
PROPOSAL FOR THE OPERATION OF THE MOUNT SUNAPEE SKI AREA

Submitted to:

*The State of New Hampshire Joint Legislative Committee &
The Department of Resources & Economic Development*

Submitted by:

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J. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Okemo has a long history and good track record of development in a mountain environment. Starting with the development of conceptual plans, we consider natural features such as wetlands, streams, and necessary wildlife habitat. We try to avoid these areas or at least provide sufficient buffers to protect them. When we have construction projects involving earthwork, we utilize the Vermont Handbook for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control on construction sites. We will follow the same practices at Mount Sunapee.

I. Trail Construction

When constructing trails, it is our practice to have no more than four acres of earth open at one time, to seed and mulch all acres prior to weekends, and to cease earthwork during rain events. Prior to earthwork, we will install diversion ditches to divert water away from construction areas with hay bale check dams in the ditches, and silt fencing is used when appropriate. We will work closely with the State of New Hampshire prior to and during trail construction.

II. Trail Maintenance

During summer months, we will have an ongoing maintenance program. This program will include replacement of culverts, reshaping of water bars, trimming of trees and the mowing of trails.

III. Stormwater Discharge Device Maintenance

We will institute a biannual stormwater discharge device maintenance program. Twice per year, stormwater conveyance and treatment devices including stormwater ponds, grass and stone lined swales, culverts, catch basins and vegetated buffer strips will be inspected and maintained. Maintenance will occur more often if necessary.

IV. Sewage Treatment Plant

Operating and maintaining this facility at a high level is vitally important for the environment and the continued sound operation of Mount Sunapee. We will manage this plant to meet or exceed New Hampshire standards continually.

N.
PROPOSAL FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

I. SKI LIFTS, SNOW MAKING CAPABILITIES,
SKI LODGES AND/OR OTHER BUILDINGS,
UTILITIES AND SERVICE ROADS

It is anticipated that we will invest approximately \$10,000,000 in capital improvements over the next six to seven years at Mount Sunapee. The improvements will be part of an all-inclusive recreation enhancement program aimed at expanding and creating both winter and summer recreation opportunities at the mountain. Improvements will be made and proposed in a three-part approach.

1. Immediate improvements
 - Replacement of the Summit Triple Chairlift with a detachable quad chair
 - Replacement of the Sun Bowl Double Chairlift with a fixed grip triple or quad chairlift
 - Renovation / expansion of the North Peak Lodge
2. Future planning and improvements to be made in existing areas of lifts, trails, and base area facilities
3. Future planning and improvements to be made in peripheral areas surrounding the current lifts, trails, and base area facilities

A general improvement master plan and planning approach is graphically depicted on the map labeled, *Concept Improvement Plan and Planning Strategy*, included at the end of this section.

Approach

Plans were prepared in 1985 by Erikson Associates and in 1989 and 1991 by The Cavendish Partnership which outlined recommended improvements for the area. The Erikson recommendations were primarily directed at on-mountain lift, trail and snow making upgrades, many of which were implemented. The Base Area Master Plan prepared by The Cavendish Partnership in 1989 and 1991 focused on base area improvements including lodge facilities, utilities, parking, and vehicular and skier circulation. Key components of the master plan included:

- A new base lodge sited in the vicinity of the North Peak Lodge. It was intended that this facility would serve the primary day lodge and skier services needs of the area.
- Renovation of the existing lodge to accommodate the racing program, ski patrol, first aid, employees, special groups and storage.
- Expansion of the parking areas.
- Expansion / upgrade of the sewer infrastructure and disposal facilities.

The improvements proposed in the master plan were prepared in response to critical needs of the area as assessed by The Cavendish Partnership and as described by various user groups, state employees, management, and others. Workshops were held with the various groups and individuals and extensive input was gathered suggesting specific improvements as well as the overall aesthetic flavor for how those improvements should be implemented. Plans, elevations, and perspectives were prepared that graphically described the improvements and cost estimates were provided for each component of the master plan. (Excerpts of the graphic components of those plans are included on the following pages.)

We will revisit the plans prepared by Erikson Associates and the Base Area Master Plan prepared by The Cavendish Partnership to assess which improvements have been implemented and update the plans to reflect current needs and recreation trends. The plan for improvements will include immediate improvements as described in the following narrative followed by the preparation of a five year master plan for longer range improvements. The plan will be prepared by the year 2000 as required in the lease agreement. Because of our experience with leasing state lands for recreational purposes, we understand the public sensitivity that accompanies any proposal for improvements associated with public lands. Okemo's planning philosophy has always been one of working with our neighbors in preparing plans that respond not only to our business goals, but also to the broader issues of environmental suitability and the needs of the community.

1. Immediate Improvements

It is important that improvements be made during the first season of operation that enhance skiing and snowboarding at Mount Sunapee, and that demonstrate our commitment to the overall improvement of the recreational experience at the mountain. It is our goal to make three primary improvements before the first season of operation as timing allows.

The first improvement will be the replacement of the Summit Triple Chairlift with a detachable quad. The Summit Chair is the longest and most important lift on the mountain, transporting skiers and snowboarders out of the base area directly to the top of the mountain and distributing them to the majority of terrain. It is critical that this lift have an uphill capacity capable of transporting skiers and snowboarders out of the base area quickly and efficiently. A new high speed lift will reduce congestion in the base area and distribute skiers and snowboarders more efficiently, not to mention the positive aspects of a quicker ride to the top. A detachable lift will cut the ride time to the summit in half.

Concurrently, the Sun Bowl Double Chairlift will be replaced with either a fixed grip triple or quad chairlift. Being the second longest and one of the oldest lifts on the mountain, the existing double chair is in need of replacing with a higher capacity, faster chair. The Sun Bowl Chair will be replaced with either the existing Summit Chair when it is removed or by a new quad. In either case a new lift will improve skier and snowboarder movement and distribution in the Sun Bowl area.

Depending upon timing and permit requirements, we will begin renovations or expansion of the North Peak Lodge. As identified in the Base Area Master Plan (*The Cavendish Partnership, 1989 and 1991*) the base area is in serious need of additional square footage to accommodate current users and to become more balanced with the capacity of the mountain. We will focus on renovating and/or expanding lodge space in the vicinity of the North Peak Lodge. We will explore options for the renovations or expansion, which may take various forms depending upon timing of the lease signing, design and permit requirements. Options include permanent expansion of the existing lodge, temporary expansion of the lodge or even temporary detached lodge facilities. We believe that the site of the North Peak Lodge is the logical location for expanded lodge facilities given its proximity to the Summit chair and the Province beginner area. It is centrally located and provides the best location for skier circulation.

Another item which should be addressed the first year are the size of both the day care and the children's ski school facilities. Mount Sunapee is a family mountain, and in order to accommodate all members of the family, these two areas will be expanded.

2. Future planning and improvements to be made in the existing areas of lifts, trails and base area facilities

We will initiate an aggressive planning process to assess and chart the course for future improvements to be made within the confines of the existing lift and trail network and base area. We will review all studies and proposals that have been made to date and update them based upon current mountain and base area conditions. Using this information we will formulate a five year master plan that lays out the improvements for the areas within the immediate area of lifts, trails and base facilities. The plan will include, but not be limited to the following investigations and recommendations. These are options that will be considered and proposed after thorough analysis and investigation of current site and market conditions.

POTENTIAL MOUNTAIN & BASE IMPROVEMENTS (in the existing areas of lifts, trails and base area facilities)

LIFTS

- A Sun Bowl Double (to be replaced the first year of operation)
- B Spruce Triple (replace)
- C Duckling Double (replace)
- D North Peak Triple (upgrade)
- E Summit Triple (to be replaced the first year of operation)
- F Beginner Pony Express Tow (replace)
- G Province Double (replace)
- New Chairlift in the North Ridge area

TRAILS

- Widening and regrading certain trails
- Improving connections
- New trails in the North Ridge / Cataract area

SNOW MAKING

- Expanded Coverage
- Longer Season Capabilities
- Add additional air and water capacity

LODGE(S) and STRUCTURES

- New Lodge Construction/North Peak Lodge Expansion (to be done the first year of operation)
- Main Base Renovation
- Summit Building Renovation / Expansion
- New indoor base area recreation / activity space
- First Aid
- Snowmaking relocation
- Maintenance
- Day Care & SKIwee Expansion (to be done the first year of operation)

ROADS & PARKING

- Reduce Lot #1
- Expand Lots #2 & #3
- New Drop Off Area(s)
- Shuttle Route(s)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewer

- Lagoon Expansion
- Lagoon Aeration, Routing & Deepening
- Spray Field Expansion
- Low Flow Fixtures
- Use of Gray Water
- Treatment Plant Construction

Water

- Well Development

EXPANDED WINTER ACTIVITIES

- Holiday Events and Carnivals
- Tubing
- Snowboard Park
- Ice Skating
- Night skiing, boarding, tubing and skating

3. Future planning and improvements to be made in peripheral areas surrounding the current lifts, trails, and base area facilities

As the planning for improvements of the existing lifts, trails and base facilities proceeds, we will explore opportunities for expanding summer and winter recreation activities outside the existing area of lifts, trails and base facilities. We understand that thorough environmental and land capability analyses will need to be conducted prior to proposing expanded recreation improvements, and we anticipate working closely with the state in determining the scope of such expansion and delineating key resource protection areas. The improvement proposals will be included in the five year master plan.

LIFTS

- New Lift in the Sun Bowl area (east of the existing lift and trail network)

TRAILS

- New Trail Network east of the Sun Bowl area
- New Trail Network above the lower parking area and below the "Campground"
- New Trail Network north and adjacent to the Province area

LODGE(S) and STRUCTURES

- New Sun Bowl Lodge
- New Learning Center in Province area for first time skiers/snowboarders

ROADS & PARKING

- New Parking Lot between Province area and south of lagoons
- Expanded Shuttle Route(s)
- Improved Road to Sun Bowl area

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewer

- Lagoon Expansion
- Lagoon Aeration, Routing & Deepening
- Spray Field Expansion

Low Flow Fixtures
Use of Gray Water
Water
Well Development

II. SUMMER RECREATION

The Mount Sunapee region is very well known as a summer recreation area. Mount Sunapee will be developing and enhancing programs to make more summer activities available. Some of the potential activities are as follows:

Mountain Biking:

- ♦ With Mount Sunapee close to the main route from major New England cities, it is an ideal setting for mountain biking. The mountain biking program at Mount Sunapee will consist of an elaborate trail system from the summit area that will cater to beginners to expert bike riders. The trails will be built on existing ski trails and also new areas of the ski resort consisting of work roads and logging trails. There will also be a children's area in the beginner skiing area which is very flat and ideal for children.
- ♦ There will be rental equipment available. This will include bikes, helmets, shoes and other equipment.
- ♦ There will be package rates for the guests that will include trail fees and bike rental.

Scenic Rides:

Scenic chairlift rides will be available to guests during the Summer and Fall.

- ♦ Guests will be able to ride the chairlift to the summit.
- ♦ Once they arrive at the summit, there will be a chance to walk around to see the views and then ride the lift back down.

Hiking:

- ♦ A hiking program at Mount Sunapee will allow our guests to explore the wonders of nature on the existing ski trails as well as work roads. Guests will be able to ride the chairlift to the summit area and hike the marked trails on the top of the mountain or walk up the trails and explore the area on their own. There will be a route map available and scenic overlooks will have benches for the guests.

Other summer activities that may be considered:

In-line Skating & Skateboard Park

A summer in-line skating program & skateboard park will provide the guests of Mount Sunapee with another activity in which to enjoy the region. The park would have the following:

- ♦ Asphalt covered inclined area.
- ♦ Asphalt covered skate park with ramps and jumps to be used by both skateboarders and in-line skaters.

- ♦ Halfpipe ramp made out of wood.
- ♦ A regulation in-line skating hockey rink complete with side boards and nets.

During the summer months there will be weekly camps for both disciplines. These camps will consist of daily group instruction, competitions, free time and free time activities. Also during the Summer, there will be local competitions for both skateboarding and in-line skating.

Alpine Slide

The construction of an Alpine slide is a possibility for another summer activity. This slide will be approximately 2000-2500 feet long and would use the existing trail and lift network.

Concerts

The staging of concerts or festivals may also take place during the summer months. These concerts will be family orientated, and made available to all the visitors of the region. The concerts will not exceed the size of the comfortable capacity of the ski area during the winter.

Water Park

Because of its central location and a broad base area, a small water park with pools and slides would be very desirable. A water park will draw from the local and regional residents as well as the vacationers that are here in the Summer. A more thorough plan will be developed in our Mountain Development Plan.

Other potential activities include:

- Craft Fairs
- Atheletic Events
- Weddings
- Family Gatherings
- Special Ethnic Festivals
- Children's Day Camps
- Nature and Wildlife Interpretation and Education
- Archery Competitions
- Food and Brewery Festivals

