

Basic details of these projects and our rationale for proposing them are as follows.

Mineral Basin and Mary Ellen Gulch Boundary Expansion

Over the years Snowbird has acquired a number of mining claims dispersed within National Forest System lands in the Wasatch Range. Those in Mineral Basin and Mary Ellen Gulch offer the potential for a logical and beneficial expansion of the resort. As a result, Snowbird seeks to add about 780 acres to our SUP area, including 387 acres (49.6%) of National Forest System land and 393 acres (50.4%) of our private land in Mineral Basin and Mary Ellen Gulch. This expansion would be in the best interest of Snowbird and the public for several reasons, including the following:

- It offers Snowbird the most practical means of meeting increasing demand for lift-served terrain, allowing access to adjacent, easily developed terrain that is in less demand by other users than Tri-Canyon Area alternatives.
- It would consolidate a complex mix of National Forest System and private lands within the SUP boundary, improving the overall utility and management of these lands
- It would provide Snowbird access for the “reasonable use” of our private inholdings, as stipulated in the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA, 1980).
- Snowbird’s management of the terrain gained through the expansion would limit snowmobile access to Twin Peaks Wilderness, solving an ongoing management issue for the UWCNF.
- Our private inholdings and surrounding National Forest System lands include several historic mining sites known to contribute to American Fork water quality issues. Snowbird has a well documented track record of successful clean-up operations, and the expansion would provide an incentive for similar efforts.

New Tram, Mary Ellen Gulch Lift, and Mineral Basin Express Extension or Fixed-Grip Double

To address the demand for more lift-served terrain Snowbird proposes to install a small low-capacity tram from Hidden Peak to the top of the American Fork Twins and a chairlift from Mary Ellen Gulch to Sinners Pass (on the ridgeline between Mineral Basin and Mary Ellen Gulch). The existing Mineral Basin Express lift would also be extended by about 2,000 feet by moving the lower terminal down the canyon. Alternatively, a fixed-grip double chair on the same alignment might be considered. These lift projects would be within the SUP boundary following the expansion described above.

Much of Snowbird’s privately owned land in Mary Ellen Gulch lies in the upper portion of the canyon. The proposed tram to the top of the American Fork Twins is necessary to provide reasonable skier access to those private holdings. The proposed chairlift from Mary Ellen Gulch to Sinners Pass would provide skier egress back to Mineral Basin as well as round-trip skiing on Mary Ellen Gulch’s lower, northern slopes. Once skiers were back in Mineral Basin, the Mineral Basin Express extension or new double chair would facilitate their return to Hidden Peak to repeat the circuit, access other parts of the ski area, or return to the base area.

Mary Ellen Gulch and Sinners Pass Skiway/Roads

To provide skier, snowcat, and service access to Mary Ellen Gulch and from Sinners Pass, we propose two skiway/service roads. The first would connect the existing Path to Paradise with the miners’ road in Mary Ellen Gulch. The second would originate at Sinners Pass and descend to the base of the extended Mineral Basin Express lift. It would be mostly on private property.