Name: Andy Weis
Residence (town/state): Hinesburg, Vermont

Candidate Statement and Bio: I am a Hinesburg, VT, native and have been skiing at Mad River Glen for 25 years and coaching many of the kids in our community since 2004. A 2008 graduate of the University of Vermont with a B.S. in Biobehavioral Psychology, I have lived (and skied) in Switzerland and spent a season coaching the Jackson Hole Ski Club Freeride Ski Team. I am also the former Executive Director for Fellowship of the Wheel, which is in the non-profit business of sustainable trail management. I have experience in managing the complex and diverse hopes, opinions, and demands of user groups. I listen first and have comfort with the ambiguity of decision-making. I bring expertise in leadership, facilitation, and design thinking in order to solve problems to reach appropriate, sustainable, and goal-oriented outcomes.

When I’m not at MRG, I teach middle level math and coach alpine ski racing and boys’ soccer at South Burlington High School. I care deeply about fostering the next generation of MRG stewards. Through coaching, I have focused my energy on grassroots understanding of the culture, values, and traditions we hold dearly. Starting from a respect of the mountain and the people that choose to recreate within its bounds, I work to create a foundation for our young skiers to appreciate what we, as a community, have worked hard to perpetuate.

My wife, Cristin, and I met at the University of Vermont in 2004 and now live in Hinesburg with our daughter, Ellie. Cristin also spent 10 season coaching for a combination of the Mad River Glen Ski Club and the Mad River Glen Freeskiing Team. We are looking forward to having Ellie join the MRG community when she is ready to ski.
Candidate Questions

1. What motivated you to run for the board?

I am running to be a member of the Board of Trustees because Mad River Glen is my home. It is my favorite place in the world. I also think there is a need for diversity of age and perspective among board members. It is important to me to keep an eye toward cultivating a positive user experience, especially for kids and families, so that we can continue to instill a sense of ownership and care for our unique mountain. I have a background in trail and forest management, coaching, education, and executive leadership. It is my hope that this diverse background would offer a complementary skill set to that of the current Board of Trustees.

2. What brought you to Mad River Glen initially and what keeps you coming back today?

I came to Mad River Glen with a family friend when I was seven or eight, after learning to ski at Cochran’s. My family was mostly focused on cross-country skiing but I quickly fell in love with alpine. I was seeking more challenge and my family was interested in providing me with a skiing experience that was community-based rather than the trappings of a resort. I fell in love with Mad River’s variation – the terrain, the conditions, and the people. Every run was a new experience; an adventure. People were friendly and supportive of kids. Employees were caring and authentic. Skiers used a range of gear – from brand new to decades old – each person finding any way possible to enjoy the Mad River Glen experience. I will never forget hearing “Go, Go, Go!” for the first time when loading the single chair.

I continue to come back to Mad River Glen to be part of the fabric that fosters a new generation of skiers to be stewards of the experience we have all grown to love. It is those who are inspired by the rites of passage created by challenging terrain, those who have a continued positive experience with our employees, and those who learn to feel a sense of place that will secure our future and our traditions. I have been a coach since 2004 and a driving force behind the growth and success of our Freeskiing Team and our Ski School. It is through personal interaction with kids and families that I continue to strive to instill a high level of respect and care for our mountain and the unique quality it provides. It is these interactions, the community, the engaging terrain, and varying conditions that make the choice easy to continue returning to Mad River Glen every year.

3. What is your opinion of the Preserve our Paradise Campaign and its goals?

I feel that the Preserve our Paradise Campaign has been a success to-date. I recognize that the Co-op’s operating revenues cover the expenses of the day-to-day
mountain operations. However, operating revenues are insufficient to fund the significant capital expenditures needed to update and renovate Mad River's infrastructure. The aims of the capital campaign are focused directly at continuing Roland Palmedo’s community-based vision for Mad River Glen, protecting and preserving a skiing experience uniquely different from the rest of the ski industry and ensuring that skiers of all ages and abilities will continue to call Mad River Glen home. It is my hope that the campaign will allow the Cooperative to be a more forward-looking and sustainable organization.

4. If you had one agenda item you’d like to accomplish during your term what would it be?

I would like to work on a comprehensive forest and trail management plan. As the former Executive Director of Fellowship of the Wheel, a Chittenden County non-profit that builds and maintains over 100 miles of public multi-use trails on public and private property, I have considerable experience designing and creating sustainable, responsible user experiences in the woods. A plan that’s developed with care and respect of our forest and the mountain ecosystem will ensure the Co-op’s stewardship of the 700 acres of forest and trails on General Stark Mountain. With a comprehensive forest and trail plan Mad River can protect the varied forest canopy and ecosystem while preserving our renowned woods lines and glades for skiers now and in the future.

5. Over the history of the Co-op what are the things that stand out to you that have worked well and where do you think there is room for improvement?

There are a number of positive moves that the Co-op has made but the one that stands out to me the most is free skiing for kids aged twelve and under. The driver of the Mad River Glen community is the family experience and nothing helps accomplish this aim more. It gets families to the mountain in a more affordable way while also giving families with young skiers easier financial access to join reasonably priced and well-coached seasonal programs. These programs help kids develop an understanding of the mountain while building skiing skills for a lifetime. In turn, positive family experiences at accessible price points continue to build our special community of skiers for generations.

An area where the Co-op could improve is finding a way to attract and retain skiers in their 20s. Other mountains do a fantastic job in this area and it is that age range when people are putting down their skiing roots for their future families.

6. What ideas or experience can you contribute to the ongoing efforts of Mad River to improve its environmental sustainability?
I have a background in sustainable trail design and forest management. As the former Executive Director of a multi-use trail management non-profit and Vermont Trail Builder of the Year, I have experience creating and overseeing the implementation of forest and trail management plans with user satisfaction and environmental sustainability at the confluence of decision making. I would look forward to using this experience to work on a mountain management plan with key employee and Board of Trustee stakeholders.

7. With the inconsistent snowfall that we have been experiencing what ideas do you have on how to drive additional revenue to the Co-op?

There are a few areas where the Co-op could increase revenue but the most interesting consideration to me is night skiing. This could be offered on the practice slope on weekends and then by rental time, much like renting ice time for hockey, during the week. Vermont high school ski racing is starving for venues to host races later in the day and into the evening so their student-athletes don’t miss as much school. Night skiing would allow for the possibility of rented mid-week time for races and/or training as well as an adult race league. On Friday nights, it could offer out-of-state families arriving for the weekend a way to get on snow and enjoy the pub before starting the rest of their weekend.