



Sherwins Access/Egress Handbook

November 21, 2020



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Purpose of the Program

During the winter of 2005–06, conflicts between local backcountry skiers and snowboarders, homeowners, and private-property interests threatened to permanently close the safest and most convenient winter egress route from the base of the Sherwin Range to the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Thanks to a partnership between Snowcreek Investment Company L.P. (Snowcreek VIII), the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML), and the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA), an approved, legal route leading outdoor recreationists home from the base of this well-loved frontcountry ski amenity has been secured and marked with directional signage. The Ranch Road Egress Route is the result of a two-year decision-making process and is formalized as a component of the adopted Snowcreek VIII Master Development Plan and the Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan as adopted in October 2011.

In January 2016, the Sherwins Egress Signage Program was initiated to install new winter only signs at three popular backcountry access points to complement the Ranch Road Egress Route. The first sign was installed at the Sherwins Trailhead, located south of Town next to the propane tank farm off of Sherwin Creek Road. The second sign was installed at Mill City, located at the winter road closure at the southern end of Old Mammoth Road. The third sign was installed at the Sherwins boot pack trail off of the Public Access Corridor on Lake Mary Road.

Currently, updated “Sherwins Access/Egress” signage continues to be stationed at the Sherwins Trailhead, Mill City and the Sherwins boot pack during the winter season. These access points serve as gateways for front and backcountry users alike, including opportunities for a wide variety of winter fun. Sherwins Access/Egress signs remind backcountry users to follow the “egress only” route across the Snowcreek Golf Course when exiting the Sherwins in order to respect private property rights and preserve the ability to continue to use this route in the future. The signs also provide maps, backcountry etiquette, regulatory and safety/emergency information including attached avalanche beacon checkers, provided by the Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center (ESAC), so that backcountry travelers can test their equipment before venturing out. Measure U plays a supportive role by allowing ESAC to provide up to date avalanche advisories. These reports can be found on esavalanche.org and mammothtrails.org or by scanning the QR code on the signs.

Dog waste stations, part of the Mammoth Lakes Trail System’s (MLTS) “Poo Fairy” program, are provided at all three access points to encourage users to always clean up after their pets. And beginning with the winter 2020/2021 season, temporary “Responsible Recreation” A-Frame signage can be found at all three locations detailing COVID-19 related backcountry etiquette and expectations for safe behavior.

To protect, maintain, and enhance the Sherwins Access/Egress Program, this handbook was produced by MLTPA, under contract with the TOML, for the benefit of the partners in the MLTS as well as for the general public. The TOML is responsible for the maintenance, publication, and distribution of the Sherwins Access/Egress Program Handbook.

Messaging Protocol:

The following represents the messaging protocol for updating and creating new Sherwins Access/Egress signage.

- 1) Determine sign location and orientation
- 2) Determine the Primary ID using the appropriate MLTS Naming Convention.
- 3) Determine the Primary ID Clarifier using the appropriate MLTS Naming Convention.
- 4) Identify appropriate winter recreation symbols: determine legal recreation activities in the area of the sign.
- 5) Include a Winter Recreation/Avalanche Safety Message and etiquette information.
- 6) Include a Ranch Road Egress user ethics message for backcountry skiers and riders.
- 7) Include map (level of detail identified on map is subject to USFS approval)
- 8) Include ESAC's "Avalanche Terrain" messaging, forecast QR code, and beacon checker information

Installation and Maintenance

The following represents an inventory of the Sherwins Access/Egress Program infrastructure, as well as the installation and maintenance procedures for providing outdoor recreationists with the necessary signage and wayfinding information to follow the approved, legal route.

The Sherwins Access/Egress Program infrastructure for winter 2020/2021 consists of the following signs:

- 1) Four (4) signs, property of Snowcreek Investment Company L.P., located on the Snowcreek Golf Course along the specified Ranch Road Egress route.
- 2) Three (3) signs, 49" by 57", with signposts anchored to metal sleeves in the ground. Signs are seasonally located at: Sherwins Trailhead (Propane Tanks/Sherwin Creek Road), the Mill City access at the winter closure of Old Mammoth Road and the Sherwins Winter Access sign installed near the boot pack trail off of the Public Access Corridor on Lake Mary Road.
 - a. Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center (ESAC) beacon checkers installed on the side of each sign (battery attached).

The installation date for the seasonal signs is dependent upon snowpack, but the program has maintained a general date of November 1 for installation and sometime in April for removal. The Town's Trail Manager shall coordinate with Snowcreek's property manager to verify the date and location of Snowcreek's signs (#1, above). The installation of the other three signs (#2, #3, & #4 above) will be coordinated with Public Works and the Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center.

Maintenance shall be provided to the installed signs on an as-needed basis, but the recommended schedule should include checking on the signs after any significant weather events and/or during times of high recreationist visitation (holidays, big snowfalls, etc.). The signs installed at the Sherwins Trailhead, Mill City, and the

Sherwins Winter Access (boot pack trail off of the Public Access Corridor on Lake Mary Road), will need to be checked after significant weather. If the snow level has risen after a storm, the signs will need to be dug out.

Partner Coordination

The following action items comprise the necessary coordination and communication to ensure the success of the Sherwins Access/Egress Program:

- 1) Prior to the seasonal sign installation, all partners (TOML, Chadmar/Snowcreek, MMSA/Tamarack, ESAC, MLTPA, USFS, MLTS) shall be contacted by the Town's Trails Manager to provide an opportunity for comment on the upcoming seasonal operations, including, but not limited to, any updates to the sign graphics, messaging, maps, and locations.
- 2) Confirm that all signs owned and maintained by Snowcreek Investment Company L.P. are installed and properly located.
- 3) Confirm that the signs at the Sherwins Trailhead and Mill City have been installed by Public Works.
- 4) Confirm with Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center that the Sherwins Winter Access sign has been delivered from Public Works to Tamarack and installed at the boot pack trail off the Public Access Corridor on Lake Mary Road.
- 5) Throughout the season, partners shall be provided feedback or updates from the program managers on issues that may arise from the route's regular use.
- 6) At the end of the season, partners shall be provided a season-closing update including, but not limited to, feedback and/or suggestions from users, other partners, and the program manager.
- 7) Ad-hoc meetings may be necessary throughout the winter season, any stakeholder should feel free to call a meeting of the partners for concerns raised regarding the Sherwins Access/Egress Program.

Public Outreach

The following constitutes the public outreach for the Sherwins Access/Egress Program:

1. Seasonal-opening press release distributed to local media. (See Appendix B.)
2. Email distributed to all interested parties and partners of the MLTS. (See Appendix C.)
3. Project web page shall be updated to reflect any changes in the signage and wayfinding along the egress route and/or any other updates to the program. (See Appendix D.)

Evaluation

While no formal evaluation program is in place for the Sherwins Access/Egress Program, this document recommends that the partners engage in a regular assessment of the program and look for opportunities for improvement.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sign Graphics and Maps

Appendix B: Sample Press Releases

Appendix C: Sample Email Messaging

Appendix A: Sign Graphic and Map

- Draft Mock Up / Not Final -

Sherwins Winter Access



ENTER THIS BACKCOUNTRY AREA AT YOUR OWN RISK

((AVALANCHE BEACON CHECKPOINT))

MAMMOTH LAKES TRAIL SYSTEM

Share your Mammoth Lakes Trail System experience!

BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS

- Mill City Winter Access
- Mammoth Lakes Trail System Access
- Sherwins Trailhead Winter Access
- Mammoth Lakes Trail System Access
- Ranch Road Winter Egress
- Egress Route/Eval Only

Using the Ranch Road Winter Egress:
If you're planning to get back to town by way of the Snowcrest Golf Course and the public access easement at Ranch Road, you'll be crossing private property. **PLEASE FOLLOW THE FOUR RED SIGNS WHICH MARK THE LEGAL EXIT ROUTE TO RANCH ROAD.** Following this route and respecting the privacy of adjoining private-property owners will protect all of our right to continue to use this route in the future.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| — Roads and Highways | — Inyo National Forest |
| — Multi-use Paths | — Closed to snowmobiles |
| — Topographic XC Trails | — Lakes Basin Closure |
| — Snowshoe trails | — Private Property |
| — Winter Egress Route/Eval Only | — Parking |
| — Gates | — Public transit |
| — Beacon Checkpoint | |

ENTERING AVALANCHE TERRAIN

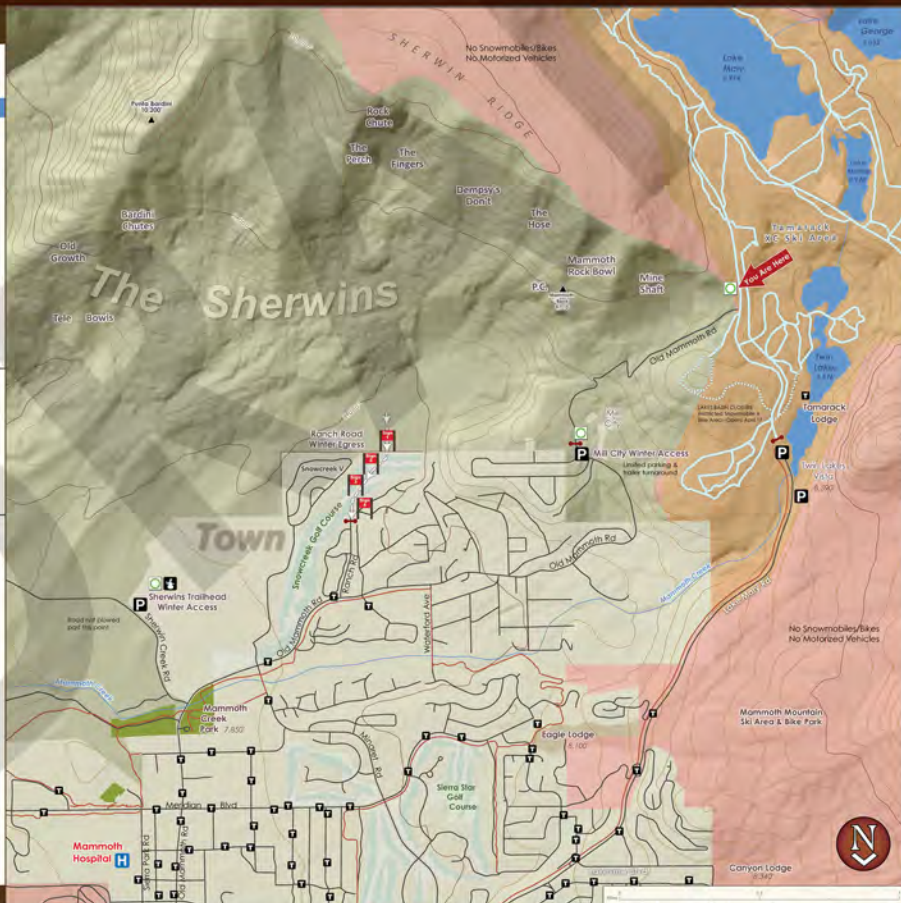
The terrain and travel routes beyond this point are in backcountry avalanche terrain. This area contains potentially dangerous slopes and avalanche paths that are not patrolled or controlled. Proceed at your own risk and only with the proper training and equipment.

KNOW THE RISKS AND BE PREPARED!

- **IS YOUR GROUP PROPERLY TRAINED AND EQUIPPED?** Backcountry skiing is dangerous - take an avalanche course before entering avalanche terrain. Everyone in your group should have an avalanche beacon, shovel, probe and knowledge of how to use them.
- **DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?** Ensure everyone knows and agrees to the plan. Do your objectives match the forecast? Do you have a backup plan? Tell someone WHERE you are going and WHEN you are returning.
- **KNOW THE FORECAST.** Visit mammothtrails.org or scan the QR code for the latest Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center forecast.
- **ENSURE YOUR BEACON IS TRANSMITTING.** Pass this checkpoint one at a time 10' apart.



In case of an emergency CALL 911



MAMMOTH LAKES TRAIL SYSTEM



Appendix B: Approved Press Release for Winter 20/21



November 18, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Joel Rathje, Trails Coordinator, Mammoth Lakes Trail System
jrathje@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov

ACCESSING SHERWINS WINTER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Sherwins offer a wide variety of diverse winter recreation opportunities, including backcountry skiing and snowboarding experiences, which are directly accessible from the community of Mammoth Lakes. The public is encouraged to take advantage of winter access opportunities at the Sherwins Trailhead at the Propane Tanks off of Sherwin Creek Road, the Mill City access at the winter closure of Old Mammoth Road and the boot pack trail located off the Public Access Corridor along Lake Mary Road . These winter access points serve as gateways for front and backcountry users alike, including opportunities for a wide variety of winter fun such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowplay, snowmobiling and backcountry skiing and snowboarding. Temporary winter Sherwins Access/Egress signage will be available at the all three locations providing maps, backcountry etiquette, regulatory and safety/emergency information including avalanche beacon checkers, provided by the Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center (ESAC), so that backcountry travelers can test their equipment before venturing out. Sherwins Access/Egress signs remind backcountry users to follow the established “egress only” route across the Snowcreek Golf Course to complete their Sherwins adventures in order to respect the private property you are crossing and the privacy of homes near the route.

Additionally, MLTS dog waste stations, as part of the “Poo Fairy” program, are provided at all three access points to encourage users to always clean up after their pets. Also, beginning winter 2020, temporary “Responsible Recreation” A-Frame signage can be found at these three locations detailing COVID-19 related backcountry etiquette and expectations.

For more information about winter recreation opportunities in the Sherwins, please visit the Mammoth Lakes Trail System website at mammothtrails.org. For information on avalanche hazard levels and traveling in avalanche terrain, please visit the Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center Web site at www.esavalanche.org. Be safe and have fun!

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The Mammoth Lakes Trail System is a partnered effort of the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the United States Forest Service.

Appendix C: Sample Email Messaging

- To be customized for transmission by the Town's Trails Manager -

Sherwins Egress Partner Update

Greetings Sherwins Access/Egress Partners:
(TOML, Chadmar/Snowcreek, MMSA/Tamarack, ESAC, MLTPA, USFS, MLTS)

Thanks to coordinated efforts between The Chadmar Group, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, MMSA/Tamarack, and MLTPA, we all witnessed the successful implementation of the Sherwins Egress program during the winter of 2010-2011.

For the upcoming 2020/2021 winter season, the Mammoth Lakes Trail System plans to implement an updated design of the Sherwins Access/Egress signs upon approval by the USFS. John Morris of Snowcreek has also advised the Mammoth Lakes Trail System that Snowcreek has replaced their weathering Sherwins egress signage with new signs (of the same design) and they have been installed along the approved exit route to Ranch Road for this 2020/2021 winter season.

Additionally, new, sturdier sign post structures will also be deployed in the field to ensure the signs remain firmly in their designated location during wind events. Beacon checkers, provided by Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center (ESAC), will continue to be attached and maintained on each of the three signs for backcountry users to test their gear before venturing out. ESAC Avalanche advisories can be found on esavalanche.org and mammothtrails.org, or by scanning the QR code on the signs.

Dog waste stations, part of the Mammoth Lakes Trail System's (MLTS) "Poo Fairy" program, are provided at all three access points to encourage users to always clean up after their pets. And beginning with the winter 2020/2021 season, temporary "Responsible Recreation" A-Frame signage can be found at all three locations detailing COVID-19 related backcountry etiquette and expectations for safe behavior.

We are excited to introduce these new improvements in the field and hope to gather feedback regarding future enhancements to this important program that provides winter recreationists with a safe and convenient egress route.

Thanks again for helping make this project a success and helping to improve the egress route for next winter. If you have any additional comments or questions, please don't hesitate to contact Joel Rathje - the Town's trails manager – at jrathje@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.