



April 29, 2008

Town of Mammoth Lakes Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 1609,  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the boundary, scope, and issues to be evaluated in the Snowcreek District Plan. Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) provides the following comments in furtherance of its mission and of the General Plan goals and policies that support that mission. These comments are on the District Plan boundary, scope, and content. More detailed comments may be provided on the Snowcreek VIII development proposal depending upon the outcome of the district planning process and the responsiveness of the project application to that outcome and to the adopted General Plan goals and policies.

Currently, there is no formal public access to public lands along the entire length of the southern edge of the Urban Growth Boundary from the Bluffs to Sherwin Creek Road. Existing informal access points have been restricted in recent years and development of Snowcreek VIII has the potential to further restrict that access while simultaneously increasing the demand for access to public lands and their recreational uses. The existing Snowcreek Master Plan environmental documents show access through the Snowcreek District to the public lands to the south. This access supported already developed phases of Snowcreek as well as community access. Planning for the Snowcreek District must address the current and future needs for that access and maintain appropriate functional connections to the public lands.

The District Plan boundary and its sphere of influence need to be broad enough to encompass the areas identified in the General Plan as being connected to the Snowcreek District. These areas include at a minimum, Mammoth Creek and Mammoth Creek Park; Hayden Museum; Sierra Meadows Ranch; the Sherwin Range, including the proposed Sherwin Bowl Ski Area; Mammoth Rock Trail; and Hidden Lake. We also suggest that Tamarack Street be included within the sphere of influence because of the potential for looped trail systems.

MLTPA wants to emphasize the importance of feet first connections for this district. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit ingress, egress, and through-access to and from public lands are critical components in providing and supporting mobility options. The need for this access is affirmed repeatedly in the recently adopted Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan (appropriate citations are listed in Attachment 1). The District Plan must accommodate existing and potential recreational and other uses on the public and private lands in and adjacent to the Snowcreek District, demonstrate the integration of those uses, and provide appropriate and functional access between all uses both within and through the district and for all seasons (An inventory of activities are listed in Attachment 2).

In furtherance of the policies of the General Plan, MLTPA recommends that the Snowcreek District Plan and its sphere of influence include:

- Direct bicycle and pedestrian connections from the Snowcreek district to Mammoth Rock Trail, Hidden Lake, and Sierra Meadows Ranch.
- Readily usable year-round access to and egress from Hidden Lake, Sherwin Bowl, and the Sherwin Road/south Mammoth Creek area for walkers, bicyclists, skiers, snowboarders, snowshoers, and other recreationists.
- Identification of potential areas and staging for snow play, skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, hiking/walking, and other recreation uses within the District and sphere of influence.
- Trail connections to the Mammoth Lakes Trail System.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Old Mammoth Road Commercial District and the Ice Rink and future Recreation Center site on Meridian Blvd.
- Equestrian trails and service
- Integration with the recreation uses on Mammoth Creek.
- Linkage to public transit to support access between the District and other districts and recreation resources of the community.

A detailed list of excerpts from the General Plan that support these comments is included in attachments 1. Attachment 2 documents recreation activities that the proposed Snowcreek District will need to accommodate. We are also including two reference maps for sphere of influence discussions, which we will produce at full scale (40" by 60") for the public meeting in May. We look forward to participating in the formal workshop with the Planning Commission and to reviewing the responses to that workshop.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the Snowcreek District Plan. MLTPA looks forward to participating in the development of the District Plan and the review of the Snowcreek VIII project, consistent with the General and District Plans.

Sincerely,

Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access



## Attachment 1

### Excerpts from the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan 2007

Snowcreek District (GP page 27)

The Snowcreek District should not act as an exclusive development, but connect to the larger community and provide community access to Snowcreek and surrounding public lands.

Characteristics include:

- Anchor for and greater connection to Mammoth District.
- Provide community access and staging areas to Sherwin Range and “community” uses accessible from Old Mammoth Road.
- Integrated with Mammoth Creek Park and Mammoth Creek Corridor, the historical museum site, equestrian center, parking, trails, and snow play, and future possibilities such as a recreation center or amphitheater.

Parks, Open Space and Recreation Element:

P.3. GOAL: Create a Master Plan for an integrated trail system that will maintain and enhance convenient public access to public lands from town.

P.3.A. Policy: Ensure public routes for access to public lands are provided in all developments adjacent to National Forest lands.

P.3.B. Policy: Coordinate with multiple organizations, agencies and jurisdictions to plan, steward, interpret, promote and sustain trails, public access and outdoor recreation amenities in the Mammoth Lakes region.

P.3.C. Policy: Identify and acquire points of public access to public lands (from within the Urban Growth Boundary to surrounding public lands) through cooperative arrangements including easements, purchase or other means of title acquisition.

P.5. GOAL: Link parks and open space with a well-designed year-round network of public corridors and trails within and surrounding Mammoth Lakes.

P.5.B. Policy: Design and construct trails as components of a regional and local network for recreation and commuting.

P.5.C. Policy: Require development to incorporate linked public trail corridors identified in the Mammoth Lakes Trail System Plan into overall project site plan.

P.5.E. Policy: Design parks and open space to be accessible and usable except when set aside for preservation of natural resources, health and safety.

Mobility Element:

M.1. GOAL: Develop and implement a town wide way-finding system.

M.2.A. Policy: Maintain and expand access to recreation areas via coordinated system of shuttle and bus services, scenic routes, trails and highways.

M.3.D. Policy: Encourage visitors to leave vehicles at their lodging by developing pedestrian, bicycle, transit and parking management strategies.

M.4. GOAL: Encourage feet first by providing a linked year-round recreational and commuter trail system that is safe and comprehensive.

M.4.A. Policy: Improve safety of sidewalks, trails and streets.

M.4.B. Policy: Provide a high quality pedestrian system linked throughout the community with year round access.

M.4.D. Policy: Provide safe travel for pedestrians to schools and parks.

M.4.D.1. Action: Update trail, streetscape and roadway design standards as well as the Circulation, Trail System and General Bikeway Plans to:

- Establish a system of bicycle routes and pedestrian trails for recreation, commuting and shopping that is comprehensive and safe
- Develop a town wide maintenance, grooming and/or snow removal program for sidewalks and trails to provide year-round pedestrian access
- Design and construct streetscapes and roadways to reduce long-term maintenance costs in a harsh climate

M.7. GOAL: Maintain and improve safe and efficient movement of people, traffic, and goods in a manner consistent with the feet first initiative.

M.7.H. Policy: Development shall dedicate, design and construct internal and adjacent streets, sidewalks and trails to Town standards.

M.8.C. Policy: Improve pedestrian traffic and roadway circulation affected by snow storage by increasing shoulder width and building sidewalks and trails along State Route 203, Minaret Road, Meridian Boulevard, and Old Mammoth Road.

Community Design Element:

C.2.G. Policy: Ensure that development in commercial areas provides for convenient pedestrian movement between adjoining and adjacent properties.

C.3. GOAL: Ensure safe and attractive public spaces, including sidewalks, trails, parks and streets.

Land Use Element:

L.1. GOAL: Be stewards of the community's small town character and charm, compact form, spectacular natural surroundings and access to public lands by planning for and managing growth.

Arts, Culture, Heritage and Natural History Element:

A.1. GOAL: Be stewards of Mammoth's unique natural environment.

A.1.A. Policy: As stewards of our natural environment recognize that our natural history is the framework for all other human activities whether economic or aesthetic and so must be conserved and protected for future generations.

A.1.A.1. Action: Encourage community and visitor awareness of our natural environment by supporting educational and recreational programs focused on the natural environment of the flora, fauna and geology of the area.

A.1.B.1. Action: Support coordination with natural history tours and programs offered by other agencies.

A.1.A.3. Action: Provide self guided natural history tours with appropriate interpretive signage in the parks of Mammoth Lakes.

A.2. GOAL: Be a vibrant cultural center by weaving arts and local heritage and the area's unique natural history into everyday life.



**Attachment 2**

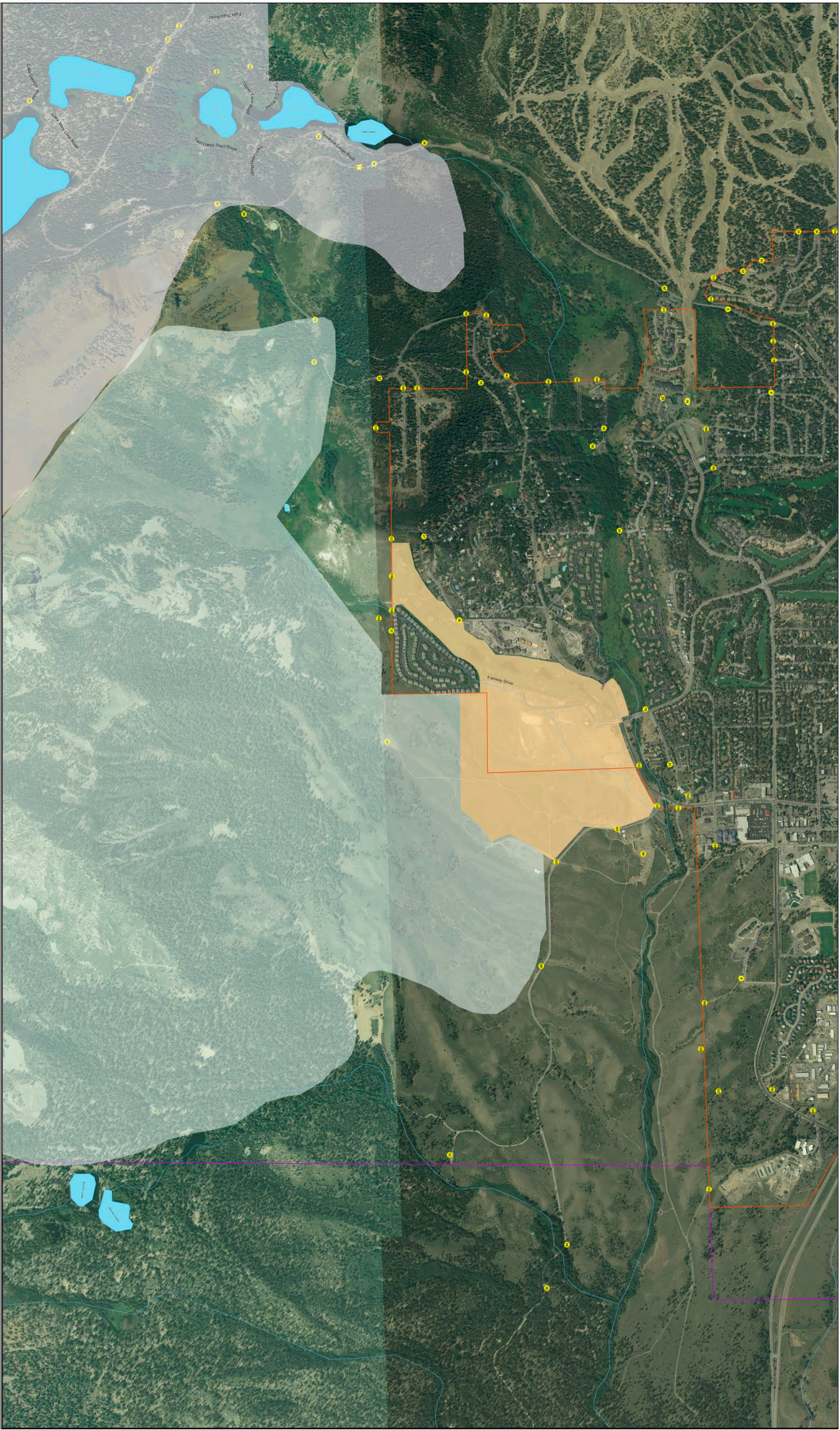
**Existing and Potential Uses in the Snowcreek District Sphere of Influence  
From the GIS Inventory Contract and General Plan Policy P.4.B.**

The Town of Mammoth Lakes contracted with the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) to produce a GIS inventory of trails and activity access points along with existing and potential recreational uses. That inventory was completed and is available at the Town of Mammoth Lakes and MLTPA offices. The following list of existing and potential uses for the Snowcreek District and its sphere of influence was extracted from the GIS points in the inventory and policy P.4.B of the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan. The District Plan must address provision of and connection to these uses within the District and its sphere of influence.

General Plan Policy P.4.B: “Provide an affordable and wide range of year-round recreational opportunities to foster a healthy community for residents and visitors.”

Existing, potential, and historical activities, summer and winter:

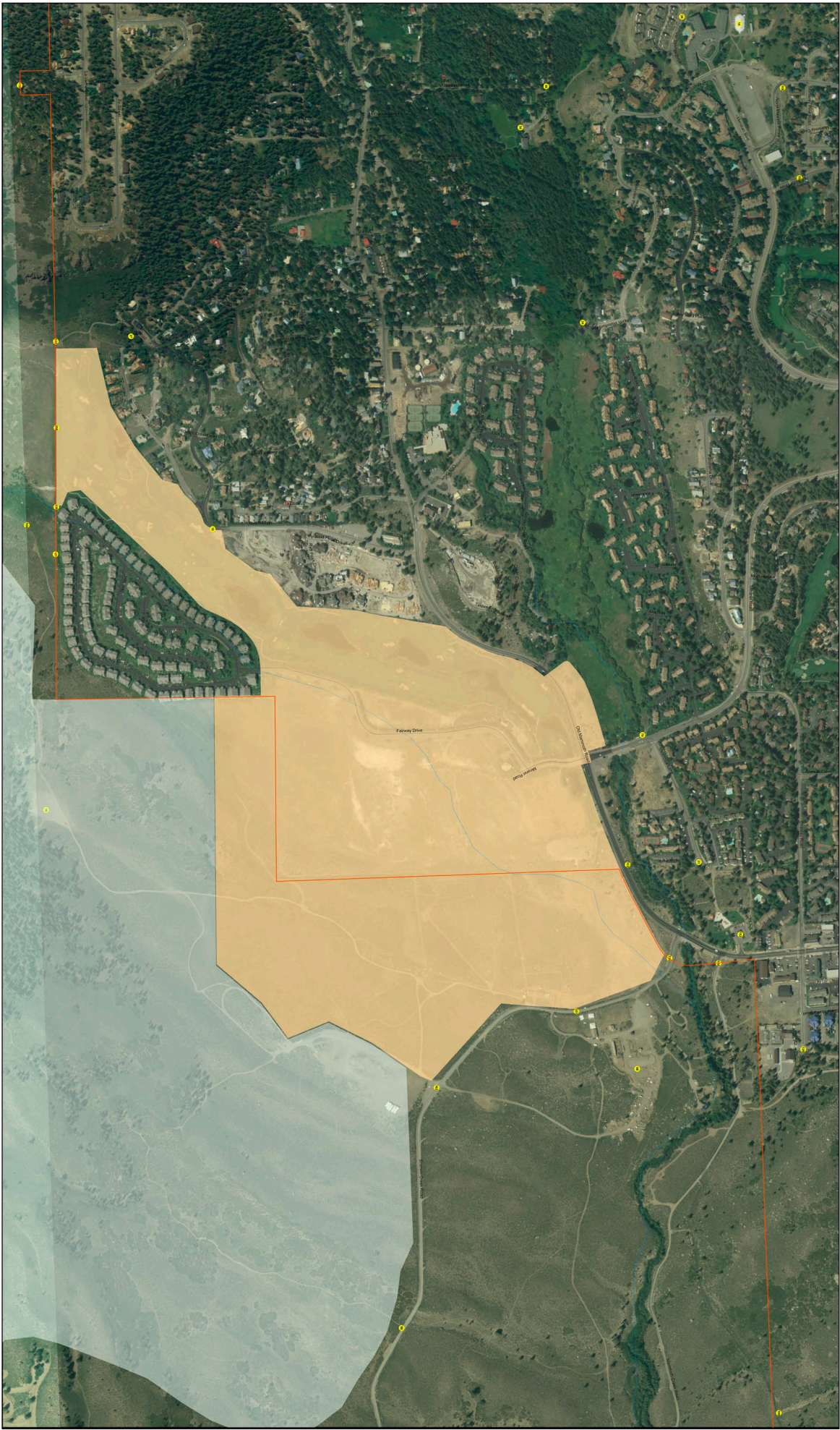
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general access</li> <li>• day &amp; backcountry hiking</li> <li>• walking</li> <li>• running</li> <li>• pet walking</li> <li>• cross-country skiing             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ groomed trails</li> <li>○ ungroomed touring</li> <li>○ biathlon</li> </ul> </li> <li>• skiing &amp; snowboarding             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ backcountry</li> <li>○ kicker zone</li> </ul> </li> <li>• interpretive trails &amp; signage</li> <li>• snowshoeing</li> <li>• sledding /snow play</li> <li>• commuter trails</li> <li>• dog sledding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing</li> <li>• sleigh rides</li> <li>• biking             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ mountain</li> <li>○ cruising</li> <li>○ road</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ice skating</li> <li>• snowmobiling</li> <li>• fall color viewing</li> <li>• wildflower viewing</li> <li>• birding</li> <li>• equestrian activities             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ commercial packing</li> <li>○ private packing</li> <li>○ commercial day rides</li> <li>○ private day rides</li> </ul> </li> <li>• motocross track parking</li> </ul>
---	---



# Proposed Sherwins District - Wide View Sphere of Influence Discussion Map

- MLTPA GIC Access Points
- Proposed Snowcreek District
- Sherwins Ski Area - Proposed/Abandoned
- Town Urban Limit
- Streets
- Lakes
- Streams
- OSV Special Use Area





- MLTPA GIC Access Points
- Proposed Snowcreek District
- Sherwins Ski Area - Proposed/Abandoned
- Town Urban Limit
- Town Boundary
- Streets
- Lakes
- Streams

## Proposed Sherwins District - Close View Sphere of Influence Discussion Map

