

**DRAFT DECISION NOTICE**

**AND**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**ALTA SKI LIFTS MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

**USDA-Forest Service**

**Salt Lake Ranger District, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest,  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document details my decision regarding a proposal from Alta Ski Lifts (Alta) to implement several improvement projects included in their accepted master development plan (MDP). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and this agency's regulations on its implementation, the potential environmental impacts of this proposal were assessed and documented in an environmental assessment (EA) released concurrently with this draft decision. The EA is incorporated herein by reference.

**BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

Alta operates under a special use permit (SUP) issued by the Forest Service. The first permit was issued in 1939, making Alta one of the oldest ski areas in the U.S. The current SUP was issued in 2002 and is administered by the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (UWCNF). It has a term of 40 years. All proposed projects fall within the current SUP boundary.

The project area is defined as Alta's approximately 1,800-acre SUP area. It is generally bounded by State Route 210 (SR 210) on the north, the ridgeline separating Big and Little Cottonwood canyons on the east, the Salt Lake County/Utah County line on the south, and Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort on the west. Access is from the Salt Lake Valley, about 13 miles up SR 210. Elevations range from 8,530 feet to 11,051 feet, and exposures are generally north. The project area is in the UWCNF's Central Wasatch Management Area.

We accepted Alta's MDP update March 14, 2013. However, acceptance of the MDP does not authorize implementation of the plan. Authorization occurs following NEPA review of projects that the resort wishes to implement within the next 5 years. In order to begin this process, Alta submitted a proposal on December 5, 2015, to implement a selection of projects from their accepted MDP, collectively referred to as the Master Development Plan Improvement Projects.

**DECISION**

My decision is to authorize all projects under Alternative 2 – Proposed Action, as described in EA section 2.4 and shown on the attached map. They include the following:

1. Albion/Wildcat base parking improvements.
2. Tram from Germania Pass to Mt. Baldy.
3. Gazex or other equivalent technologies to replace artillery and Avalaunchers.
4. Sunnyside lift replacement.
5. Wildcat lift replacement.
6. Flora lift construction from bottom of Sugarbowl to the top of Collins lift.
7. Supreme summer ski run work.
8. Alf's restaurant building addition.
9. Watson Shelter building addition.
10. Equipment storage facility construction.

As part of my decision, I am requiring all design criteria and mitigation measures listed in EA section 2.5 and Appendix A, respectively, to be incorporated in project design and implementation. This includes the best management practices (BMPs) for watershed protection listed in EA Table 3-6. These required design criteria and mitigation measures are included as an attachment to this decision.

I am also requiring Alta to continue working closely the UWCNF permit administrator to monitor and evaluate project implementation and mitigation effectiveness. This is an ongoing aspect of the UWCNF's administration of the SUP. Beyond that, we undertake the Forest Service's National BMP Monitoring program, providing a more structured format for monitoring and reporting.

## **DECISION RATIONALE**

My decision is based on the analysis in the EA and supporting project record, which documents a thorough review of relevant information, consideration of divergent views, and acknowledgement of any incomplete or unavailable information. The analysis identifies the techniques and methodology used, considers current and accurate science, and references cited scientific resources. The analyses include a summary of the credible evidence relevant to evaluating reasonably foreseeable impacts.

Within that framework, my decision focused on two factors: how well the alternatives (1) met the purpose and need for action and (2) addressed the main environmental issues identified through scoping, comment on the proposed action, and internal, interdisciplinary review.

### **Purpose and Need**

EA section 1.5 outlines the purpose and need for the proposed action, and Alta's project-specific rationales are provided in EA section 2.4.

All of the authorized projects are logical and practical expansions of existing resort infrastructure, which increases the value of the commitment of National Forest System resources to date. Similarly, all authorized projects reflect the cooperative effort by the UWCNF and Alta to provide the public with access to high-quality recreational activities on the National Forest and benefit the local economy.

The only other alternative considered was the no-action alternative. It would not achieve these purposes because it would resolve none of the stated needs. I believe that collectively the projects comprised by the proposed action effectively resolve those needs and are consistent with national, regional, and Forest-level policies and plans regarding ski area development.

### **Main Environmental Issues**

The other major factor in reaching my decision was how effectively the alternatives addressed the main environmental concerns raised during scoping, comment on the proposed action, and internal, interdisciplinary review. Comments from the public and other agencies identifying environmental issues were included in our internal review process to determine the scope of the analysis. Concerns associated with seven resource areas were identified through this process and were analyzed in depth in the EA. These were: soil, water, and watershed resources; vegetation; wildlife; cultural resources; scenic resources; recreation; and safety.

Several potential concerns raised during our review were not carried into detailed analysis for various reasons. Growth-related concerns were not analyzed in depth because the intent of the proposed action, as outlined in EA section 1.5, is to replace outdated equipment, upgrade service facilities, and take advantage of new technology. The proposed action does not open any new terrain; rather it updates the infrastructure serving existing terrain. The new lifts are not designed to add capacity. The Flora lift would replace East Baldy Traverse's transfer function, not provide ski access. The Mt. Baldy tram would have a very low capacity and would serve primarily to transport ski patrol personnel. Public use would involve primarily those expert skiers who currently hike Mt. Baldy. The Wildcat and Sunnyside lift replacements would have somewhat higher capacities than the existing lifts, but increasing skier capacity is not the rationale for the replacement. As outlined in EA sections 2.4.3.1 and 2.4.3.2, the upgrades are to replace old, less reliable lift systems, provide redundant capacity when other lifts are down, and meet the current skier market's desire for high-speed lifts. EA sections 3.5.3.2 and 3.5.3.3 describe Alta's well-established program of maintaining low skier density by adjusting the operating speeds of their lifts and rarely operating them at design capacity. As discussed in EA sections 2.4.6.1 and 2.4.6.2, the proposed additions to Alf's restaurant and Watson Shelter are mostly to replace space lost to new retail functions – another adaptation to changing skier demands.

In short, the intent of the proposed action is not to increase visitation but to maintain numbers by meeting the needs and expectations of today's skier market and changing patterns of skier use at Alta. Overall ski area capacity would not change appreciably, and the cap on new parking would remain in place. As a result, this EA focuses on the resource impacts of infrastructural development under the proposed action and alternatives, and not the impact of more visitors to Alta. As a result, impacts in the following areas were not addressed further in the EA:

1. Air Quality
2. Transportation and Parking
3. Utilities
4. Socio-economics

I find that the EA adequately addressed all specific environmental issues relating to each of the seven resource categories. Chapter 3 of the EA documented that no significant impacts (as defined under NEPA; see Finding of No Significant Impact below) would occur on any of the resources of concern if the proposed action were implemented as described in the EA.

In regard to these specific resources of concern, based on the analysis found in the EA I have concluded that, with required design criteria and BMPs in place:

- The risk of erosion and sedimentation will be low, and no appreciable water quality impacts on streams in the project area will occur. This is largely due to the successful disturbed site restoration program that Alta has developed in conjunction with the UWCNF and Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities (SLCDPU) over the years. The ski area's spill prevention and containment protocols also meet applicable regulatory requirements for the protection of water quality. Maintaining that successful program is a condition of this authorization. (EA sections 3.4.1.3 and 3.4.1.5)
- Impacts on wetlands and stream channels will be minimized by BMPs that maintain proper functioning of wetlands and channel stability. Any unavoidable impacts on wetlands and riparian areas, specifically the impacts on 0.23 acres of wetlands associated with construction of the bottom terminal of the Flora lift, will be mitigated in accordance with applicable local regulations and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. (EA sections 3.4.1.3 and 3.4.1.5). No net loss of wetlands will occur, in accordance with Forest Plan direction.

- There will be no impacts on threatened and endangered plant species as none occur in the project area. Effects on Forest Service sensitive plant species will be negligible and consistent with applicable regulatory and management direction as long as the design criteria listed in EA section 2.5 and the riparian area BMPs listed in Appendix A are followed. (EA sections 3.4.2.3 and 3.4.2.5)
- Any impacts on threatened and endangered wildlife species as none occur in the project area. Effects on Forest Service sensitive species, birds of conservation concern, and big game species will be negligible and consistent with the regulatory and management direction applicable to each of those classes of wildlife. (EA sections 3.4.3.3 and 3.4.3.5)
- No adverse impacts on the historic Alta Townsite will occur, and no other historic properties or Native American Tribal issues were identified in the project area. (EA sections 3.5.1.3 and 3.5.1.5)
- Impacts on scenic resources, including those of the Mt. Baldy tram, will be mitigated and consistent with the landscape character theme and the scenic integrity objectives assigned to the permit area in the Forest Plan. (EA sections 3.5.2.5 and 3.5.2.7)
- Higher capacity lifts will not result in crowding on trails because lift operating speed is managed by Alta to maintain the uncrowded conditions sought by their visitors. While the Mt. Baldy tram may reduce the novelty of hiking to ski Baldy, that option will remain, and there is ample hike-to terrain in the Central Wasatch. The lower tram terminal will not impair skier circulation on Germania Pass because the terminal will be off to the side of the pass and because management of skier flows using signage, rope lines, and other methods is standard ski area practice. (EA sections 3.5.3.3 and 3.5.3.5)
- The Mt. Baldy tram will not pose a safety risk, beyond the inherent risk of skiing, because people already ski the chutes; Alta manages high-risk conditions with signage, rope lines, and closures; and people who change their minds once they get to the top of Baldy will now have the option of taking the tram down. As to the potential for sympathetic avalanche releases in Wolverine Cirque triggered by Gazex deployment on Patsey Marley, the new technology will not increase the risk of this unlikely event beyond that of the currently used artillery and helicopter bombing. (EA section 3.5.4.3)

## **OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

As discussed in EA sections 2.2 and 2.3, one alternative other than the selected alternative was analyzed in depth, the no-action alternative.

### **No-Action Alternative**

Analysis of the no-action scenario provides a baseline for assessing the impacts of the proposed action. In this case, the no-action alternative would allow for continuation of ongoing resort operations. EA Chapter 3 summarizes the environmental effects of ongoing resort operations. The no-action alternative was not selected because it does not address the stated purpose and need for action, as discussed above.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The UWCNF issued a public scoping notice summarizing Alta's proposed improvement projects (the proposed action) and inviting comments regarding the scope of the associated NEPA review. The improvement projects included in the proposed action were described in detail in the *Description of the Proposed Action: Alta MDP Improvements Projects*, which accompanied the scoping notice. The scoping notice was mailed to the agencies, organizations, and individuals on the UWCNF mailing list. The notice was also posted on the UWCNF website and made available on CD or in hard-copy form to anyone requesting it.

The scoping period formally began on April 26, 2016, when the UWCNF's legal notice was published in the Salt Lake Tribune (Newspaper of Record), and closed on May 26, 2016. Responses were received from 1 agency, 3 organizations, and 123 individuals. The scoping notice and responses are included in the project record.

In accordance with the Forest Service's Pre-Decisional Administrative Review Process (36 CFR 218), the UWCNF issued a Notice of Opportunity to Comment on the proposed action. The full-text preliminary EA was released for review and comment. The Notice of Opportunity to Comment was mailed to the agencies, organizations, and individuals on the UWCNF mailing list. It was also posted on the UWCNF project website and made available on CD or in hard-copy form to anyone requesting it.

The 30-day comment period began on October 20, 2017, when a legal notice was published in the Salt Lake Tribune, and closed on November 20, 2017. A total of 214 responses were received, including two from agencies, three from organization, and 209 from individuals. A report was prepared listing the name, address, response number, and comment topics for each response, then responding how each comment would be addressed in this NEPA process. The Notice of Opportunity to Comment, all responses, and the report are included in the project record.

I have reviewed this public input in conjunction with the EA, supporting documentation, and discussions with my staff. The noted scoping report and response-to-comments report address all comments in detail, but three major concerns identified in public comments warrant mention here. My consideration of those concerns is addressed as follows:

1. The overall impact of increasing visitation and use of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Specific issues spanned from water quality to traffic to impacts on flora and fauna. However, as noted above (see Main Environmental Issues, concerns not carried into detailed analysis), this proposed action is neither intended nor expected to notably increase canyon visitation. Parking limits remain in place, infrastructure and operating procedures are in place to accommodate ski area visitors with minimal impact, and no new ski terrain is being added. The EA effectively addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the proposed development.

The larger issue of increasing canyon use results from rapid growth in the Wasatch Front population. The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. One of the most important products that the UWCNF provides is quality recreational opportunities. Another is clean drinking water for neighboring metropolitan areas within Salt Lake Valley. Recognizing the importance of both, the UWCNF's strategy is to balance provision of recreational amenities and opportunities with natural and financial resources.

2. Wetland impacts. Wetland impacts. The unforeseen wetland impacts of the Supreme lift replacement last summer raised concerns from local residents, the SLCDPU, the Salt Lake County Health Department, and other concerned citizens and organizations. In response, we were diligent in reviewing this proposed action to carefully identify wetlands, ensure that project design minimized potential impacts on them, and identify mitigation to offset any unavoidable adverse impacts. While the Flora lift project will affect a small wetland area, I believe that the EA describes this impact as clearly and accurately as possible, documents our efforts to find a feasible alternative location, and establishes the requirement for appropriate mitigation, as I am requiring in this decision. Accordingly, I am confident that the Forest Service is meeting its obligations regarding wetland protection.
3. Visual and environmental impact of the Mt. Baldy tram. Visual impact of the Mt. Baldy tram. Most of the comments received were regarding the tram. Members of the public questioned the need for the tram, discussed visual and environmental impacts resulting from the tram, and preferred to remove this project from the overall EA. Alta is a ski area and the Forest Plan

provides clear direction for the management of scenic resources at UWCNF ski areas. The landscape character theme established by the Forest Plan for developed recreation areas states that “recreation amenities are the main attraction for people and why they come to an area.”

In siting and planning construction of the lift, Alta has made practical efforts to reduce its visual and environmental impact, placing the upper terminal at a location below the peak and summit ridgeline, proposing minimal infrastructure for the terminal, and committing to using materials and colors that blend with the setting. Because the tram has limited capacity and will primarily be used for transporting ski patrol, winter use of the tram is not expected to impact vegetation more than what currently occurs from skiers hiking to the top of Mt. Baldy. In addition, summer use of the tram is not approved in my decision. Therefore impact’s resulting from summer use will not occur. As a result, I believe the project will be consistent with Forest Plan direction.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

As the responsible official, I am evaluating the effects of the selected alternative, the proposed action, relative to the definition of significance established by the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1508.13). I have reviewed and considered the EA and documentation included in the project record, and I have determined that the selected alternative will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. As a result, no environmental impact statement will be prepared. My rationale for this finding is as follows, organized according to the CEQ definition of significance cited above.

### **Context**

The selected alternative would implement project activities that are of limited scope, affecting only the immediate area around the proposed project sites. Some effects (i.e., visual impacts) extend beyond the Alta SUP area, but only to a distance of a few miles. Construction of the authorized infrastructure would be completed within a short timeframe, but its use would extend into the foreseeable future.

### **Intensity**

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, based on information from the effects analysis in this EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered in an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public and our interdisciplinary team. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits.

My finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using these 10 factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b):

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.**

Some effects associated with the selected alternative are adverse but not significant. My decision that these impacts are not significant is not biased or offset by the minor beneficial effects of some of the elements of the selected alternative.

**2. The degree to which the selected alternative affects public health or safety.**

The EA identified no potential impacts on public health or safety.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as the proximity to historical or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

The analysis indicated no parklands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas within selected alternative’s area of potential effect.

The selected alternative will impact 0.23 acres of wetlands in the project area. That impact will be fully mitigated, in compliance with appropriate permits and authorizations. There will be not net loss of wetlands. Preservation Office (SHPO) concurs that no historic properties, including the historic Alta Townsite, would be affected. No other unique characteristics of the geographic area were identified.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

There is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of this project. As discussed above, the EA adequately addresses the controversial issues raised through scoping and comment on the proposed action.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

All elements of the selected alternative are common for ski resorts across the country and on the UWCNF, and similar actions have already been implemented at Alta. The potential effects described in the EA for this project are reasonable and do not constitute highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

As noted above, all elements of the selected alternative are common for ski resorts, and similar actions have already been implemented in Little Cottonwood Canyon within the ski areas. My decision will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

An analysis of cumulative effects was conducted for each resource area of concern, and no significant cumulative effects were identified, as disclosed in the EA (Chapter 3).

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

As stated above, EA section 3.5.1 notes that the Utah SHPO has concurred that no historic properties, including the historic Alta Townsite, would be affected. No loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources was identified.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.**

As indicated in EA sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3, no federally listed plants are known to occur in the permit area, and no listed wildlife species would be affected.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

No such laws or requirements will be violated by the selected alternative (see following section). Any required approvals from other local, state, and federal regulatory agencies will be obtained prior to implementing the authorized projects.

## FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The selected alternative meets requirements for all applicable laws and regulations, including the following:

**Endangered Species Act:** No federally listed plants are known to occur in the permit area (EA section 3.4.2.2), and no listed wildlife species would be affected (EA section 3.4.3.2).

**Clean Water Act:** The selected alternative is consistent with the Clean Water Act (EA section 3.4.1.3).

**Safe Drinking Water Act:** The selected alternative is consistent with the Safe Drinking Water Act (EA section 3.4.1.3).

**Persons with Physical Challenges:** With the required design criteria in place, including item 16 in EA section 2.5, the selected alternative will maintain accessibility for persons with physical challenges at Alta.

**Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 – Protection of Floodplains and Wetlands:** The selected alternative will impact 0.23 acres of wetlands in the project area. That impact will be fully mitigated, in compliance with appropriate permits and authorizations. (EA sections 3.4.1.3 and 3.4.1.5).

**Executive Order 13186 – Protection of Migratory Birds:** The selected alternative will not result in taking of migratory birds or their parts (EA section 3.4.3.2).

**Executive Order 12898 – Environmental Justice:** The selected alternative will not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations.

**Prime Farmland, Rangeland, and Forest Land:** The selected alternative does not include any use of prime farmland or rangelands, and the term “prime forest land” does not apply to National Forest System lands. Under the selected alternative, National Forest System lands will be managed with sensitivity to the effects on neighboring lands.

## OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT

This project is subject to the objection process described in 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. Only persons or organizations who have submitted specific written comments during a public comment period are eligible to file an objection (see 36 CFR 218.5). If an objection is submitted on behalf of a number of individuals or organizations, each individual or organization listed must meet the eligibility requirement of having previously submitted specific written comments. Names and addresses of objectors will become part of the public record.

Incorporation of documents by reference in the objection is permitted only as provided for at 36 CFR 218.8(b). Minimum content requirements of an objection (36 CFR 218.8) include:

1. Objector’s name and address with a telephone number if available; with signature or other verification of authorship supplied upon request;
2. Identification of the lead objector when multiple names are listed, along with verification upon request;
3. Name of project, responsible official, national forest/ranger district of project, and
4. Sufficient narrative description of those aspects of the proposed project objected to, specific issues related to the project, and suggested remedies that would resolve the objection.

Written objections, including any attachments, must be sent via regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivered, or express delivered to:

Objection Reviewing Officer  
USDA-Forest Service Intermountain Region  
324 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Ogden, UT 84401

Objections must be filed within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice in *The Salt Lake Tribune*.

Hours for submitting hand-delivered objections are: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic objections must be submitted in a format such as an email message, .pdf, .txt, .rtf, .doc, or .docx to [objections-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:objections-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us). Faxed objections should be sent to (801) 625-5277. Objectors are responsible for ensuring that their objection is received in a timely manner (36 CFR 218.10).

The publication date of this legal notice in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, which is the newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the start of the 45-day objection period. Persons wishing to object should not rely on information provided by any other source. Objections must be received or postmarked by the end of this 45-day objection period. Extensions of the objection period are not permitted.

When the objection-filing period has ended and responses have been made to all objections by the reviewing officer, the responsible official may make a final decision on the proposed project. The reviewing officer shall issue a written response to objectors within 45 days following the end of this objection-filing period. When no timely objections are filed, a decision can be made on the fifth business day following the close of the filing period. Implementation may begin immediately after the decision is made.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

If no objection is filed, a final decision can be made on, but not before, the fifth business day following the end of the objection-filing period. Implementation may begin immediately after the final decision is signed.

If an objection is filed, a 45-day objection resolution period will begin, and a final decision will be issued at the end of that period. The objection-reviewing officer may authorize a 30-day extension. A decision may be signed once all concerns and recommendations of the objection-reviewing officer have been addressed. Implementation may begin immediately after the decision is signed.

## **CONTACT**

The project documents are available for review at the project website under the “Decision” tab:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48903>.

For further information about the project, including documents and maps, or about the objection process, contact Polly Bergseng at (801)733-2686.

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David C. Whittekiend

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Date

Forest Supervisor, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

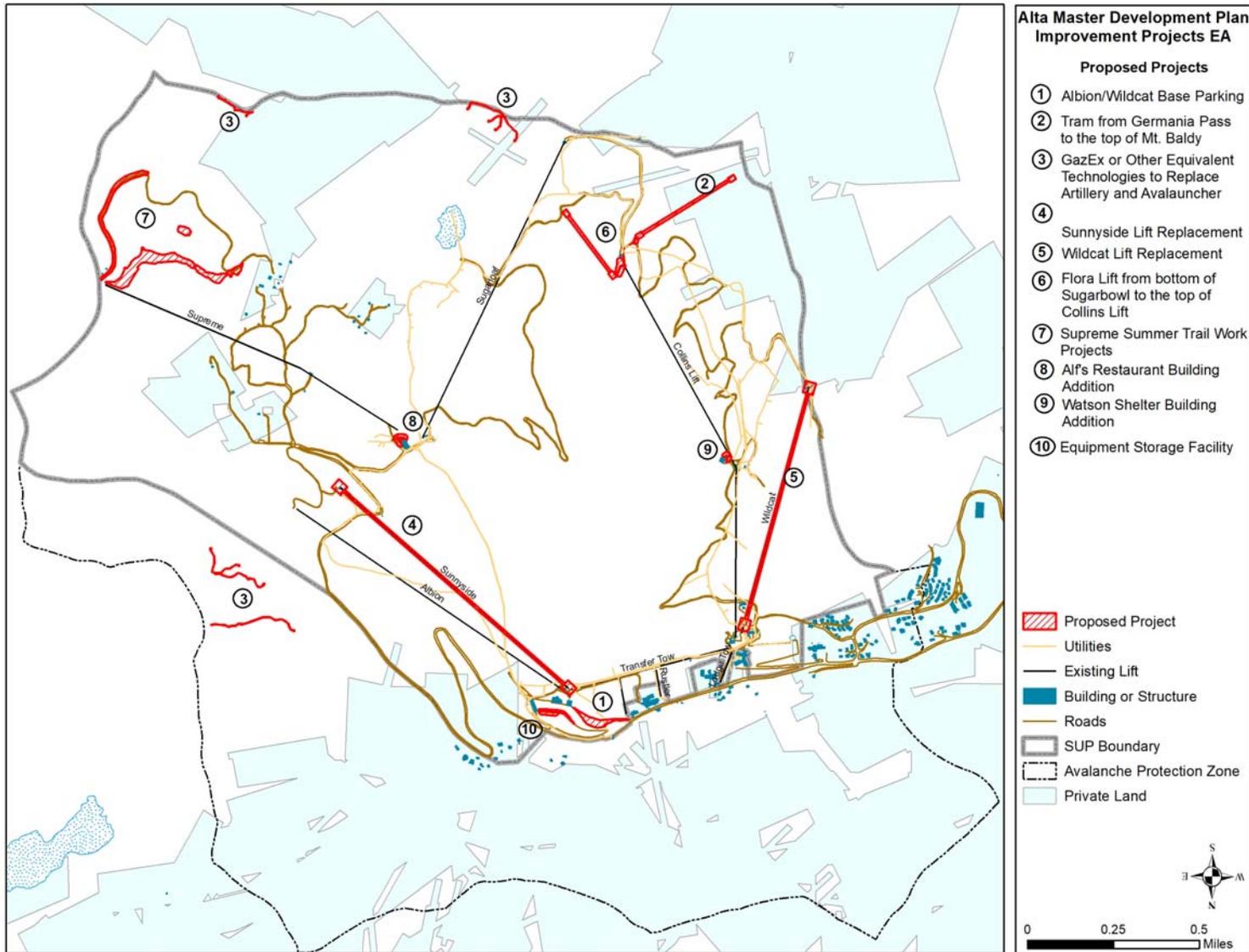
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## Overview of the Proposed Action



## REQUIRED DESIGN CRITERIA AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Design Criteria

#### *Erosion Control*

1. Prior to construction, Alta will prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that will apply to all authorized projects. The SWPPP is a condition of the Utah Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit and will include appropriate BMPs for erosion control, sediment control, site stabilization, operational controls, and provisions for maintenance and inspection. The UWCNF may request review of SWPPPs.
2. The SWPPP will include appropriate BMPs from *National Best Management Practices for Water-Quality Management on National Forest System Lands. Volume 1: National Core BMP Technical Guide* (Forest Service 2012a). Pertinent watershed BMPs are listed in Appendix A.

#### *Vegetation Management*

3. Soil disturbance will be minimized, and existing topsoil will be conserved for replacement.
4. Where possible, native vegetation will be retained.
5. In cleared and graded areas, mechanized equipment may be used to fell and remove trees. When possible, trees will be removed over snow to protect the ground surface. Disposal will be in accordance with applicable Forest Service permit requirements.
6. Slash created by tree removal will be disposed of either through utilization, burning, chipping, mastication, lopping and scattering, or removal from the site within a specified timeframe. Disposal will be in accordance with applicable Forest Service and state permit requirements.
7. Alta will follow Forest Service policy (FSM 2070) and use genetically appropriate native materials for rehabilitation and restoration. A qualified Forest Service botanist will be involved in development, review, and/or approval of plant materials selected for use in site rehabilitation and restoration.
8. Any areas of native vegetation that would be disturbed and have not been previously surveyed for special-status plants will be surveyed prior to construction. Results will be reported to the Forest Service permit administrator, and appropriate measures to mitigate impacts will be implemented.
9. All construction equipment and vehicles used will be cleaned and certified free of noxious weeds and their seeds prior to entrance onto the UWCNF. This restriction will include equipment and vehicles intended for both on- and off-road use, whether they are owned, leased, or borrowed by either contractors or subcontractors.
10. Any fill material proposed for the project, including any topsoil, will come from an on-site or in-canyon location.
11. Any straw bales, chips, or other imported mulch used in conjunction with the proposed action will come from a certified weed-free source.

#### *Wildlife Protection*

12. Construction and refueling helicopters operating during the nesting season (April–June) must approach, and depart, cliff areas from behind and above the cliffs to avoid flushing nesting falcons.

13. Do not clear, cut, burn, drive on, or park equipment on vegetation that may harbor nesting birds during the breeding season (May 15–July 15). If this is not possible, survey for nesting birds no more than 10 days prior to commencing work. If no nests are found, project activities may proceed. If nests are found, contact the Forest Service permit administrator.

#### *Scenic Integrity*

14. Permanent structures will be designed and built in compliance with the *Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands* (Forest Service 2001, FS-710). Ensuring that architectural style, building materials, size, and color are consistent and meet the adopted scenery objectives. Compliance will be confirmed through Forest Service engineering review prior to construction.
15. The edges of cleared ski runs will be feathered to appear more like natural openings in forest cover, flowing with the topography and blending with the natural vegetation.

#### *Accessibility*

16. All buildings will be designed and constructed in accordance with the *Accessibility Guidebook for Ski Areas Operating on Public Lands – 2012 Update* (Forest Service 2012b). Compliance will be confirmed through Forest Service engineering review prior to construction.

#### *Undiscovered Heritage Resources*

17. If any previously unidentified prehistoric or historic cultural resources are identified or encountered at any time during construction, efforts shall be made to protect the resource(s) until the Forest Service Permit Administrator is notified and the Forest Service fulfills its consultation requirements, including consultation with the appropriate Tribal representatives.
18. If unmarked human remains are encountered at any time during construction, all work in the vicinity of the find shall cease, with the remains covered and protected in place, and the Forest Service permit administrator notified immediately to begin proper notification and consultation procedures with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, Native American Tribes, and other local officials as needed (e.g., county coroner) to determine to what time period and ethnic group the skeletal material may be ascribed and the appropriate treatment.
19. If any previously unidentified Traditional Cultural Places or sacred sites are identified or encountered at any time during construction, efforts shall be made to protect the resource until the Forest Service permit administrator is notified and the Forest Service fulfills its consultation requirements, including consultation with the appropriate Tribal representatives.

#### *Wetland Resources*

20. Placement of lift towers in wetland areas will be avoided, the amount of wetland area disturbed will be avoided and minimized. Disturbances will be mitigated when avoidance is not practical.
21. Trench breakers will be used when snowmaking or other utility lines cross sloped wetland areas. Trench breakers will be placed at the lower wetland boundary so that groundwater is not drained through the trench and out of the wetland.
22. Any tree removal from wetlands will be done either over the snow or after the ground has frozen to protect soil resources.
23. When constructing buildings and lift terminals, equipment will not operate in adjacent wetlands and stream channels.

**Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures identified through this analysis include the following:

WAT-1: Implement the BMPs listed in Table A-1.

WAT-2: Obtain appropriate COE, Utah Division of Water Rights, Salt Lake County Health Department, and Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities permits and authorizations prior to disturbing wetlands or altering stream channels.

WAT-3: Mitigate wetland and stream channel impacts in accordance with the permits and authorizations noted above and avoid any net loss of wetlands.

VEG-1: Delineate the boundaries of nearby rockcress draba populations on Sugarloaf Mountain using pin flags prior to construction of the Gazex system. Avoid any activity near the delineated boundary.

VEG-2: Monitor and treat noxious and non-native invasive plant infestations at all areas disturbed by the proposed action for a period of at least three years following construction.

VEG-3: Provide educational signage or other material to the public about minimizing disturbances in alpine ecosystems and the need to protect them by staying on trails or on snow cover when that is not possible.

WIL-1: Construction and refueling helicopters operating during the nesting season (April–June) must approach, and depart, cliff areas from behind and above the cliffs to avoid flushing nesting falcons.

WIL-2: Do not clear, cut, burn, drive on, or park equipment on vegetation that may harbor nesting birds during the breeding season (May 15–July 15). If this is not possible, survey for nesting birds no more than 10 days prior to commencing work. If no nests are found, project activities may proceed. If nests are found, contact the Forest Service permit administrator.

CUL-1: A qualified archaeologist will monitor all surface disturbing activities during all ground-disturbing activities associated with expansion of the Albion parking lot to avoid potential effects on the historic Alta Townsite.

SCE-1: Acid etch the exploder tubes and gas storage units to blend with the natural background.

REC-1: Alta will continue to operate lifts at speeds that are appropriate for the conditional capacity of the terrain, regardless of the design capacity of the lifts.

<b>Table A-1. Best Management Practices that would be followed under the proposed action.<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>FS National Core BMP Code and Name</b>	<b>Practice Description</b>
<b>AQECO-2: Operations in Aquatic Ecosystems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate stream channel, shoreline, lake, pond, and wetland activities with appropriate Federal, State, County, and City agencies.</li> <li>• Incorporate Clean Water Act (CWA) 404 permit requirements and other Federal, State, and local permits or requirements into the project design and plan.</li> <li>• Locate access and staging areas near the project site but outside of work area boundaries, AMZs, wetlands, and sensitive soil areas.</li> <li>• Refuel and service equipment only in designated staging areas.</li> </ul>

**Table A-1 (Cont'd). Best Management Practices that would be followed under the proposed action.<sup>1</sup>**

<b>FS National Core BMP Code and Name</b>	<b>Practice Description</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule construction or maintenance operations in waterbodies to occur in the least critical periods to avoid or minimize adverse effects to sensitive aquatic and aquatic-dependent species that live in or near the waterbody.</li> <li>• Promptly install and appropriately maintain spill prevention and containment measures.</li> <li>• Conduct operations during dry periods.</li> <li>• Return clean flows to channel or waterbody downstream of the activity.</li> </ul>
<b>FAC-2: Facility Construction and Stormwater Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain Clean Water Act (CWA) 402 stormwater discharge permit coverage from the appropriate State agency or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) when more than 1 acre of land will be disturbed through construction activities.</li> <li>• Control, collect, detain, treat, and disperse stormwater runoff from the site.</li> </ul>
<b>FAC-6: Hazardous Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the use, storage, discharge, or disposal of pollutants and hazardous or toxic substances generated by the facility in compliance with applicable regulations and requirements.</li> <li>• Respond to hazardous materials releases or spills using the established site-specific contingency plan for incidental releases and the Emergency Response Plan for larger releases.</li> <li>• Ensure that hazardous spill kits are adequately stocked with necessary supplies and are maintained in accessible locations.</li> </ul>
<b>FAC-9: Pipelines, Transmission Facilities, and Rights-of-Way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-locate pipelines and transmission lines with roads or their rights-of-way where practicable.</li> <li>• Require suitable and regular inspections, testing, and leak detection systems to identify and mitigate pipeline deformities and leaks.</li> </ul>
<b>FAC-10: Facility Site Reclamation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove unneeded structures.</li> <li>• Establish effective ground cover on disturbed sites to avoid or minimize accelerated erosion and soil loss.</li> </ul>
<b>REC-10: Ski Runs and Lifts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid wetlands and riparian areas when locating ski runs and lifts wherever practicable.</li> <li>• Locate ski runs and lifts on stable geology and soils to minimize risk of slope failures.</li> <li>• Use yarding equipment suitable to the steepness of the terrain to avoid or minimize adverse effects to soil and water quality.</li> <li>• Clear and construct ski runs and lift lines in sections to limit the area of exposed disturbed soil at any one time.</li> </ul>

**Table A-1 (Cont'd). Best Management Practices that would be followed under the proposed action.<sup>1</sup>**

<b>FS National Core BMP Code and Name</b>	<b>Practice Description</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize grading or re-contouring of hill slopes to maintain intact soil horizons and infiltrative properties.</li> <li>• Cut stumps flush with soil surface or grind in place instead of grubbing when clearing trees from ski runs wherever practicable.</li> <li>• Use low-pressure construction and maintenance equipment whenever practicable to reduce surface impact on steep slopes.</li> <li>• Stockpile biologically active topsoil removed during excavation for use in reclamation. Store stockpiled topsoil separately from other vegetative slash, soil, or rock and protect from wind and water erosion, unnecessary compaction, and contaminants.</li> <li>• Use suitable measures to direct overland flow on slopes into areas with intact soil horizons to encourage infiltration and disconnect overland flow from waterbodies.</li> <li>• Prohibit traffic on disturbed areas during periods of excessive soil moisture, precipitation, or runoff.</li> <li>• Perform additional revegetation or erosion control as needed to protect water quality and soil integrity.</li> </ul>
<b>REC-12: Ski Area Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid wetlands and riparian areas to the extent practicable when locating ski area facilities.</li> <li>• Locate ski area facilities on stable geology and soils to minimize risk of slope failures.</li> <li>• Avoid contaminating return water with chemicals or other pollutants.</li> <li>• Use applicable practices of BMP Road-2 (Road Location and Design), BMP Road-3 (Road Construction and Reconstruction), BMP Road-4 (Road Operations and Maintenance), BMP Road-8 (Snow Storage and Removal), and BMP Road-9 (Parking Sites and Staging Areas) for designing, constructing, maintaining, and operating roads and parking areas at ski area facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>ROAD-3: Road Construction and Reconstruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not place such materials on slopes with a risk of excessive erosion, sediment delivery to waterbodies, mass failure, or within the AMZ.</li> <li>• Do not permit sidecasting within the AMZ, avoid or minimize excavated materials from entering waterbodies or AMZs.</li> </ul>
<b>ROAD-7: Stream Crossings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design the crossing to pass a normal range of flows for the site.</li> <li>• Use suitable measures to avoid or minimize culvert plugging from transported bedload and debris.</li> <li>• Construct at or near natural elevation of the streambed to avoid or minimize potential flooding upstream of the crossing and erosion below the outlet.</li> </ul>

**Table A-1 (Cont'd). Best Management Practices that would be followed under the proposed action.<sup>1</sup>**

<b>FS National Core BMP Code and Name</b>	<b>Practice Description</b>
<b>ROAD-8: Snow Removal and Storage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a snow removal plan for roads plowed for recreation, administrative, or other access to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources.</li> <li>• Store snow in clearly delineated pre-approved areas where snowmelt runoff will not cause erosion or deliver snow, road de-icers, or traction-enhancing materials directly into surface waters.</li> </ul>
<b>ROAD-9: Parking and Staging Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use applicable practices of BMP Fac-2 (Facility Construction and Stormwater Control) for stormwater management and erosion control when designing, constructing, reconstructing, or maintaining parking or staging areas.</li> <li>• Use and maintain suitable measures to collect and contain oil and grease in larger parking lots with high use and where drainage discharges directly to streams.</li> </ul>
<b>ROAD-10: Equipment Refueling and Servicing.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use suitable measures to avoid spilling fuels, lubricants, cleaners, and other chemicals during handling and transporting.</li> <li>• Remove service residues, used oil, and other hazardous or undesirable materials from NFS land and properly dispose them as needed during and after completion of the project.</li> <li>• Report spills and initiate suitable cleanup action in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations.</li> </ul>
<b>VEG-1: Vegetation Management Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and field verify site conditions in the project area to design a transportation plan associated with the mechanical vegetation treatments to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources.</li> </ul>
<b>VEG-2: Erosion Prevention and Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the natural drainage pattern of the area wherever practicable.</li> <li>• Control, collect, detain, treat, and disperse stormwater runoff from disturbed areas.</li> <li>• Divert surface runoff around bare areas with appropriate energy dissipation and sediment filters.</li> <li>• Stabilize steep excavated slopes.</li> </ul>
<b>REC-12: Ski Area Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use applicable practices of BMP Road-3 (Road Construction and Reconstruction), BMP Road-4 (Road Operations and Maintenance), BMP Road-8 (Snow Storage and Removal), and BMP Road-9 (Parking Sites and Staging Areas) for designing, constructing, maintaining, and operating roads and parking areas at ski area facilities.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Selected from the *National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands* (Forest Service 2012a).