

The Sunlight Mountain Resort project management team aspires to create a village that is a year-round mountain playground where locals want to visit as much as visitors. Sunlight Mountain Resort will be a place to gather and interact with nature—a place where the past is respected and the future ensured.

The Background

A spirit of determination has always prevailed in Glenwood Springs. Perseverance saw the early settlers through hardships of making a living through mining, then ranching. But the winter landscape spurred a desire to recreate. Locals were determined to establish skiing in Glenwood Springs as early as the late 1930's--first, on Red Mountain, then on Holiday Hill, a slope at the west side of the base of the Sunlight ski area. Skiing returned to Red Mountain in the early 1940's where progress was often thwarted by marginal snow conditions, limited skiing, and lift mishaps over the years.

Sunlight formally opened on December 16, 1966 under the ownership of Sunlight Ski Corporation, headed by John Higgs of Chicago who began buying and optioning land along Four Mile Creek in 1964. Locals had a stake in the company from the beginning, with shareholders such as Jack Goodrich of Rifle, Bob Perry of Carbondale, Dr. Carter Jackson, Don Vanderhoof, Dick Stockman, Dr. Donald Steward, Clifford Cerise, Lee Morgan, and Jack Snobble. When financial problems started to plague Higgs in 1968 and 1969, Higgs lost his control and investment. The local officers took over management and operation of the area.

Not only has Sunlight been a place for locals to work and play for 40 years, there is a tradition of volunteerism that has helped ensure the area's vitality. The trails have been cleared by volunteers and the Sunlight Volunteer Ski Patrol, a long-standing institution, still exists today.

Sunlight has been shaped by locals and generations of families with familiar names such as Vanderhoof, Buckmaster, and Doose. For generations Sunlight has been the place where locals and visitors alike learned to ski—returning again and again with their families. It's a casual, friendly place to ski. No fancy ski clothes. No glitz. No glamour--just an affordable, family-oriented ski area with its own quirky ambience.

Sunlight has served a cross-section of the community and visitors—from the very young to 96-year old snowboarder, Julian Vogt. Many Roaring Fork Valley locals lay claim to Sunlight as the mountain where they learned to ski. Some, like Olympic skier Andy Mill, learned their early skills at Sunlight and went on to earn their claim to fame on skis or snowboards.

Sunlight has a culture all its own. Sunlight is very much a part of the community and the community is very much a part of Sunlight. There's Ski Spree, a 40 year-old winter carnival of fun and games on the mountain. Then there's Skier Appreciation Day, a day when skiers get a big break on the price of their lift ticket and the proceeds benefit The United Way. The 100-Club, a group of Sunlight's long-time skiers get together every Wednesday to avoid the lift lines and enjoy each others' company. There's middle school cardboard box races, free passes for 4th graders in the RE-1 and RE-2 school districts, and graduation festivities for Yampah and Bridges High School grads—Sunlight is a staunch supporter of the community.

The tenure of Sunlight's management team is unusually long. Tom Jankovsky, general manager since 1985, comes from a family of ski operators. Ross Terry, Sunlight's Assistant General Manager has worked on the mountain since 1989.

As a recreational arm to Glenwood Springs, Sunlight has also helped fuel the economic engine of the town. Given that Glenwood Springs is primarily a summer resort town, Sunlight has provided economic vitality during the winter season. According to the town's accommodations tax schedule for 2006, January through April, along with December revenues comprised 25% of the total revenues for the year.

Given the rich recreational opportunities surrounding the ski area including Nordic skiing trails, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and horseback riding, a new, improved base area can only complement and enhance the appeal of Glenwood Springs as a year-round vacation destination.

The Need

Improvements to Sunlight Mountain Resort have been slow and not so steady. The area's first lift, Primo, was acquired in 1967 from the closed "Glenwood Park" area on Red Mountain. The Segundo lift was acquired from the Aspen Skiing Corporation and

became operable at Sunlight for the '73-'74 season, fulfilling a need for additional capacity out of the base and on the mountain during weekends and holidays. Sunlight's third lift, Tercero, came on the scene in 1986. In the late 1990's a dozen trails were added, including steep terrain. Snowmaking provided extra snow coverage at the base.

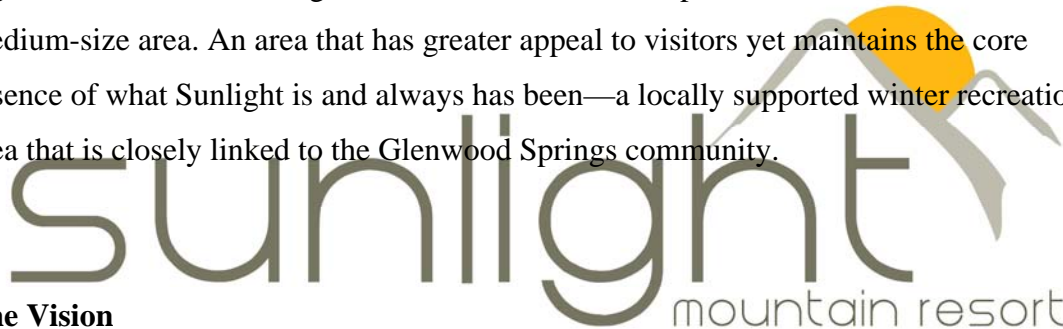
Sunlight Mountain Resort has been long overdue for more lifts, more trails, and improved, expanded base facilities. Until such improvements occur, when compared to other surrounding ski areas, Sunlight will be a "1980's area." Sunlight cannot survive solely on business from locals and the existing loyal visitor base. Skier visits have averaged 80,000 per season since the 1997/98 season. Lodging capacity at the ski area is approximately 72 units with 50 condominiums at the Brettleberg and 22 rooms at the Sunlight Inn. Additional lodging will not only accommodate more visitors at the mountain resort, it will accommodate overflow of Glenwood Springs' visitors during the high summer season. Sunlight Mountain Resort has the potential to become a first class medium-size area. An area that has greater appeal to visitors yet maintains the core essence of what Sunlight is and always has been—a locally supported winter recreation area that is closely linked to the Glenwood Springs community.

The Vision

Sunlight is a friendly, casual mountain resort whose infrastructure needs some help. The area is a playground of incredible potential.

The Sunlight Mountain Resort project management team consists of regional professionals and long-time local consultants, some of which learned to ski, and still ski at Sunlight. Mark Burnell, senior associate at SE Group in Frisco leads the team and has skillfully planned improvements of other Colorado ski areas—some with characteristics similar to Sunlight. Familiar locals include Doug Pratte, land planner from The Land Studio; Louis Meyer, SGM Engineering; Larry Green, attorney; and of course, Sunlight Mountain Resort General Manager, Tom Jankovsky and current Sunlight Mountain Resort President & Chairman of the Board Richard Schafstall.

This team understands the character, the culture, and the essence of Sunlight. The Sunlight Mountain Resort they envision is a place that is welcoming, real, and friendly



enough to be supported by those who would rather not see Sunlight change while appealing to more of those who want it to change just enough to plant their souls here. The team envisions a place that reflects the determined spirit of Glenwood Springs—a spirit that is rooted in its past – in coal mining, ranching, and a resolve to establish a thriving ski area. They also see it as an opportunity to further strengthen the bond between Sunlight, the town of Glenwood Springs, and the outside world.

Sunlight Mountain Resort will not only be a warm, family-friendly place to ski and snowboard, but a vibrant, year-round gateway to the recreational opportunities that surround it. Sunlight Mountain Resort will be the launching point for Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, mountain biking, and horseback riding in Glenwood Springs.

The team also understands that the community is a stakeholder in Sunlight Mountain Resort. The community recognizes the need to increase the attractiveness of Sunlight—both for day visitors and those, who in the future, may choose to own a home here, but not at the expense of losing its friendliness and charm.

The industrious and inventive spirit of the people who initiated skiing in Glenwood Springs will be reflected in the way the new village will be designed and built, as well as the way it works. The stewards of this village will carefully balance the need to attract visitors from across the country while ensuring that the genuine, casual, family-friendly atmosphere is maintained. There will be no attempt to change Sunlight to appeal to a demographic that wouldn't like it exactly the way it is. First and foremost, the team realizes that Sunlight is for those who have already pledged their hearts and souls to this place and next for those who wish to join them here.

The team also understands that supporting the local community is a “sacred cow” among the core values at Sunlight—a value that will ever remain; because as Sunlight evolves, it will always remain Sunlight.

The Improvements

Sunlight Mountain Resort is a 445-acre “island” of private land surrounded by the White River National Forest and BLM land. Within the “island,” 315 acres or 71% will remain open space.

The Sunlight Mountain Village improvements encompass on-mountain ski area enhancements; a commercial component, additional lodging, plus a residential aspect that will help fund the other improvements. Three small mixed-use villages will be connected by a gondola to the ski front at the main base area.

On-mountain improvements include new lifts, new expert ski terrain, trail refinements, and a significant increase in snowmaking capabilities. New lifts will include the Primo Express-- a new, high-speed, top-to-bottom quad lift; and a new lift for the expert ski area. Never-ever skiers will benefit from the addition of a Magic Carpet. The existing Tercero lift will be used as a beginner lift. Easy access to backcountry skiing and riding will be offered on Williams Peak. Currently, Sunlight has the ability to produce snow on 10 acres at the base of the ski area. The proposed plan includes snowmaking capabilities covering 120 acres.

On the west side, recreation launch points, including a Nordic/Snowmobile Center and a Mountain Biking Center provide points of entry into the wilderness beyond. The land at the edge of the Sunlight to Powderhorn Snowmobile Trail represents the longest groomed trail system in all of Colorado.

The commercial plan is focused on serving those in the village with lodging, plus guest service and recreational equipment services—primarily restaurants and rental shops. With its strong connections to the surrounding recreational amenities, the Sunlight Mountain Resort recreational and retail experience will be differentiated from the “in town” experience. Sunlight and in-town retail and service centers will complement one another and shuttles will connect the two.

A diversity of housing will be available at Sunlight Mountain Resort, from high density skier accommodations to lower density private residences tucked away in the forest. Affordable housing and seasonal employee housing are integral to the plan.

The Environment

The Sunlight Mountain Resort project team is keenly aware of the environmental impacts of development and has painstakingly planned to mitigate those impacts and find ways to even *improve* the surrounding environment. The team feels that Sunlight Mountain Resort represents an opportunity to build a “green village” from the ground up.

Riparian areas have been flagged and identified, and appropriate setbacks have been established. Upgraded water and waste water facilities, plus an innovative snowmaking plan have been designed to actually improve water quality and quantity in Four Mile Creek and to the Roaring Fork River.

The Benefits

There is no denying that Sunlight Mountain Resort needs upgrading. Its authenticity is near and dear to all who frequent there, but the fact remains that some things must change in order for Sunlight to survive. The improvements presented in this plan will make Sunlight more appealing to locals and visitors alike. The residential component will provide the funds to make it all happen.

Currently, 70% of revenues at Sunlight Mountain Resort are generated on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The proposed improvements will expand the visitor base and increase skier visits Monday through Friday.

Glenwood Springs will become more attractive as a year-round recreation destination. Not only will the new Sunlight Mountain Resort mountain biking and horseback riding facilities complement the many summer recreational opportunities that are the “bread and butter” of the Glenwood Springs economy, winter visitor traffic will increase. With an improved alpine ski area and Nordic/Snowmobile Center, it is anticipated that Glenwood Springs could become as popular for its winter recreation as it is currently known for its summer recreation.

Sunlight Mountain Resort is envisioned to be a vibrant, year-round playground--an essential part of the overall Glenwood Springs playground.