



WINTER NARRATIVE

Final Draft

November 3, 2009

Map ID

Description

1

CONCEPT: Major multi-use staging area at the borrow pit

This will be the primary staging area for the Sherwins area and therefore the most developed. Facilities, which will be shared between both parking areas (non-motorized at the southern end, motorized turnaround and/or parallel roadside parking at the northern end; see also Winter Map ID #3), will include bathrooms, a beacon basin/interpretive area, and signage. This staging area will be open year-round (see Summer Map ID #1) to all uses and will be served by public transit (see Winter Map ID #12).

RATIONALE: The tank-farm facility to be built by Turner Propane at the borrow pit offers several opportunities to create a major staging area in this location: Sherwin Creek Road will require conversion to a hardened surface from its intersection with Old Mammoth Road to the borrow pit, which must be plowed in the winter and therefore will provide for improved vehicular travel; construction of the tank farm will allow the staging area to be situated in an already-disturbed location; and future water infrastructure for the tank farm may be usable for bathrooms at the staging area. This area has traditionally been, and continues to be, a popular staging area for recreationists, as evidenced by existing winter conditions (crowded vehicle parking along Sherwin Creek Road). A beacon basin/interpretive area would be an excellent addition to this staging area due to the expected high volume of users.

Creating a separate parking area with over-snow vehicle (OSV)–specific design allows for separation of motorized and non-motorized staging, which mitigates noise and air pollution, reduces potential safety hazards and/or conflicts between snowmobiles and children, dogs, or others, and provides an easy loading/unloading area for those with trailers. Locating the non-motorized parking area farther south allows for better access to the proposed snowplay area (see Winter Map ID #2) for families with children too small to walk a long distance as well as for proximity to non-motorized recreation opportunities to the west.

2

CONCEPT: Non-motorized snowplay area adjacent to the borrow pit staging area

Situate a non-motorized snowplay area on the moraine that is nearest the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1) to provide sledding and other complementary wintertime recreation opportunities. This area will be open to non-motorized snowplay only.

RATIONALE: This area is ideal for snowplay due to its moderate slope, gentle terrain, and aspect (north-facing, which best retains snow). Its proximity to the borrow pit staging area makes it highly visible and therefore attractive to potential users, enables them to access the snowplay area via a very short walk, and offers bathrooms and other facilities nearby, which is important for families with small children.

Sherwins Working Group: Winter Map ID Descriptions



Map ID #	Description
3	<p>CONCEPT: Additional off-loading area for OSV users near the borrow pit staging area Extend a spur from the borrow pit staging area along Sherwin Creek Road that ends in a turnaround that can accommodate a pickup truck with a trailer, but is not limited to or reserved strictly for OSV users. Facilities will be limited to signage; users will access additional facilities at the main borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1).</p> <p>RATIONALE: Providing an additional off-loading area with a turnaround will help to relieve potential congestion at the formal borrow pit staging area, enabling drivers to drop off or pick up both motorized and non-motorized users more efficiently and with ease. The proposed site's distance from the main staging area will naturally contribute to separation of use.</p>
4	<p>OMITTED</p>
5a	<p>CONCEPT: Formal non-motorized access/egress point at Snowcreek VIII Formalize the access/egress point at Snowcreek VIII as identified in the Snowcreek VIII Master Plan. Facilities will include signage and the area will be served by public transit (see Winter Map ID #12). This point will be open year-round to non-motorized use only (see Summer Map ID #3).</p> <p>RATIONALE: Formalization of this access/egress point will allow residents of, and visitors to, the Snowcreek VIII development access to the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1) as well as to other amenities recommended in this proposal, such as the groomed portion of the stacked-loop trail system (Winter Map ID #9a), while also allowing users to travel through Snowcreek VIII to visit the planned hotel and retail amenities.</p>
5b	<p>CONCEPT: Formal non-motorized access/egress point at the Snowcreek golf course Formalize the access/egress point at the Snowcreek golf course as consistent with the Snowcreek VIII Master Plan. Facilities will be limited to signage. This point will be open to non-motorized winter use only.</p> <p>RATIONALE: Formalization of this point will facilitate clear egress across the Snowcreek golf course and back to town for skiers and snowboarders exiting the Sherwins, a very popular frontcountry ski and snowboard amenity, avoiding conflict with private-property owners while providing a direct and easy-to-use route. This point will also connect to Snowcreek VIII–area transit stops (see Winter Map ID #12).</p> <p>NOTE: The exact location of this point will be determined by construction phasing of the Snowcreek VIII project.</p>

Map ID #

Description

5c

CONCEPT: Non-motorized trailhead at Tamarack Street

Develop an ADA-accessible non-motorized trailhead at the end of Tamarack Street. Facilities will be limited to signage and the creation of three to six parking spaces, at least one of which will be an ADA-only spot. The trailhead will remain ungroomed. This trailhead will be open year-round to non-motorized use only (see Summer Map ID #2) and is intended to serve as a secondary, neighborhood-centric access/egress point.

RATIONALE: Tamarack Street is an access/egress point popular with neighborhood residents and others. Improving the site with parking and signage will increase ease of use and accessibility while respecting the private-property owner. Formalizing it as a trailhead creates an important link within the stacked-looped trail system in the meadow (see Winter Map ID #9a). This trailhead will provide an alternative access/egress point to the Sherwins area for non-motorized users wishing total separation from OSV staging at the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1) and will primarily serve neighborhood residents. This trailhead is intended to support a relatively low volume of users as compared to formal staging areas such as the borrow pit, Mill City (see Winter Map ID #6), and the Lake Mary Road winter closure (see Winter Map ID #16), which will help to keep traffic levels low in the neighborhood and alleviate safety concerns of residents regarding increased traffic on this narrow street.

NOTE: Signage regarding avalanche danger should be considered at this spot.

NOTE: The private-property owner's future development plans will influence the exact location of this trailhead as well as potential usage, signage, and parking, but also may provide opportunity for site improvement concurrent with private construction.

Map ID

Description

6

CONCEPT: Multi-use staging area at Mill City

Develop a multi-use staging area at Mill City, located at the Old Mammoth Road winter closure. Facilities will include signage, expanded parking, and bathrooms. This staging area will be open year-round to non-motorized use (see Summer Map ID #4) and open to OSV use after April 17, when snowmobiles are permitted in the Lakes Basin. This staging area will be served by public transit (see Winter Map ID #12).

RATIONALE: This facility will provide an alternative to the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1), which will relieve pressure on the main parking/staging areas at the eastern end of the Sherwins and provide an alternative access/egress point to the Sherwins area for non-motorized users wishing total separation from OSV staging prior to April 17. It also will relieve pressure on the existing Lake Mary Road winter closure staging area. Parking along Old Mammoth Road will continue to be permitted per Town of Mammoth Lakes policy until the parking area is completed.

7

CONCEPT: Non-motorized connector from the Mill City staging area (Winter Map ID #6) to Hidden Lake meadow

Articulate a non-motorized connector between the Mill City staging area and the stacked-loop system within the Hidden Lake meadow on the west end of the Sherwins area (see Winter Map ID #9a). The connector will be ungroomed and receive no maintenance, but will be signed to indicate the level of difficulty. The trail will be articulated over a summer trail and will be open to non-mechanized use (no bicycles) year-round (see Summer Map ID #5a).

RATIONALE: This connector satisfies an existing need to provide efficient, marked travel for cross-country skiers and snowshoers from popular Lakes Basin amenities such as Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center and the frequently used meadow at the west end of the Sherwins. This feature will provide an important link directly into the stacked-loop trail system (see Winter Map ID #9a). Lack of grooming will make the trail less visible, keeping use to a minimum, and the steeper slope angle and cautionary signage will deter less-skilled skiers and snowshoers.

Map ID #	Description
8	<p>CONCEPT: Grooming on Old Mammoth Road from the Mill City staging area (Winter Map ID #6) to the Lakes Basin Groom over the existing Old Mammoth Road alignment from the Mill City staging area to the intersection of Old Mammoth Road and Lake Mary Road. This will be corduroy only (no Nordic track) that will be open to non-motorized use only until April 17, when the Lakes Basin opens for OSV use.</p> <p>RATIONALE: Grooming this portion of Old Mammoth Road will facilitate connectivity to the Lakes Basin for non-motorized users, as it will provide an easier surface on which to cross-country ski, snowshoe, or skin. Following the existing road alignment will allow grooming to occur with a low snow threshold, keeping this access/egress corridor open longer than would be possible if it were groomed over vegetation.</p>
9a	<p>CONCEPT: Non-motorized stacked-loop trail system in the meadow Articulate a stacked-loop trail system from the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1), along the base of the Sherwins to the Tamarack Street trailhead (see Winter Map ID #5c), and back to the borrow pit staging area. Facilities will include signage and some maintenance; a specific grooming program will be developed to provide a quality experience for multiple uses, which may include separate trails or delineation as appropriate. The westernmost loop is intended to be left ungroomed, while the section connecting the borrow pit staging area and the Tamarack Street trailhead is intended to be groomed. This system will be aligned, if possible, over the summertime system (see Summer Map ID #8) and will be open to non-motorized use only. This system will be contained within the developed recreation area described in Winter Map ID #18 and will provide connectivity to the Lakes Basin via the connector described in Winter Map ID #7.</p> <p>RATIONALE: To improve the existing non-motorized opportunities in the meadow (the legacy blue-diamond signage system, as one example), a “stacked-loop” or “nested” trail system with partial grooming will be created to offer multiple route options to a variety of winter users, including a quality groomed cross-country skiing experience. The primary section of trail (aligned over the multi-use path, or MUP, identified in Summer Map ID #7), out from which the smaller nested loops will branch, will connect to the access points identified in Winter Map ID #5a (formal non-motorized access/egress point at Snowcreek VIII), #5b (formal non-motorized access/egress point at the Snowcreek golf course), and #5c (non-motorized trailhead at Tamarack Street), providing consistent and easy access/egress across the area to the loop system, the borrow pit staging area, and points of connection farther north and east. Grooming will provide a packed surface for dog-walkers, snowshoers, pedestrians, cross-country skiers, and others and will allow these users a lengthy maintained-route option. Leaving the western loop ungroomed (but signed) will provide an option for those seeking a more “wild” or “natural” experience.</p>

Map ID

Description

9b

CONCEPT: Dog policy for stacked-loop trail system in the meadow

Dog owners are free to have their pets off-leash on ungroomed non-motorized trails and in open areas, but dogs must be under voice control. Dogs must be leashed on groomed non-motorized trails, at the snowplay area (see Winter Map ID #2), and at all trailheads and staging areas. Facilities will include signage and doggie-bag stations along the main trail.

RATIONALE: As on-leash policies are increasingly enforced at other areas, such as Shady Rest Park, an alternative should be provided to those who would like to take their pets for a walk leash-free. Clear signage outlining this policy and providing trail-etiquette education is essential (see Winter Map ID #13). The doggie-bag facilities installed along the trail at regular intervals will help to ensure cleanup compliance, which will not only keep the area tidy, but also will reduce potential conflict between dog-walkers and other users.

10a

CONCEPT: Non-motorized connector from the borrow pit staging area to Mammoth Creek Park East at the bridge

Develop a groomed connector (corduroy, but no Nordic track) between the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1) and Mammoth Creek Park East at the bridge near Hayden Cabin (see Summer Map ID #25). This connector will be open to non-motorized use only and will be consistent with the alignment of the connector described in Summer Map ID #6.

RATIONALE: This trail will encourage and facilitate use of Mammoth Creek Park East as an alternate staging area and will provide connectivity between the park, the borrow pit staging area, the stacked-loop trail system (see Winter Map ID #9a), the Mammoth Lakes Trail System, and formal access/egress points along the meadow's northern boundary.

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10b	<p>CONCEPT: Off-leash dog area north of Sherwin Creek Road Designate a zone that is north of Sherwin Creek Road and east of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) stables where dogs may be off-leash and are not required to respond to voice command. Facilities will include signage and doggie-bag stations, and the area will not be groomed or fenced. Dogs must be leashed, however, at all trailheads and staging areas.</p> <p>RATIONALE: As on-leash policies are increasingly enforced at other pet-play areas, such as Shady Rest Park, an alternative should be provided to those who would like to walk, play with, or exercise their pets leash-free. This specific area is a logical choice due to its proximity to the borrow pit staging area parking (easy and quick to access; see Winter Map ID #1), its lack of groomed trails (reduces potential conflict with other users), and the tendency for this area to become packed down relatively quickly due to foot traffic and OSV use.</p>
11	<p>OMITTED</p>
12	<p>CONCEPT: Public-transit stops near staging areas and trailheads Public-transit stops should be located within reasonable walking distance of the following staging areas and trailheads: the Mill City staging area (see Winter Map ID #6); the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1); the Lake Mary Road winter closure staging area (see Winter Map ID #16); and the Snowcreek VIII access/egress point (see Winter Map ID #5a). See also the public-transit proposal described in Summer Map ID #28.</p> <p>RATIONALE: Public-transit stops close to staging areas and trailheads will make it easy for those who do not have a vehicle available to them (or a driver's license) to access the Sherwins zone via formal access/egress points with facilities of some kind. Expanded routes support the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan vision for public-transportation mobility and can help alleviate potential traffic congestion both on the roads and at the parking areas. Adding stops near these points also supports the area's internal connectivity (i.e., the stacked-loop system described in Winter Map ID #9a) by enabling users to enter or exit from the location that is most desirable or convenient.</p> <p>NOTE: The turnaround for public transit at the Mill City staging area could be built at the same time that the parking area is expanded.</p>

Sherwins Working Group: Winter Map ID Descriptions



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13	<p>CONCEPT: Signage and wayfinding system A comprehensive signage and wayfinding system should be installed throughout the study area, including educational and interpretive opportunities. See also the signage and wayfinding proposal described in Summer Map ID #30.</p> <p>RATIONALE: A uniform and comprehensive signage and wayfinding system will enhance the user experience by providing specific information (trail length, degree of difficulty, etc.), more general information (overview of stacked-loop system, public-transit schedules, etc.), interpretive opportunities (anatomy of a meadow, mining-town history, etc.), and education that will assist with enforcement of policies (on- and off-leash areas, motorized/non-motorized use, etc.).</p>
14	OMITTED
15	OMITTED
16	<p>CONCEPT: Multi-use staging area at the Lake Mary Road winter closure Develop a formal multi-use staging area east of Lake Mary Road, above the bridge. Facilities will include signage and parking. The staging area will be open to non-motorized use year-round (see Summer Map ID #12a) and to OSV use only after April 17, when snowmobiles are permitted in the Lakes Basin. This staging area will be served by public transit (see Winter Map ID #12).</p> <p>RATIONALE: This staging area will relieve existing pressure on the current Lake Mary Road parking used to access the Sherwins, Panorama Dome, Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center, and other Lakes Basin recreation amenities.</p>
17	<p>CONCEPT: Improved trail to the Sherwins from Lake Mary Road Create a more visible, guided connection between Lake Mary Road and the Sherwins by installing a set of simple signage. This route will not be groomed and will be open to non-motorized use only.</p> <p>RATIONALE: The trail currently used to access the Sherwin Ridge from Lake Mary Road, though heavily used, is not formally recognized by the USFS. Making it “legal” will allow the trail to be aligned to address erosion and other environmental concerns and will enable a simple, small set of signage to be installed at the trailhead (and other spots where necessary) to guide users up the most sustainable route.</p>

Map ID #	Description
18	<p>CONCEPT: Developed, partially groomed non-motorized recreation zone extending from the borrow pit staging area (see Winter Map ID #1) to Old Mammoth Road, including the non-motorized snowplay area (Winter Map ID #2), the formal non-motorized access/egress point at Snowcreek VIII (Winter Map ID #5a), the formal non-motorized access/egress point at the Snowcreek golf course (Winter Map ID #5b), the non-motorized trailhead at Tamarack Street (Winter Map ID #5c), the multi-use staging area at Mill City (Winter Map ID #6), the non-motorized connector from the Mill City staging area to Hidden Lake meadow (Winter Map ID #7), and the non-motorized stacked-loop trail system in the meadow (Winter Map ID #9a)</p> <p>Define and articulate a developed, partially groomed non-motorized recreation zone as shown on the SWG Winter map extending roughly from the borrow pit staging area south to Mammoth Rock Trail and west to Old Mammoth Road. The Town of Mammoth Lakes Urban Growth Boundary will form the northern boundary.</p> <p>RATIONALE: Defining and articulating a developed, partially groomed non-motorized recreation area will offer a “quiet recreation” experience for those who wish to snowshoe, walk, cross-country ski, or enjoy snowplay by providing a sight and sound buffer from OSV use. The establishment of a grooming plan as described in Winter Map ID #9a will preclude motorized use of this area; however, OSV use will continue to be permitted in this area until the grooming plan is established. The location of this zone will allow for direct OSV access to Solitude Canyon via the Tele Bowls. The SWG recognizes that implementation of this feature will likely limit OSV access to the face of the Sherwins; however, the intent is to allow OSV access to Solitude Canyon via a sustainable route that takes into account variable snow conditions and topography and that maintains a clear demarcation between activity areas. Further study is required to determine the exact boundary alignment that will achieve the goals described above.</p>
19	<p>CONCEPT: Retain trails depicted as USFS system trails on the Summer map as part of the SWG Winter Proposal</p> <p>Retain trails depicted as USFS system trails on the Summer map as part of the SWG’s overall wintertime proposal, including Mammoth Rock Trail, the Panorama Dome trails, and the Sherwin Lakes Trail.</p> <p>RATIONALE: The SWG did not separately propose or consider trails depicted as USFS system trails on the Summer map while drafting their Winter Proposal, as they assumed that, as official trails recognized as part of the Inyo National Forest inventory, these trails would not be restored or lose system status if not specifically identified in the Winter Proposal. It is the intent and assumption of the group that these trails will remain or become official USFS system trails and will be included as part of their Winter Proposal, regardless of their seasonal use and accessibility.</p>