State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION

172 Pembroke Road Concord, New Hampshire 03301
Phone: 603-271-3556 Fax: 603-271-3553
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964
nhstateparks.org

June 30, 2026

Susan Donnelly, General Manager
Mount Sunapee Resort
P.O. Box 2021
Newbury, NH 03255

RE: Conditional Approval – 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan

Pursuant to Part 5 of the 1998 Lease and Operating Agreement, as subsequently amended (Lease), Mount Sunapee Resort's (MSR) proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan (AOP), including the proposed schedule of operations and description of recreational activities available to the public, is subject to review by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) and must be either approved as proposed or revised for resubmission. The Lease further requires the Department to notify the Operator in writing of the final schedule of operations no later than June 30 of each year. The purpose of this letter is to provide the Department's approval of Mount Sunapee Resort's 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan, dated May 15, 2026, subject to the conditions set forth herein. The resort shall re-submit a revised Annual Operating Plan, with the conditions set forth incorporated, within 30 days of this letter.

Authority for Review

The Lease authorizes the Operator "to manage and operate the Leased Premises as a public ski area summer recreational facility to provide year-round outdoor recreational opportunities for the general public" and "shall entitle the Operator to the right to operate a commercial recreational (*sic*) facility (including all of its support activities) on Mount Sunapee in the Towns of Newbury and Goshen" (Lease 1998, Part 4, Ski Area Operations, p. 4).

The Annual Operating Plan (AOP)

Part 5 of the Lease requires the Operator to annually submit an operating plan identifying the proposed schedule of operations and recreational activities for the upcoming year. The Department has completed its review of the proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan in accordance with the Lease and applicable Lease Amendments. Consistent with the Department's longstanding practice, the proposed Annual Operating Plan was distributed to the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission (MSAC), made available for public review, and circulated to appropriate Department staff for technical and administrative review. Written public comments were accepted through June 29, 2026, and all comments received during the review period were considered as part of the Department's evaluation.

Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission (MSAC)

In accordance with the Public Involvement and Oversight Policy (PIOP) and the 2018 Lease Amendment, the Department convened a public meeting of the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission on June 23, 2026, at Mount Sunapee Resort. During the meeting, Mount Sunapee Resort presented its proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan, provided operational updates, and discussed ongoing recreational programming, environmental stewardship initiatives, maintenance activities, and capital improvement planning. The Commission also received an update regarding the recently approved Weston & Sampson wastewater feasibility study, together with an overview of the forthcoming 2026–2030 Master Development Plan (MDP) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

The meeting was well attended, with approximately 100 members of the public in attendance. The meeting included productive discussion among members of the Commission, Resort representatives, State officials, interested stakeholders, and members of the public who chose to provide comments. The comments received during the public meeting, together with written comments submitted during the public comment period, informed the Department's review of the proposed Annual Operating Plan.

Wastewater Feasibility Study

On June 17, 2026, the Governor and Executive Council approved the Department's contract with Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. to conduct an independent feasibility study evaluating the long-term wastewater treatment and disposal needs of Mount Sunapee Resort. The study will evaluate the existing wastewater treatment system, identify system deficiencies and develop design flows and loads for a 20-year planning horizon, evaluate alternative treatment and disposal technologies, analyze permitting requirements, environmental considerations, lifecycle costs, and provide recommendations regarding the most effective and sustainable long-term wastewater solution for Mount Sunapee. The study will also include opportunities for public engagement and presentations to the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission throughout its duration.

The Department recognizes that the feasibility study represents an important planning initiative intended to support informed, data-driven decision-making regarding future wastewater infrastructure. The Department further recognizes the Operator's commitment, as reflected in the proposed Annual Operating Plan, to work collaboratively with the State as the study progresses and future recommendations are evaluated.

Conditional Approval of the AOP

Following review of Mount Sunapee Resort's proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan, consideration of comments received from the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission, members of the public, interested stakeholders, Resort representatives, and Department staff, the Department hereby grants conditional approval of the proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan, subject to the following conditions. Upon issuance of this conditional approval, the following provisions shall be deemed incorporated into, and made part of, the approved 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan. The Resort shall re-submit a revised Annual Operating Plan, with the conditions set forth incorporated, within 30 days of this letter.

1. Wastewater Feasibility Study

Recognizing the importance of this planning effort, and following review by the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission, consideration of public comments, and discussions between the Department and the Operator during review of the Annual Operating Plan, the Department has determined that the following provision shall be incorporated into the approved Annual Operating Plan:

> ***"To the extent the feasibility study completed by Weston & Sampson Engineers makes any recommendations that are reasonably necessary to protect the environment or public health, the Resort shall work with the State to evaluate such recommendations and develop an implementation plan. The Resort acknowledges that implementation of such recommendations may require funding contributions from the Resort, in accordance with the terms of the 1998 Lease and Operating Agreement, as subsequently amended, and the Resort shall work in good faith with the State to determine the appropriate scope of work, allocation of costs, and implementation schedule necessary to address any identified concerns to the satisfaction of the State."***

2. State Park Campground Access Road

During the Department's review of the proposed Annual Operating Plan, the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission considered the importance of maintaining safe and reliable access to the Mount Sunapee State Park Campground. Following review by the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission, consideration of comments received from members of the public, and discussions between the Department and the Operator during review of the Annual Operating Plan, the Department has determined that the following provision shall be incorporated into the approved Annual Operating Plan for routine maintenance, non-emergency purposes:

> ***"The Resort and the State shall conduct an annual inspection of the access road serving the State Park Campground prior to the campground opening. To the extent the inspection identifies grading, maintenance, or repair needs necessary to provide reasonable access to the campground, the Resort shall be responsible for completing such work in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of the State. Any capital improvements or major reconstruction beyond routine maintenance shall be addressed by mutual agreement between the Resort and State."***

3. Marketing and Advertising

To better align with Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) public information requirements, the Mount Sunapee website should more clearly identify the property as publicly owned within the New Hampshire State Park System and describe the State's ownership and management oversight. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Manual expressly includes "literature and advertising" among the public-facing materials that must identify the area as publicly owned. Therefore, the website should clearly identify and prominently state that the property is public land within the New Hampshire

State Park system, identify the public owner, and explain that the facility is operated by a lessee or concessioner under agreement with the State.

Continuing Collaboration and Future Planning

The Department recognizes that the Annual Operating Plan is one component of the broader framework governing the operation and long-term stewardship of Mount Sunapee Resort. As planning efforts continue, the Department remains committed to a transparent, collaborative process that incorporates sound technical analysis, meaningful public participation, and ongoing coordination with the Operator, the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission (MSAC), state agencies, local communities, and interested stakeholders.

The Department appreciates the Resort's continued cooperation throughout the Annual Operating Plan review process and its commitment to working collaboratively with the Department on matters affecting the operation, maintenance, environmental stewardship, and long-term planning of Mount Sunapee.

The Department also recognizes the value of the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission as an important forum for public engagement and appreciates the thoughtful participation of Commission members, Resort representatives, local officials, members of the public, and other stakeholders during the June 23, 2026 public meeting. The Department will continue to utilize the Commission as an advisory body throughout implementation of the Annual Operating Plan, the Weston & Sampson wastewater feasibility study, and review of future planning documents.

As the Weston & Sampson feasibility study progresses, technical memoranda and other project deliverables will be reviewed by the Department and made available to the public, as appropriate. The Department anticipates continued opportunities for public participation as future study milestones are achieved, and the findings are presented to the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission. Information regarding the feasibility study, including project milestones, technical deliverables, MDP/EMP review materials, and opportunities for public participation, will be made available through the Department's Mount Sunapee project webpage, as appropriate.

Similarly, the Department will continue its review of the proposed 2026–2030 Master Development Plan (MDP) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP). Public review materials will continue to be available through the MSAC's website, and a public hearing will be held by the Department in coordination with the Regional Planning Commission following completion of the public review period and in accordance with applicable Lease requirements.

The Department looks forward to continuing its collaborative partnership with the Operator, the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission, state agencies, local communities, interested stakeholders, and members of the public while balancing year-round recreational opportunities with responsible stewardship of Mount Sunapee State Park and the protection of its natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

Final Approval

Based upon the Department's review of the proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan; consideration of comments received from the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission, members of the public, interested stakeholders, and Department staff; and the Department's determination that the proposed operations are generally consistent with the 1998 Lease and Operating Agreement and subsequent Lease Amendments, the Department hereby approves the Mount Sunapee Resort Annual Operating Plan for 2026–2027, subject to the conditions contained within this letter.

The Department appreciates the continued partnership between Mount Sunapee Resort and the State of New Hampshire and looks forward to continued collaboration as the Resort advances future planning initiatives, environmental stewardship efforts, and infrastructure improvements consistent with the Lease and in the best interests of New Hampshire citizens and visitors.

Conditionally Approved.

Sincerely,

Adam J. Crepeau
Commissioner