

Sophia Peissig

Berg Scholarship Essay

2/20/24

Granite Peak's Significance to Local Skiers and How it Compares to Other Midwest Ski Resorts

The significance of Granite Peak, formerly known as Rib Mountain Winter Sports Area, is one that many of the area hold dearly. Open for over eight decades, the hill's large spread of runs has a small-town feel on quiet, calm weekdays when local skiers come to enjoy the views over the Wisconsin River and town of Wausau. For this essay, I wanted to focus on the familial aspect of skiing at Granite Peak and how that compares to other Midwest ski resorts.

To further discuss Granite Peak's current status, we will need to travel back and recount a quick history of how it transformed into the family-friendly skiing destination it is today. One aspect that Jerry and Laura Meyer recounted to me while describing Granite Peak's atmosphere was that "*[Granite Peak] was smart with updating and equipping the chalets with outdoor firepits and building new lodges, as other out-of-state locations often do not have up-to-date facilities.*" While new renovations are always being carried out, they maintained a historical aspect to the property as a rustic stone warming building now known as the Historic Chalet, which was constructed in 1939 by a local Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp and is still in use today (*TerBeek*). In addition to the chalet's construction, Granite Peak has expanded its entertainment events to include live music, festivals, fireworks, and outdoor events. It is these activities that cause many tourists to flock toward Central Wisconsin instead of continuing up to the Upper Peninsula (UP). As time has gone on, the hill has expanded and diversified by adding on the terrain park, west-side runs, and magic carpet in recent decades, making it more accessible for both younger skiers and snowboarders.

While interviewing the Meyers, I wanted to see how they would compare Granite Peak to other resorts in the UP and around the state to see what could be improved or applauded. Despite having a plethora of family opportunities, Granite Peak has had some changes over the last few years, such as new pass options with specific blackout days of the season for lower-priced pass options. In past years there were no blackout days and lower season pass prices, but

this comes with the added access to the two recently purchased resorts Lutsen Mountains and Snowriver Mountain Resort in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. However, for locations such as Porcupine Mountain which is run by the Michigan DNR and Ski Brule, free or discounted events like the Winter Festival and Brule Bash are fun to attend, in addition to more reasonably priced season passes. Many local families often consider the affordability of passes, as costs have gone up for Granite Peak in the last few years.

However, despite all these changes, being able to make memories with your family is one that will never leave the Meyer family. Listening to my close friend's father, Jerry, remark on his memories of his daughter, made me feel grateful that we have a place for families to make these memories. Mr. Meyer said to me, "*I remember teaching Katie, I used to take a rope harness and hold her back so she wouldn't go so fast down the Bunny Hill and hold her so that she learned how to turn*" which was mentioned to me as one of his most enjoyable moments on the hill with Katie. Moments like this are possible because of all the additions and renovations that Granite Peak strives to incorporate for its guests. One such example that Jerry mentioned to me was the evolution of moving from the two-man lift of his twenties to the new high-speed six-man lift installed in 2001-2002, which dropped the lift ride time from eight minutes to three minutes (*Our Legendary History*).

Overall, Granite Peak has evolved into a family-friendly ski destination that has a lot to offer for both local skiers and tourists. Despite its higher costs, they come at greater rewards as being a pass holder gives access to three distinct locations with more updated technology and a wider variety of runs and trails. Each Midwest ski resort has its unique benefit whether it is Porcupine Mountain's beautiful view over Lake Superior or Ski Brule's extended season. It is certain to me after studying the characteristics of these locations and through my interview, that Granite Peak's previously mentioned assets have created and maintained a community generation long with numerous priceless memories.

Works Cited

“Our Legendary History.” *Granite Peak*, www.skigranitepeak.com/discover/discover-granite-peak/our-history. Accessed 22 Feb. 2024.

TerBeek, Erin. “RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK AND CCC CAMP – RIB MOUNTAIN WI.” *Living New Deal*, 15 Oct. 2012, livingnewdeal.org/sites/rib-mountain-state-park-and-ccc-camp-rib-mountain-wi/.