

ICE COAST REVIVAL / COMPACT PRINT EDITION



THE MOUNTAIN MANUAL

An operator's guide to reviving the lost hills

FORTY FIELD NOTES / TWO NOTES PER PRINTED PAGE

PRINT PAGE 01

NOTE 02 / THE FILE ON YOUR DESK

A mountain left behind

The bank has the deed. The lifts are still. The lodge is cold. Around town, people remember powder mornings, crowded parking lots, and the sound of the bullwheel turning.

You have a limited operating budget and a chance to make the place work again. This is not a museum project. The hill must earn its revival one open day at a time.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Your first asset is not acreage. It is a small, functioning loop that guests can reach, ride, ski, and enjoy.

NOTE 03 / YOUR JOB

Own and operate a ski hill

Build the physical mountain, then run the operating company around it. Lifts and routes create capacity. Snow and maintenance protect reliability. Tickets, marketing, and reputation create demand. Staff and guest services turn that demand into a day people want to repeat.

Every system draws from the same cash, time, and attention. A solution in one office can become a bottleneck in another.

- Open a complete skiable route
- Match demand to useful capacity
- Protect cash through weak weather and slow days
- Build reputation without overpromising

NOTE 04 / THE OPERATING LOOP

Observe. Decide. Operate. Learn.

Read the mountain before spending. Find the constraint that is actually limiting guests or profit. Make one coherent change, run enough time to see its effect, and compare the result with the cost.

The loudest symptom is not always the cause. A lift queue might begin with poor route distribution, an underpriced ticket, a tangled arrival path, or a single popular trail.

- Observe demand, queues, satisfaction, snow, and cash
- Decide which bottleneck matters now
- Operate long enough to reveal the trade-off
- Learn before committing the next dollar

NOTE 05 / MORNING ONE

Pause and survey

Start paused. Pan across the parcel and locate the base, existing access, useful elevation, and any inherited structures. Open the mountain information and finance views before placing anything.

A short inspection prevents the classic first-day mistake: spending most of the cash on an impressive lift that does not yet serve a complete route.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Keep a cash reserve. Construction is only the beginning of an operating expense.

NOTE 06 / BUILD ORDER

Create one complete guest journey

A guest needs a reason to arrive and a route that works from end to end. Connect the base to an appropriate lift, clear terrain back to the base, and verify that every segment is reachable.

Begin with infrastructure you can afford to operate. Capacity that sits idle still ties up cash.

- Base access and essential guest facilities
- A lift with a valid loading and unloading path
- Cleared, connected terrain back to the base
- Snow coverage and operational staff where required

NOTE 07 / BEFORE OPENING

Run the checklist

Do not assume a finished-looking hill is an operating hill. Select each lift and route. Read its current status and resolve missing access, snow, staff, maintenance, or connections.

Set a defensible ticket price, confirm essential operating choices, then advance slowly through the first arrival period.

- Can skiers enter, ride, descend, and return?
- Are snow and conditions suitable?
- Are required buildings and crews active?
- Can the cash balance absorb the day if turnout is weak?

NOTE 08 / FIRST CLOSE

Read the day, not just the bank balance

At close, separate revenue from the experience that produced it. Count visitors, then examine satisfaction, queues, unfinished trips, breakdowns, and the operating cost needed to serve them.

A profitable bad day can damage tomorrow's demand. A beloved day can still be financially impossible. Your operating plan needs both.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Change one major lever at a time when diagnosing a problem. Otherwise the mountain teaches you nothing.

NOTE 09 / DESK CONTROLS

Move through the mountain

Use pan, zoom, and rotation to read both the broad operating network and the exact connection under your cursor. The camera is an analysis tool: wide views reveal circulation, while close views reveal access and status.

Select objects to open their operating details. Return to the neutral tool before surveying to avoid accidental placement.

- Pan to follow skier movement
- Zoom out to compare base, lifts, and terrain
- Zoom in before connecting or inspecting
- Use selection panels for status and action

NOTE 10 / BUILD DESK

Plan before you place

The build catalog shows prerequisites, price, and function. Treat the placement preview as a contract: valid terrain, access, clearance, and connections all matter.

Lay out a complete system on paper before buying its most expensive component. A lift, snowmaking expansion, or village building has value only when the rest of the guest journey supports it.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Use the least permanent experiment that can test your idea. Keep room for the mountain you will need later.

NOTE 11 / CLOCK DESK

Time is a diagnostic instrument

Pause for planning and construction. Use slower speeds when guests first meet new infrastructure. Accelerate only after the system is stable enough that you will notice a problem before it compounds.

Daily and seasonal effects need enough horizon to appear. A single rush can reveal a queue, but only repeated days can show whether a price, marketing plan, or capital project earns its keep.

- Pause for irreversible choices
- Slow down around opening and new systems
- Review each close during a turnaround
- Use longer horizons for demand and investment decisions

NOTE 12 / UPHILL TRANSPORT

A lift is a promise of flow



A functioning pod connects arrival, lift access, and a skiable return.

A lift converts base access into mountain access. Its useful capacity depends on more than the machinery: guests must reach the loading area, unload safely, find suitable terrain, and return without dead ends.

Place for a network, not a postcard. A lower-cost lift serving a coherent pod can outperform a larger machine connected to weak terrain.

NOTE 13 / TERRAIN DESK

Cleared is not the same as connected

Terrain becomes useful when it forms a continuous, reachable route. Inspect every junction, crossing, and return. A beautiful strip of cleared snow that fails to connect remains scenery.

Route difficulty should fit the guests you are attracting. Growth can stall if new arrivals cannot find terrain they are willing or able to ski.

- Trace the route from unload to base
- Check junctions and one-way traps
- Match terrain difficulty to guest mix
- Provide alternatives before demand overwhelms one line

NOTE 14 / CAPACITY DESK

Find the useful bottleneck

Advertised lift capacity does not guarantee mountain throughput. The drop-off lane, ticketing, route distribution, loading access, and guest services can limit the number of satisfying ski days before the bullwheel does.

When a queue grows, follow the guest journey backward and forward. Solve the narrowest useful point instead of automatically buying a bigger lift.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Capacity added upstream of the real constraint can make the downstream failure more expensive.

NOTE 15 / NETWORK NOTE

Build redundancy with purpose

A second route can spread skiers, serve another skill group, and keep part of the hill useful when conditions or maintenance close an option. Redundancy is insurance only if both paths are reachable and operational.

Expand after measuring where guests actually go. The right next pod may serve unmet demand rather than the highest summit.

- Alternative return routes reduce concentration
- Distributed lifts can isolate failures
- Terrain variety can improve satisfaction
- Every redundant system adds cost and staff demand

NOTE 16 / WEATHER OFFICE

Operate the snow you have



Storms can lift demand and operating pressure at the same time.

Weather changes demand and the physical surface you can offer. Read temperature, natural snowfall, current coverage, and the forecast together. A busy forecast is useful only if the mountain will be ready when guests arrive.

Climate pressure makes timing more important. Preserve cash and machine hours for windows when snowmaking can create durable operating value.

NOTE 17 / SNOWMAKING DESK

Coverage is a capital decision every night

Snowmaking trades cash and operating effort for coverage and reliability. Aggressive output can secure a critical route, but unnecessary output spends money where natural snow, low demand, or unused terrain cannot repay it.

Protect the complete route first. Deep snow on an isolated segment does not open the mountain.

- Prioritize essential connecting terrain
- Watch the forecast before committing
- Match intensity to the operating goal
- Include energy and staffing in the decision

NOTE 18 / GROOMING DESK

Turn coverage into a product

Coverage makes terrain possible. Grooming helps make it dependable and welcoming. Use the crew where surface quality affects the largest share of the guest journey, especially core returns and high-traffic routes.

The best grooming plan is not necessarily the widest. It is the plan that protects the experience your current operation promises.

OPERATOR'S NOTE A narrow, well-prepared opening can build more trust than a broad opening that cannot hold together.

NOTE 19 / CLIMATE LEDGER

Plan for volatility, not a perfect winter

Good seasons can hide a fragile cost structure. Weak windows reveal it. Keep enough liquidity to maintain a viable route through warm periods, repairs, and disappointing turnout.

Long-term resilience comes from matching fixed costs to realistic demand, building reliable core terrain, and adding optional capacity only when the business can carry it.

- Maintain a cash floor for weather shocks
- Favor infrastructure with repeatable value
- Use forecasts without treating them as guarantees
- Review the full season, not only the powder days

NOTE 20 / GUEST TRAFFIC

Every skier has a day of their own



A crowd is thousands of connected individual decisions.

Guests differ in skill, patience, needs, and goals. They choose routes, wait in lines, use services, and leave with an experience shaped by the whole operating system.

Aggregate totals tell you how many people arrived. Watching individuals tells you why the day worked or failed.

NOTE 21 / QUEUE WATCH

A queue is a message

Lines form where arrival rate exceeds useful service. The cause can be slow service, too much demand, weak distribution, poor access, or a failure elsewhere that sends everyone to the same place.

Read the length, duration, location, and guest alternatives before acting. Sometimes the cheapest fix is clearer circulation or another usable route.

- Watch where the line begins
- Compare peak and off-peak behavior
- Look for closed or unattractive alternatives
- Check whether pricing created avoidable overload

NOTE 22 / EXPERIENCE REPORT

Satisfaction is the whole trip

A strong run cannot fully rescue a day spent searching, waiting, or discovering that essential services are missing. Satisfaction reflects the guest journey across arrival, skiing, comfort, value, and reliability.

Improve the weakest repeated part of the journey. Expensive polish has limited value while a basic failure remains common.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Follow one dissatisfied guest from arrival to departure. Their path can expose a system-wide pattern.

NOTE 23 / REPUTATION LEDGER

Tomorrow remembers today

Reputation turns repeated experience into future demand. It grows when the hill reliably fulfills its promise and weakens when crowded, unreliable, or poor-value days become the story guests carry away.

Marketing can invite more people to test that promise. It cannot permanently replace the operation behind it.

- Build demand on repeatable service
- Avoid opening more than you can support
- Recover from failures before amplifying demand
- Measure reputation movement across many days

NOTE 24 / TICKET WINDOW

Price is both revenue and traffic control



Price changes both the ledger and the load on the mountain.

Ticket price changes value perception, turnout, and revenue per guest. A lower price may fill unused capacity or overwhelm a constrained hill. A higher price may improve margin or leave expensive systems idle.

Choose a price for the mountain you can deliver today, then judge it across visitors, revenue, satisfaction, and repeat demand.

NOTE 25 / DEMAND DESK

Demand arrives through several doors

Price, conditions, reputation, marketing, and the attractiveness of the mountain combine to shape turnout. Capacity then determines how much of that demand you can serve well.

Do not count an interested guest as earned revenue until the operating system can convert the visit into a completed, satisfying day.

- Conditions change the size of the opportunity
- Reputation changes trust
- Marketing changes awareness
- Capacity changes the experience of the resulting crowd

NOTE 26 / MARKETING DESK

Promote a promise you can keep

Marketing is most valuable when useful capacity sits empty and the guest experience is ready. Promoting into a bottleneck can convert cash into longer lines, weaker satisfaction, and reputation risk.

Use campaigns as measured experiments. Compare incremental visitors and revenue with the campaign cost and the strain placed on the hill.

OPERATOR'S NOTE If a campaign works, ask which system will become the next constraint before repeating it.

NOTE 27 / YIELD NOTE

Optimize the system, not one number

Maximum skier count, maximum revenue, maximum satisfaction, and maximum net income are different objectives. A plan can be excellent for one and poor for another.

Choose the objective that fits the mountain's current stage. Keep financially feasible alternatives on the table and look for choices where improving one outcome requires a clear sacrifice elsewhere.

- Growth objective: expand useful skier count
- Income objective: protect sustainable net income
- Experience objective: strengthen satisfaction and reputation
- Balanced objective: avoid extreme trade-offs

NOTE 28 / CREW BOARD

Staff the operation you actually run



Staffing choices trade payroll against service and resilience.

Lean staffing protects payroll but leaves less room for surges, complex operations, and disruption. Generous staffing can improve service and resilience but must be supported by revenue.

Match the crew plan to open terrain, operating machinery, guest volume, and the day's objective. Review it as the mountain changes.

NOTE 29 / MAINTENANCE BOARD

Reliability has a price before it has a failure

Deferred maintenance can protect today's cash while raising operational exposure. Preventive work costs more now but can reduce the chance that a critical system interrupts the guest day.

The right policy depends on asset condition, redundancy, cash reserves, and the consequence of failure. A single essential lift deserves a different risk posture than a backed-up system.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Measure breakdown risk beside cost. Cheap operation is not cheap if it destroys the day's revenue and trust.

NOTE 30 / DAILY LEDGER

Reconcile the day

Revenue includes the transactions guests make across the mountain. Costs include the labor, energy, maintenance, services, and obligations required to operate. Net income is what remains after the full day is reconciled.

A strong cash balance can hide a weak operation after a capital sale or before large obligations. Read daily net income together with cash, assets, and future commitments.

- Trace ticket and ancillary revenue
- Name the largest operating costs
- Confirm revenue minus costs equals net income
- Watch the lowest cash point, not only the closing balance

NOTE 31 / CASH FLOOR

Liquidity keeps the bullwheel turning

Profitable projects can still fail if cash goes negative before their benefits arrive. Keep enough liquidity for payroll, operations, repairs, weak demand, and weather variability.

Before an investment, compare expected marginal profit with payback time and the lowest cash balance along the way. Survival is a constraint, not merely another metric.

- Reserve for several weak operating days
- Stage projects when possible
- Do not spend forecast revenue before it arrives
- Reject financially impossible strategies even if their averages look attractive

NOTE 32 / BASE AREA

The ski day begins before the lift



A useful village turns arrival and downtime into a coherent guest experience.

The drop-off lane, ticketing, rentals, food, lessons, rest, and circulation shape the guest day before and between runs. The base village is an operating network, not decorative frontage.

Place services where guests can reach them without creating new conflicts. Growth in one amenity can change movement and staffing demand elsewhere.

NOTE 33 / SERVICE PLAN

Add the service the crowd is asking for

Read unmet needs and abandoned actions before building. A service earns its footprint by helping enough guests, improving the journey, or producing sustainable margin.

New buildings also create operating cost, staffing demand, and traffic. A modest service in the right location can outperform a prestigious building that the current hill cannot support.

- Observe repeated unmet needs
- Estimate who can reach the service
- Include payroll and operating cost
- Recheck circulation after opening

NOTE 34 / VILLAGE GROWTH

Build a place, not a pile of upgrades

The best base villages express the mountain's scale and purpose. They support the core ski loop, offer useful choices, and leave room for circulation and future growth.

Expand when the existing base has a measured limitation. If the lifts and terrain remain the constraint, another amenity may improve comfort without improving mountain throughput.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Sketch the guest path through arrival, equipment, lift, food, rest, and departure before placing the next building.

NOTE 35 / REGIONAL FILE

Every lost hill has a different argument



The campaign connects individual turnarounds into a regional revival.

The campaign moves through real lost-ski-area inspiration across New England. Each property brings its own terrain, inherited problems, market, climate pressure, and path back to relevance.

Methods transfer, formulas do not. The operating plan that rescues a local rope-tow hill may not fit a larger destination with more systems and fixed cost.

NOTE 36 / LEADERSHIP FILE

Build an operating identity

Boston teaches the core game first. The career Playbook opens with your second hill, starts with one point, and awards another for every three guest-serving operating days across the career. Learn a talent once and bring it to every hill.

Mountain Operations can lean toward Precision and Systems, Big Iron, or Old School methods. Guest Experience shapes the destination, skier identity, and crowd flow. Skier Development connects lessons and mountain skills to racing and Nordic programs.

- Read prerequisites before committing
- Spend from one pool across all three departments
- Choose talents that answer the current bottleneck
- Let one mountain teach the plan for the next

NOTE 37 / ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENTS

Change the brief, keep the discipline

Sandbox provides room to experiment with layouts, systems, and mountain ideas outside the campaign's normal pressure. Daily Challenge gives every operator a shared deterministic problem to solve and compare.

Use both modes to learn causes, not just outcomes. Record the objective, constraints, and changes that produced the result.

- Sandbox: explore and prototype
- Daily Challenge: solve a shared fixed problem
- Campaign: build a durable operating company
- Field Guide: inspect deeper rules and references

NOTE 38 / AUTOMATION DESK

Automate a stable decision

Automation reduces repetitive operating work after you understand the conditions that make a choice safe. It does not remove the need to monitor outcomes or respond when the mountain changes.

Automating a weak policy repeats the weakness faster. Establish a useful threshold, observe several cycles, then review exceptions.

OPERATOR'S NOTE Write down what the automation assumes. Weather, demand, capacity, and cash can invalidate those assumptions.

NOTE 39 / WHEN THE HILL WILL NOT WORK

Trace the guest journey

Most operating failures become clearer when you follow one complete path from arrival to departure. Pause, select the affected object or guest, read the status, and check each required connection.

- No guests: check open status, access, price, conditions, and awareness
- No lift riders: check loading access, destination terrain, staffing, and status
- No skiable route: trace every cleared and snow-covered connection
- Long queues: check alternatives, distribution, service rate, and excess demand
- Cash collapse: pause expansion and reconcile daily revenue, costs, and obligations
- Low satisfaction: follow individual guest histories and find the repeated failure

OPEN DELIBERATELY

Complete route. Suitable snow. Ready crew. Defensible price. Cash reserve. Slow first run.

The Mountain Manual explains the operating relationships that tie the hill together. For detailed rules, current references, and deeper systems, continue to the Field Guide at revivetheicecoast.com/guide.

OBSERVE BEFORE SPENDING

SOLVE THE BINDING BOTTLENECK

MEASURE TRADE-OFFS ACROSS A FULL HORIZON

KEEP EVERY STRATEGY FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE

LEAVE ROOM FOR THE MOUNTAIN TO TEACH YOU