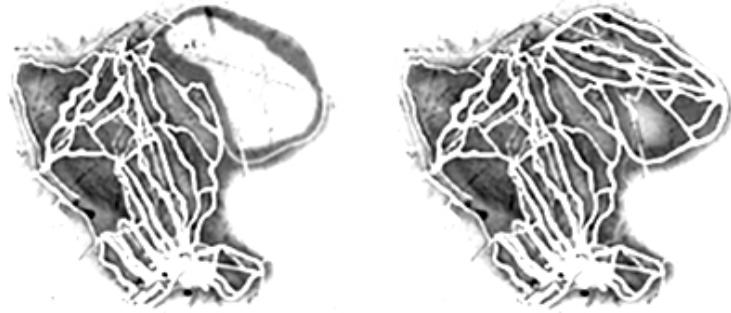


What's the real goal?

In June 2014, Okemo/Mount Sunapee Resort proposed to the Dept. of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) a significant expansion of the ski area at Mount Sunapee State Park. Okemo/MSR wants to extend ski trails and infrastructure across forested parkland onto private land in Goshen, where the resort operator owns hundreds of acres that abut the state park.



Existing Trail Network (L) and Proposed Expansion (R)

The master plan is suspiciously silent in regards to the scale and scope of residential and commercial development that will accompany the expansion.

- ➔ In two prior master plans (2004 and 2009), Okemo/MSR claimed residential development as “an integral part of the expansion plan.” The 2014 master plan includes a traffic study (2004) that details 175 to 250 housing units to be built on the lease operator's land abutting the park.
- ➔ The resort's lawsuit against the people of New Hampshire revealed their interest in residential development. Okemo/MSR claimed (in a 2014 legal brief) the loss of revenue from real estate development in Goshen amounted to millions.
- ➔ See FOMS website for more information: www.FriendsofMountSunapee.org.

Questions FOMS and other organizations are asking:

- What are the resort's long-term plans for real estate development?
- What are the environmental impacts of the project? (The plan includes 10-year old environmental assessment that appears incomplete and inaccurate.)
- What are the local, regional and statewide impacts of this proposal? What will be the impacts on Goshen's infrastructure if the town's population doubles?
- What are the legal and public policy implications of cross-border development and how will it impact other state parks in New Hampshire?
- How will the State assure appropriate management and financial oversight if Okemo/MSR operates partially on private land?
- What happens to the expansion at the end of the lease?
- Is expansion of the ski area at Mount Sunapee State Park appropriate and desirable? What are the criteria for making those decisions?



The Friends of Mount Sunapee supports improving the state park and ski area. However, **FOMS opposes Okemo's western expansion plan for Mount Sunapee.** This plan opens the way to cross-border private development in Goshen, which not only violates the mission of our park, but will diminish an ecologically important landscape—the Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands.

The resort-driven real estate development that will inevitably follow expansion will forever change the rural character of the communities in the mountain's shadow. Harmful impacts will affect other park uses and resources. Expansion will destroy the current hiking experience now enjoyed along the Summit Hiking Trail and diminish Mount Sunapee's natural heritage.

Friends of Mount Sunapee is a grassroots organization that seeks to preserve and protect Mount Sunapee State Park for its essential public values and preserve the region's quality of life, clean waters and open spaces. Please join us!

See FOMS website and Facebook page for more information, including our “Latest News”:

www.FriendsofMountSunapee.org

[www.Facebook.com/FriendsofMountSunapee](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMountSunapee)

FOMS, PO Box 199, Georges Mills, NH 03751
Phone (603) 863-0045
Email: info@FriendsofMountSunapee.org



Discussion of the
2015-2019 Proposed Master Plan
for Mount Sunapee:
Western Expansion into Goshen

**Does Public Benefit
or Private Profit
Determine the
Future of
Mount Sunapee
State Park?**



Major Concerns & Considerations

- ➔ Consideration of the master plan requires an **open accountable process, and informative interactive public hearings. Impact studies should be current and complete**, unlike those included in the 2014 plan. In October, DRED Commissioner Rose said many questions about the plan need answers and that he would release a draft response, and again accept public comment.
- ➔ **Our state parks exist for public benefit, not private gain.** This plan goes far beyond enhancing the skiing experience. It allows the lease holders to develop resort facilities on their privately owned land adjacent to the state park. To allow Okemo/MSR to use its management position at the state park ski area to facilitate resort development on private land violates the mission of our parks. Many families gave, sold or lost by eminent domain property for the formation of Mount Sunapee State Park, to be held in trust for the public good. Approval by the State would set a dangerous precedent for other N.H. public lands.
- ➔ **DRED has already approved a large number of previously proposed projects** for the ski area that Okemo has **not** yet implemented. If, as the lease holders claim, “enhancements” are critical for success, it makes sense to complete these projects before proposing a large expansion.
- ➔ **The proposed expansion will threaten rare forest** that is part of a larger mosaic of mature and old growth tracts of exemplary forest on Mount Sunapee. Some of the older trees within the park are over 250 years of age. A 2014 study by the N.H. Natural Heritage Bureau documents the existence of “exemplary forest communities” directly in the path of the proposed development. In addition to their rarity, because these forests are part of the 30,000 acre Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands Corridor their ecological value is increased. These exemplary forests are protected under state law and are extremely important educational and scientific public resources that must be protected for future generations.
- ➔ **Wildlife habitat.** The undeveloped west flank of Mount Sunapee is the northern end of the Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands, an unfragmented forest block that has been recognized by state wildlife officials as critical habitat and an important travel corridor for large mammals such as moose, black bear and bobcat. Construction of this new ski area will greatly diminish the value of this habitat. Additionally, the Sunapee Highlands is part of a far larger landscape—the last remaining area of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in central New England—the focus of the Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership.
- ➔ **Expansion will seriously impact the Summit Hiking Trail**, the only public trail on the western side of the park. Expansion will essentially destroy the current deep woodlands hiking experience by bisecting the trail several times with new ski runs and a major lift line. This will make winter hiking dangerous or impossible. Under the current plan no satisfactory re-route is possible.

The Summit Trail is part of the Greenway, a 75-mile loop of trails that connect 4 State Parks, 3 State Forests, and NH Fish and Game protected lands, as well as town and private properties. The SRKG also links with the 50-mile Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway and Pillsbury State Park. These hiking trails and conserved lands that they cross are vital to the State’s recreational economy.
- ➔ **Mount Sunapee State Park is a State Park with a ski area. It is not a private ski resort or amusement park**, and the park is not just for skiing. The N.H. Division of Parks and Recreation 10-year study (2010) found that 71% of park users feel our parks should focus on traditional uses, e.g.: hiking, picnicking, fishing, swimming, and other types of leisure. Many people now seek low-impact and low-cost recreation. In contrast, a family ski day at Mount Sunapee during the holiday season for two adults and two teens costs nearly \$300. Add a meal and rentals and the cost is \$500 a day.
- ➔ **Climate change.** Porter Fox, features editor of Powder Magazine, travels the world and sees less and less snow everywhere. “Half of the 103 resorts in the Northeast will likely not be able to stay open, and that’s in the next 30 years, which is pretty shocking,” Fox told CBS News, February 27, 2014.

Does this plan sound familiar?

Expansion into Goshen was proposed in two prior master plans (2004 and 2009). At the time, Governor John Lynch said expansion onto private land for condo development was inconsistent with our state parks. He refused to bring the plan forward.

Commissioner Jeffrey Rose, Department of Resources & Economic Development (DRED) considers and decides what proposals in the master plan to approve. If the commissioner approves the expansion, it will then go before Governor Hassan and the Executive Council.

Contact the Decision Makers

Governor Maggie Hassan

State House, 107 North Main Street,
Concord, NH 03301

Phone (603) 271-2121 Fax (603) 271-7640

Go to: www.governor.nh.gov/contact

Commissioner Jeffrey Rose, DRED

PO Box 1856, Concord, NH 03302-1856

Email: Jeffrey.Rose@dred.nh.gov

NH Executive Councilors

See: www.nh.gov/council

The Public Trust Doctrine requires that property subject to the Trust must not only be used for a public purpose, but must also be held available for use by the general public, may not be sold, and must be maintained for the natural uses peculiar to that resource.

The Public Trust Doctrine as it applies to our state parks is embodied in NH RSA 216-A:1 that states that the **first priority** of the park system is **“To protect and preserve unusual scenic, scientific, historical, recreational, and natural areas of the state.”**

Who owns what? The state-owned ski area at Mount Sunapee is now leased to CNL Lifestyle Properties, LLC, a Florida based real estate investment trust (See CLLY – OTC US). Triple Peaks, LLC (the Muellers) sold their three mountain resorts—Mount Sunapee, Okemo and Crested Butte—to CNL in 2008 for a reported \$132 million with a leaseback arrangement keeping the Muellers as managers.

Resort-real estate development is the growth model for big operators, such as CNL. Look at CNL’s portfolio of mountain lifestyle properties, which includes Loon and Omni/Mount Washington (Bretton Woods) in N.H., Okemo and Stratton in Vermont, and Sugarloaf and Sunday River in Maine.

When a group of Goshen residents visited Ludlow, Vt., (2004) to talk to the locals about the impact of Okemo’s resort development, this is some of what they heard:

- **Property taxes** more than doubled when Ludlow became a “donor town” due to an increase in property values.
- **85% of the homes** were owned by out-of-staters. Locals could not afford to buy them.
- **Okemo lawyers** lobbied for and got the residential density requirement misconstrued from its original one-acre zoning per residence (meaning one family) to one-acre per residence, which could house a 100-unit development.
- **The drive time through town** in winter can take 45 minutes.
- **Most small locally owned businesses** in Ludlow are gone. Local residents shop in Claremont or Rutland.

➔ See the **“Goshen Visits Ludlow Study”** via FOMS website:
<http://www.friendsofmountsunapee.org/goshen-visits-ludlow-2004>

See the film **Resorting to Madness** via <http://vimeo.com/86809444>