historically been managed with the bare minimum staffing levels needed to operate the ski area. Prior boards and management have been keenly aware of the impact of Eaglecrest’s expenses on the CBJ budget and have worked hard to provide a quality product to the public with a minimum of staff. However, it has become increasingly obvious that this is not sustainable, and we simply cannot continue to provide winter recreational opportunities to the public that depends on stretching our staff thin. We also are losing revenue by not having the personnel available to provide full programming to the public.

Eaglecrest staff have completed an analysis of needed positions at the operation to staff it in an industry standard fashion. This analysis indicates that we need to increase the budgeted FTE number from 33 to 56. This increase would result in a \$2M increase in fully loaded wages and benefits if implemented in FY26 at the current pay plan.

Pay Plan

Recruitment and retention of employees at Eaglecrest has always been a challenge. We are fortunate to have a dedicated workforce that truly believes in our mission, unfortunately the high cost of living in Juneau, combined with low wages have made it extremely difficult to recruit and retain employees at Eaglecrest. In a study commissioned by the Eaglecrest board in 2024, it was found that Eaglecrest pays its employees approximately 40% lower than comparable ski areas in the lower 48. And this is after the Eaglecrest board, and the assembly have invested in a multi-year effort to raise wages by over 20%. It is simply unacceptable for Juneau residents to continue to subsidize their winter recreation on the backs of Eaglecrest employees and the Eaglecrest pay plan must be addressed.

Implementing an across the board 40% increase in wages in FY26 would result in approximately a \$780,000 increment in wages and benefits for existing positions at Eaglecrest.

Wages at Eaglecrest are not competitive with comparable jobs in Juneau in both the public and private sector. It is necessary to increase wages by a minimum of 15% (\$290,000 in FY26) in order to address our critical staffing needs.

Infrastructure Investment

At the request of the board, Eaglecrest staff have taken a critical look at the infrastructure needs of the operation. While the CBJ CIP program provides a minimum level of investment in Eaglecrest maintenance, like any aging operation Eaglecrest has significant capital needs that must be addressed. While we anticipate that future summer operations will provide the revenue needed to address ongoing maintenance needs, Eaglecrest still needs significant capital investment in the next few years to maintain its existing operation.

Eaglecrest staff has identified approximately \$1.5 million in capital projects to be completed between now and FY30. This is in addition to the \$511,000 proposed in the FY26 CIP budget. Costs for these projects are only an estimate, and it is likely that existing staff will not have the resources to accomplish them all and contractors will be needed to do the work. For FY26 this means at least an additional \$273,000 in capital.

Conclusion

The Eaglecrest board is very thankful for the investments that the CBJ Assembly has made in Eaglecrest over the years. Committing to summer operations through purchase of the gondola and signing the agreement with Goldbelt for its installation will ultimately result in Eaglecrest being self-sufficient for its operating and capital needs.

However significant investment in Eaglecrest is still needed in the immediate future to ensure we can provide quality and sustainable winter recreational opportunities to the Juneau public. Increases in staff and pay plan of \$290,000 to >\$2M dollars are needed in FY26 in addition to over \$784,000 in capital.

The Eaglecrest board looks forward to working with the CBJ Assembly to provide the necessary investment in our people and our facilities to maintain this cherished community asset.

Sincerely,

Michael Satre

President, Eaglecrest Board of Directors