



Sierra at Tahoe Master Development Plan

April 28, 2006



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V. SHORT-TERM PROJECTS PLAN

In the existing conditions section several discrete short-term projects were identified to bring the resort into an improved balance to meet the needs of the existing guests. These short-term projects focus on imbalances that the existing resort is experiencing, and they deal mainly with deficiencies in skier services, mountain circulation, and shortages of parking. By addressing these needs, the projects will help meet the needs of, and improve the experience for, the existing resort guests. The projects are shown in Figure V-1

A. SKI TERRAIN

Two projects are proposed in this section in relation to the resort's existing ski terrain. First is Sugar 'n Spice trail grading to address the ability level constraint described in the existing conditions section. The second is an SUP boundary expansion for the Huckleberry area. This area is currently skied under an outfitter/guide permit, the SUP boundary modification will bring the area into the resort to allow for better access and control. This area is approximately 322 acres in size and is shown on Figure V-1.

On the Sugar 'n Spice trail, the steep section of the trail just below where the Marten trail merges in will be graded out so that the ability level of the trail can accurately be rated Novice. This steeper 800 foot section of 29% slope will be graded to a consistent slope of 25%. This change will allow the easiest way off the top of the mountain to be rated Novice, which will improve the circulation and desirability of the trail. The grading will be on the existing run and will not increase the skiable acreage or capacity of the run. Since the whole Sugar 'n Spice trail will be rated Novice, both of the Novice runs that are located above the steep section, Upper Snowshoe and Marten, will be rated Novice as well. This will allow novice level skiers to comfortably repeat ski those runs and the whole Grandview lift area.

B. TERRAIN PARKS

In the area between the Aspen and Aspen West runs, the general location of the existing halfpipe, some earthwork is recommended to facilitate the winter creation of the half pipe in that area. Constructing a halfpipe out of snow typically requires up to 500,000 cubic feet of snow. Depending on natural snowfall, this can require up to two to three million gallons of water to be used for snowmaking. In an effort to reduce the quantity of water, time, and energy expended to construct the existing halfpipe, Sierra will do earthwork in the general vicinity of the current halfpipe, as illustrated in figure V-1. As there may be some conflicts with the existing drainage, the final location for this grading is yet to be determined. At the time the project is proposed and undergoes environmental review and design, the appropriate biological surveys and drainage studies will be performed to ensure the project does not adversely affect the drainage.

C. COMFORTABLE CARRYING CAPACITY

There would be no change to Sierra's existing comfortable carrying capacity associated with the Short-term projects. It would remain at 6,010.

B. SKI TERRAIN

The goal of the ski terrain upgrading program is to allow for better utilization of the existing terrain, as well as provide some new, more varied terrain. Sierra will construct several new trails within the existing resort area, including new terrain off the Grandview, Tahoe King, and Nob Hill chairs, and new West Bowl terrain. Additionally, new terrain will be opened up in the Huckleberry area. This will add approximately 70 acres of additional terrain to Sierra's developed trail network (310 acres), for a total of 380 acres.

Two runs in the West Bowl area are approved through the 2001 Environmental Assessment but have not yet been implemented. One of the runs will be built in conjunction with the West Bowl Return lift line clearing, and will connect the top terminal of the new lift with the existing Beaver run. The second run will connect several existing clearings and will create additional terrain for accessing the bottom of the West Bowl area.

Sierra will smooth the trails on the backside of the resort. This terrain, accessed from the El Dorado lift, is quite rocky and irregular, resulting in a situation where the trails cannot be skied if there is a low snow base. Since this side of the mountain has no snowmaking infrastructure, a considerable amount of natural snow is required to open the terrain. This results in underutilization of that terrain until there is sufficient snow cover. Depending on the amount of natural snowfall in a given year, this terrain can remain closed for some time. This can be of particular concern during the peak visitation of the early season holiday periods. In such situations, not having access to or use of this side of the mountain puts additional pressure on the balance of the mountain, resulting in higher slope densities and longer lift lines. Doing this surface grading (often referred to as "summer grooming") will smooth out the irregularities and allow for better utilization of this existing terrain, by allowing it to be opened earlier in the season.

Additional proposed terrain improvements within the current lease boundary include several new gladed runs and improvements to several existing runs. Four runs are proposed for the main part of the resort, one between the lift line and Upper Dynamite, one between Preacher's Passion and Lower Dynamite, one from Upper Main to Echo, and one from Lower Main to Aspen. One gladed run is proposed for the West Bowl, between Sleighride and Dogwood. All of these runs are in areas that currently have relatively light tree cover, so extensive clearing would not be required to make them more skiable. For this reason, only selective thinning is proposed for these new runs. These new trails will create more advanced and expert level terrain and will provide better utilization, dispersal, and circulation of skiers on those parts of the existing mountain.

The Huckleberry expansion will create new advanced and expert level skiing. The area will consist of around 170 acres of lift serviced terrain, of which around 30 acres will be selectively thinned to create more defined ski spaces. The only full clearing that will be required is for the lift line and the bottom terminal area. The rest of the area is already open or the tree cover is sparse enough that very little tree cutting will be required. An additional approximately 150 acres of terrain will remain open for hiking access. Appendix C - Table 2 lists details of the proposed terrain upgrades.