

# Mittersill Terrain Area Enhancement Project Cannon Mountain // Franconia Ski Club Joint Effort

## Frequently Asked Questions // Updated January 2013

**Note:** *The information given in this FAQ sheet is accurate at the time of submission. Due to a variety of permitting, environmental, fundraising, and business concerns or other factors, the scope and/or timelines associated with this project may change.*

**1. What, exactly, is the scope of this project?** The project scope includes a T-Bar lift installation to complement the Mittersill Double Chair (completed in January, 2011), slope clearing on *Taft Slope* to incorporate a ski trail / alpine training/race slope, trail widening (with contour matching) on *Baron's Run*, and snowmaking on *Taft Slope*, *Baron's Run*, a connecting portion of *Skyline*, and a lower mountain connector to *Baron's Run*. The project cost is estimated at roughly \$3.5 Million.

**2. Who would be funding this project?** Franconia Ski Club (FSC / the Club), a New Hampshire based non-profit (and partner to the State of New Hampshire / Cannon Mountain since 1933), has proposed the project, and would enact a private fundraising campaign to fund it. Upon its completion, FSC would gift the project (and all associated equipment) to the State of New Hampshire / Cannon Mountain. Upon acceptance of the project (and ownership of all associated equipment), Cannon Mountain would incorporate the facilities and equipment into its daily / weekly / monthly / annual operation of Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway & Ski Area (Cannon).

**3. Who would handle the planning, fundraising, contracting, liability, and approvals?** FSC and Cannon officials have discussed the project and its planning at length, and have engaged in both field studies of potential environmental, watershed, and habitat impact and project construction planning. FSC officials have begun planning a fundraising campaign. FSC would act as the general contractor, funding the project and assuming any and all associated liability (and indemnifying the State of New Hampshire / Cannon), while ensuring contractors' adherence to all State and Federal environmental and construction guidelines, under the guidance of Cannon's mountain operations team. FSC and Cannon are jointly working toward local, State, and Federal approvals, acceptances, and permits; FSC, at its sole cost, has engaged the services of Ted Sutton as project manager, SE Group and Sno-Matic Engineering as trail / snowmaking system designers, and Lobdell Associates as wetlands mitigation / planning engineer.

**4. Wouldn't this project completely change the character and/or visual impact at Mittersill?** No. The vast majority of the balance of the Mittersill terrain area will remain in its current state (all-natural, no snowmaking/grooming) for the foreseeable future. There are some gladed terrain possibilities in some lower and upper sections, and some forested areas may be placed into *preserved* status to further protect the Bicknell's Thrush habitat. The trail sections incorporated in this project would not exceed their 1989 footprint (*Mittersill Alpine Resort ceased its skiing operations in 1984*). The earlier trail network at Mittersill incorporated a far more open "swath" of terrain that encompassed the majority of the lower 1/3 of the mountain. The current trail / glade network at Mittersill (even with completion of this proposed project), incorporates a far greater diversity of terrain.

**5. What's in it for FSC?** The Club and Cannon would renegotiate FSC's usage contract to include training/race use of the *Taft Slope* venue on a consistent basis, and training/race use of *Baron's Run* on a limited basis (freeing up Cannon terrain). The Club would then be able to better utilize a far safer, yet more challenging terrain area for its athletes, set away from the general public, thus offering a better and safer skiing and snowboarding experience to both Cannon's guests and its athletes. The T-Bar installation would allow for a quicker turnaround time for both FSC athletes and the general public when accessing the lower portion of the Mittersill terrain.

**6. What's in it for the public and Cannon?** The skiing/snowboarding public at Cannon would gain daily lift and skiing/snowboarding access to both the natural and snowmaking terrain at Mittersill with the advent of snowmaking. The FSC training / racing move to Mittersill would make the very popular *Gary's*, *Middle Ravine*, *Turnpike*, *Banshee*, *Missing Link* (and other) trails FAR more accessible to the general public. Cannon would serve its public as a true everyday two-mountain ski area, offering a wonderful diversity of terrain on the Mittersill side. Cannon's snowmaking system would increase in efficiency, largely due to the new compressor being funded by FSC as a part of the project, leading to increased early and late season snowmaking capacity. The T-Bar installation would allow for a quicker turnaround time when accessing the lower portion of the Mittersill terrain. Franconia residents and businesses (both in-town and at Mittersill Alpine Resort and Mittersill Village) would see increases in property values and rooms and meals taxes, and an increase in local spending and visitation.

**7. What's the projected timeframe?** The goal of FSC and Cannon is to have the gift of the project and equipment (and associated contract revisions) approved by the New Hampshire Governor and Executive Council during the winter 2012/13 season, and subject to funding timeframes, to commence with the compressor portion of the project in 2013. Completion date for the entire project would then be expected in time for the 2014/15 winter season. The 20-year contract with FSC is contingent upon project commencement within 3 years of approval, or the agreement reverts back to the 2010 (10-year) contract.

**8. What about environmental and habitat impact?** Joint field studies of potential environmental, watershed, and habitat impact were undertaken, with FSC and Cannon working closely on mitigation, preservation, and prevention planning with the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Forest Service / White Mountain National Forest, the New Hampshire Audubon Society, the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department, the Cooperative Land Administrative Commission, and the New Hampshire Division of Forests & Lands / State Lands Management Team. The project would be completed in accordance with the *Sustainable Slopes* environmental charter for US ski areas, and all appropriate State and Federal permits would be in hand prior to commencement.

## **Mittersill Terrain Area Enhancement Project Cannon Mountain // Franconia Ski Club Joint Effort**

**Note:** *The information given in this FAQ sheet is accurate at the time of submission. Due to a variety of permitting, environmental, fundraising, and business concerns or other factors, the scope and/or timelines associated with this project may change.*

### **Frequently Asked Questions // Updated January 2013**

**9. What about the lights / night skiing discussed earlier?** That discussion was a part of the earliest project outlines, and is not currently under discussion as a part of the project. If the topic is raised again sometime in the future, then it'll go through several phases of local and State discussion as to environmental, visual, and economic impact.

**10. What do Mittersill “residents” and/or Cannon’s guests think about all of this?** FSC and Cannon officials have met with the Mittersill Association of Chalet Owners (MACO) residents’ group three times, and once with the General Manager at Mittersill Alpine Resort, and the approval rating of the project has been overwhelmingly positive. The MACO group voted to endorse the project. Anecdotally, the approval rating by the FSC membership and Cannon’s guests in general has also been overwhelmingly positive. The public comment period on the project came back at 80% positive, 10% negative, and 10% no opinion given.

**11. Who “owns” Mittersill?** The skiing/snowboarding operations and equipment on Mount Jackson (geographical name of Mittersill) are owned and managed by the State of New Hampshire / Cannon. The Mittersill Alpine Resort is privately owned as a non-profit, and is operated as a vacation ownership property with rental availability / opportunity. The Mittersill Association of Chalet Owners (MACO) is operated as a homeowners’ association, whose residents are considered full or part-time residents of the Town of Franconia.

**12. How did people voice support / concerns / comments?** The public comment period for the project was September 20 – October 12, 2012. In addition, Public Information Workshops were held on September 20, 2012 at the Department of Resources and Economic Development, and September 21, 2012 at the Brookside Learning Center at Cannon Mountain Ski Area. When the DES / Environmental permitting process commences, there will be a public comment period related to wetlands permitting, and another related to alteration of terrain.