

JULY 2018

TIMBERLINE'S 10 YEAR CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN  
A VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE AND BEYOND  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH REPORT

AUTHORED BY:



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH REPORT

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2. INTRODUCTION TO TIMBERLINE
  - A. 10-YEAR CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN
  - B. SUMMARY LIST OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
3. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH
  - A. PURPOSE AND APPROACH
4. PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS
5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH RESULTS
  - A. KEY THEMES AND STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS
    - I. TRANSPORTATION
    - II. DESTINATION TIMBERLINE
    - III. CELEBRATING HISTORY, CULTURE, AND DIVERSITY
    - IV. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
    - V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
6. CONCLUSION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Timberline Lodge is an Oregon icon. The Lodge was built by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression as a Federal Arts Project. It was a master/apprentice project intended to provide jobs, celebrate the arts, and also teach the skills of the traditional construction trades. Craftspeople and artisans spent nearly two years constructing the Lodge and creating the majestic space.

The Lodge was dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 28, 1937, on what is now referred to as the “Roosevelt Terrace.” In his remarks, the President commented that his vision for the Lodge was to create a destination for year-round recreation for current and future generations. The original intent for Timberline to be an operating ski resort and recreation destination continues to this day.

Just seventeen years after the Lodge was dedicated by President Roosevelt, there was a severe backlog of deferred maintenance, no federal funding, and for a brief time, Timberline closed. Following World War II the Lodge re-opened, but went through a series of failed operations. Richard L. Kohnstamm, a social worker from New York City who had recently moved to Portland, convinced the Forest Service to give it one more try. He took the permit to operate the Lodge and ski area in 1955 and began working with the Mount Hood National Forest and community partners to restore and maintain the Lodge. Today, he is famously known as “the man who saved Timberline.” He saw the potential of Timberline, and knew how important it should be to the people of this country. Due in large part to his leadership and the dedication of his family, the Lodge has been continuously operated and open to the public since 1955. The Kohnstamm family continues to operate the Lodge and their company, R.L.K. and Company, is focused on providing a high quality guest experience that supports the on-going stewardship of the historic facilities.

Timberline provides an important gateway experience to people visiting the Mount Hood National Forest, and represents a rare National Historic Landmark guest experience in that it is still operated for what it was originally intended to be. Today, the Timberline experience is considered part of Oregon’s DNA, and the public/private partnership comprised primarily of the USDA Forest Service, R.L.K and Company, and the Friends of Timberline has a national reputation as an excellent model of collaborative stewardship and a purpose driven public enterprise.

### 10-YEAR CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

Timberline Lodge is located within the Mount Hood National Forest, and R.L.K. and Company holds a long term special use permit to operate the Lodge. A requirement of the permit is to maintain a 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan (CMP) that outlines potential development projects that would occur within the permit area boundary. The current CMP expires in 2019. R.L.K. plans to submit a new master plan to guide development through the next decade.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

R.L.K. and Company operations on public lands have led the company to place a strong emphasis on public accessibility, relationship building, and trust. The company hired Sustainable Northwest, a regional non-profit, to organize and lead a series of public engagement meetings focused on gathering stakeholder input on projects proposed for inclusion in the updated 10-Year CMP. The meetings served as a venue to gather feedback, but also as an important opportunity to reconnect with community leaders and key members of the public after a protracted court case filed in 2013 over a previously approved mountain bike development. That lawsuit was dismissed with a March 31, 2018 decision by Federal Judge Ann Aiken.

Projects for potential inclusion in the updated 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan were identified by R.L.K. and Company leadership and presented to Timberline employees and key stakeholders between April and June 2018. Prospective projects focused on enhancing the guest experience, improving accessibility, and mitigating potential impacts of climate change on business operations.

The draft CMP was presented to more than 40 local businesses, non-profit organizations, elected officials, thought leaders, and agencies at three stakeholder meetings. The discussions primarily included representatives from local communities, environmental groups, the cultural and historic preservation community, travel and tourism industry, and the outdoor recreation community. The meetings were held in Government Camp, Hood River, and Portland. The primary objectives of R.L.K. and Company's public engagement and outreach include:

1. Engage key organizations and individuals in developing a shared understanding of Timberline's history, mission, and values as a premier public destination for lodging, dining, sightseeing, year-round recreation, and Oregon art and history.
2. Renew and strengthen relationships with a diverse range of organizations and members of the public.
3. Through robust and thoughtful public engagement, build broad stakeholder understanding and support for Timberline's updated 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan.

#### KEY THEMES

Consistent themes emerged through the stakeholder engagement meetings. Similar interests and concerns among participating stakeholders focused on transportation and parking, the history and culture of the people who maintain a connection to Timberline, environmental stewardship, and on-going community engagement. Each of the themes are described briefly here, and outlined in further detail in the full report.

- **Transportation** and accessibility concerns center around increasing demand for limited parking and inadequate public transportation options to shuttle guests to the Lodge and other nearby destinations. Increasing parking and expanding public transportation options were the primary stated interests of participating stakeholders. While outside the footprint of the ski area special use permit area, connectivity to Government Camp was also a theme with comments such as "Why aren't you thinking in a bigger, broader way?"
- Timberline is a **renowned regional tourist destination** that serves a diverse range of guests – from world-class skiers and Pacific Crest Trail thru-hikers to local history buffs and families on vacation. Stakeholders shared strong support for continued investments in the family friendly and accessible nature of Timberline's operations.
- The **rich history, deep cultural connections, and diversity of uses** at Timberline creates multiple competing demands for a limited maintenance budget and staff capacity. Leveraging partnership with key partners such as Friends of Timberline, will be critical in ensuring continued investments in this National Historic Landmark.
- **Stewardship** of the surrounding alpine environment, forests, and watershed were recognized as important considerations. Stakeholders expressed an interest in working with R.L.K. and Company to reduce and mitigate the potential impacts of future developments on the mountain.
- **Community engagement** is a pillar of successful operations on public lands. Efforts to decrease barriers to entry, and increase diversity of recreation participants was an emerging theme that was presented for future consideration and embraced by R.L.K. representatives. In general,

participating stakeholders expressed appreciation for the public engagement meetings, and a desire for continued dialogue.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH | FULL REPORT

### INTRODUCTION TO TIMBERLINE

Timberline Lodge, located on the southern flank of Mount Hood, is an Oregon icon. Built during the Great Depression, the historic Lodge and alpine surroundings boast some of the region's most visited and sought after experiences. Timberline is the only ski-in/ski-out resort in the State of Oregon, the Lodge sits along the Congressionally-designated Pacific Crest Trail, and the resort maintains the longest ski season in North America. It is one of the most popular ski areas and one of the most highly visited tourist attractions in the Pacific Northwest. The USDA Forest Service and the long-time operator of Timberline Lodge, R.L.K. and Company, take pride in their commitment to hospitality and guest services, hosting more than 2 million visitors from around the world each year.

Timberline Lodge is located within the boundary of the Mount Hood National Forest, an approximately one-million-acre expanse of public lands less situated roughly 60 miles due east of the Portland metropolitan area. R.L.K. and Company operates Timberline on a 1,419-acre special use permit area on the National Forest. The special use permit area and the immediate surroundings are considered developed recreation (Management Area A-11) under the Mount Hood National Forest Plan (USDA 1990). Developed recreation designation helps support organized use of specific parts of the National Forest in order to concentrate and control impacts of human use and reduce potential impacts of uncontrolled and unmanaged recreation in other parts of the forest. R.L.K and Company holds the oldest special use permit in the United States, and the company is proud of the long-term, on-going partnership with the Mount Hood National Forest, and the public at large.

### 10-YEAR CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan (CMP) is to set out a visionary set of capital projects that will improve the operations, safety, and guest experience at Timberline Lodge. All projects included in the CMP fall within the 1,419-acre ski area boundary covered by the special use permit. The CMP is a requirement of the special use permit with the Mount Hood National Forest, and the current plan expires in 2019.

### SUMMARY LIST OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

R.L.K. and Company's development philosophy is an extension of its credo *Proud to be your Host*. It is also focused on a principle of offering "quality recreation within the capabilities of the ecosystem." The company recognizes that the outdoor recreation business has an impact on the environment, but points out that it is a known impact that can be managed. R.L.K. and Company is taking proactive steps to mitigate and reduce the environmental impacts associated with potential capital projects and improvements to the facilities.

The following list of proposed projects were shared with stakeholders during a series of public engagement meetings between April and June 2018, and are described briefly here:

Bruno's Beginner Hill: Timberline hosts some of the most family-friendly skiing in Oregon, with accessible beginner runs and terrain. Bruno's beginner hill needs to be upgraded to meet the needs of beginner skiers, an improved learning experience, and a more consistent guest experience. The immediate area served by Bruno's needs to be regraded to provide an optimal area for ski lessons. Magic carpets will also be incorporated into the area to provide beginner skiers with a non-chairlift conveyance option.

Expanded Snow-making: Climate change in the Pacific Northwest is anticipated to lead to less reliable snow pack. In order to prepare for the potential impacts on mountain operations, R.L.K. and Company

is proposing to expand snow-making in strategic locations within the special use permit area to ensure a more reliable ski experience in the face of an uncertain climate future, particularly in early season, and in seasons with low snow conditions.

Molly's Portal: Limited parking and transportation are significant barriers to ensuring public access to Timberline. Prospective visitors are regularly turned away on weekends and holidays during the winter months. Expanding parking and guest service operations at Molly's Portal, nearly halfway up Timberline Road, will create additional capacity and access to the slopes. The overriding goal of this proposal is to better balance Timberline's parking capacity with on-hill skier capacity. The Molly's Portal concept is also considering both a managed and unmanaged snow play area for families and children. It is recognized that this access to snow play meets a need faced by the Forest Service, accommodating new and unique user groups.

Phlox Point Cabins: Phlox Point Cabin, a former boy scout cabin, is a historic space offering skiers food, beverage, warmth, and a break from the slopes. The proposed updates and expansion of this space includes an additional hosted ski-in/ski-out lodging experience, as well as a summer "glamping" option for guests.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH STRATEGY

### PURPOSE AND APPROACH

R.L.K. and Company hired Sustainable Northwest, a regional non-profit organization, to engage Timberline staff and key stakeholders in the development of the 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan. Sustainable Northwest's mission is to resolve conflicts around natural resource management, and the organization has worked for more than 25 years to bring together disparate stakeholders engaged in public lands management to reduce risk of litigation and accelerate restoration on National Forest System lands.

R.L.K. and Company and Sustainable Northwest organized a series of four meetings to engage key members of the public and stakeholder groups in evaluating potential projects for inclusion in the 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan. The first meeting was organized internally, and engaged the twenty most senior staff at Timberline Lodge. Staff provided feedback on the proposed improvements and shared insights into how to pursue implementation of potential future projects that would limit impacts on operations. A series of three meetings were held with external partners and stakeholders with meeting locations in Government Camp, Hood River, and Portland. The four meetings were hosted between April and June 2018.

During each of the four meetings, R.L.K. and Company leadership, including Jeff Kohnstamm, President/Area Operator, and Jon Tullis, Director of Public Affairs and Planning, shared a presentation that highlighted Timberline's history, development philosophy, and ethos. The presentation also outlined each of the company's proposed projects for potential inclusion in the 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan. The presentation was followed by a facilitated discussion that focused on eliciting key areas of stakeholder interest and potential issues and concerns from meeting participants.

R.L.K. and Company's operations on public lands require a strong emphasis on building trust with a diverse range of interest groups and community members. While not a requirement of the 10-Year Conceptual Master Planning process, robust public engagement prior to submission of the plan is a voluntary, proactive approach to mitigating risk of future conflict and building broader support for potential projects. Stakeholder input is not required for approval of the CMP, but all future capital

improvements are subject to public review and comment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Primary Objectives of the Public Engagement and Outreach Strategy:

1. Engage key organizations and individuals in developing a shared understanding of Timberline’s history, mission, and values as a premier public destination for lodging, dining, sightseeing, year-round recreation, and Oregon art and history.
2. Renew and strengthen relationships with a diverse range of organizations and members of the public.
3. Through robust and thoughtful public engagement, build broad stakeholder understanding and support for Timberline’s updated 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan.

**PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS**

R.L.K. and Company invited representatives from the following businesses, organizations, and agencies in the review of the 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan. Invited groups are listed in alphabetical order. Organizations in italics were not able to attend, but will receive this report.

*BARK*

Best Western Hood River Inn

*Bremik Construction*

Charlie’s Mountain View

Clackamas County Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office Mount Hood Territory

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

*Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde*

Crag Rats

*Doug’s Sports*

*Fat Tire Farm*

Friends of Mount Adams

Friends of Mount Hood

Friends of Timberline

*Freshwater Trust*

Government Camp Community Planning Organization

*Government Camp Snow Removal Company*

Hoodland Fire District

*Hoodland Women’s Club*

*Hood River County Board of Commissioners*

Hood River Valley Residents Committee

Huckleberry Inn

KEEN Footwear

Mazamas

Mountain Resort Lodging Company

Mountain Shop

Mount Hood Area Chamber of Commerce  
Mount Hood Coffee Roasters  
Mount Hood Cultural Center and Museum  
Mount Hood Meadows  
Mount Hood Ski Bowl  
*Mount Hood Ski Patrol*  
*National Forest Foundation*  
Off-Piste Magazine  
Office of Congressmen Earl Blumenauer  
Office of Governor Kate Brown  
Office of State Representative Jeff Helfrich  
Office of State Senator Chuck Thomsen  
Office of Senator Ron Wyden  
Office of Senator Jeff Merkeley  
*Office of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler*  
*Oregon Cultural Trust*  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
Oregon Outdoors Coalition  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
*Oregon State Parks and Recreation*  
*Oregon Tourism Commission*  
Oregon Wild  
*Pacific Crest Trail Association*  
Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association  
Portland Mountain Rescue  
Powder Hounds Ski School  
Rhododendron Community Planning Organization  
Sandy River Watershed Council  
*Second Wind Sports*  
Sierra Club  
*Summit Ski Area*  
Travel Oregon  
USDA Forest Service Mount Hood National Forest  
Valian's Ski Shop  
Welches Mountain Properties

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH RESULTS

### KEY THEMES AND STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key themes emerged through the stakeholder engagement meetings. Each key theme is briefly described and followed by a summary of stakeholder recommendations captured during the public meetings. The themes are not presented in any prioritized order.

#### KEY THEME: TRANSPORTATION

Congestion through Government Camp, lack of adequate parking, and a dearth of public transportation makes it difficult for R.L.K. and Company to meet current demand at Timberline, especially during the

winter ski season. Prospective guests are regularly turned away due to the limited amount of available parking.

Stakeholder recommendations:

- There was strong support to increase available parking on the mountain to better meet demand and balance parking capacity with on-hill capacity to ensure a high quality guest experience. In the draft Conceptual Master Plan, this will largely be achieved through calculating a comfortable carrying capacity, and determining an appropriate number of additional parking spots for the development of Molly's Portal. Some stakeholders expressed concern over developing more parking in the upper elevations of the mountain environment, favoring the development of more parking in the vicinity of Government Camp.
- Explore opportunities to expand existing partnerships with transportation providers that support customer travel from Portland destinations, including the international airport, directly to Timberline. Work with Clackamas County and the Mt. Hood Transportation Alliance to expand the Mount Hood Express service and eventually connect to the Columbia Gorge Express bus service in the Gorge.
- Pursue the development of a transit center in the vicinity of Government Camp that would offer a rest stop as well as well lit, secure parking. This could provide a "you have arrived" pedestrian destination experience for visitors to Government Camp, and in addition to accommodating the public transportation systems such as the Mount Hood Express, it could function as a public/private partnership for ski area shuttles and private sector carriers as a regional park and ride.
- There was particular interest during the Government Camp meeting in developing a gondola or bubble chairlift between town and Timberline Lodge as year-round alternative transportation.

#### KEY THEME: DESTINATION TIMBERLINE

The Lodge not only hosts exceptional year-round recreation, it is a destination in and of itself for visitors from around the world. Fine dining, warm hospitality and customer service, and the family friendly atmosphere make Timberline an inviting place for a vacation, winter or summer.

Stakeholder recommendations:

- There was strong support for replacing the Bruno chairlift with surface conveyors and re-grading the nearby terrain. Timberline maintains a welcoming family atmosphere, and ensuring the mountain infrastructure aligns with the expectations of ski customers of all ability levels was a stated priority among participants in the outreach meetings.
- Stakeholders expressed support for Molly's Portal, in part to reduce congestion at the main lodge and relieve pressure on the facilities further up the mountain. Expanding snow-play at Molly's was also recognized as a proactive attempt to embrace a more diverse visitor make-up and reduce public safety risks associated with the informal/unsanctioned snow-play that currently occurs along the roadside and at Timberline.
- There was stated support for previously approved projects, including the development of mountain bike trails, as both a way to enhance the guest experience and diversify recreation business opportunities in the face of climate change.

## KEY THEME: CELEBRATING HISTORY, CULTURE, AND DIVERSITY

Timberline Lodge is an important part of Oregon’s cultural heritage and history. Stakeholders expressed a deep appreciation for R.L.K. and Company’s restoration and stewardship of the Lodge. Participants shared a strong desire to be engaged in supporting this unique experience, and preserving the facilities for future generations.

### Stakeholder recommendations:

- Leverage existing and new partnerships with Friends of Timberline, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, Mount Hood National Forest, and Oregon’s Congressional Delegation to ensure continued investment in the maintenance and preservation of the Lodge.
- Deepen and strengthen relationships with the Native American Tribes and work together with the Tribes to ensure that there are accurate depictions of their history, artwork, and culture at the Lodge. Pursue programs that could provide jobs and economic opportunities for tribal members, particularly tribal artisans interested in developing retail markets for their arts and crafts.
- Investigate opportunities to re-open historic trails, such as the Blossom, Glade, and Alpine Trails in order to enhance connections to Government Camp and the surrounding area.
- Timberline hosts numerous guests each year travelling the Pacific Crest Trail. Continue to provide logistical support and hospitality at the Lodge for these unique visitors.
- Integrate traditional Cascadia design themes into future building projects that align with the aesthetics of the historic Lodge.
- Timberline is uniquely positioned to share a one-of-a-kind recreation/art history/cultural experience with guests. Continue to explore ways to serve as a bridge in connecting the various interests and user groups at the Lodge, for example, by hosting or convening relevant community meetings.

## KEY THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Timberline Lodge operates in an alpine environment, which requires special attention to the potential impacts of mountain operations. Stakeholders expressed a desire for a continued focus on reducing the impacts of human use on the mountain and investing in opportunities that can help “green” the operations. Timberline maintains an exceptional reputation and staff and stakeholders believe that R.L.K. and Company has taken admirable steps to invest in the sustainability of mountain operations, but must continue to enforce this as an integral part of the company’s culture.

### Stakeholder recommendations:

- Timberline Lodge sits at the headwaters of the Sandy River watershed, which provides habitat for a diverse range of wildlife and fish species. Work with non-profit organizations, such as the Sandy River Watershed Council and National Forest Foundation, and agency partners to identify opportunities to reduce the potential impacts of mountain operations on wildlife habitat and water quality.
- Degraded forest health within the ski area boundary poses a wildfire risk to the facilities and surrounding infrastructure. Preventative maintenance, such as thinning and creating defensible space, has the potential to reduce risk.

- Enhanced snow-making capacity on the mountain is a hedge against the likely impacts of climate change. Stakeholders expressed support for increasing snow-making, which also has the potential to increase snow retention through the spring and early summer months, providing runoff and streamflow somewhat later than under natural conditions. In partnership with agency scientists or university partners investigate how snow retention and snow-making may benefit water flow and water temperature in the watershed.
- Stakeholders and Timberline employees suggested that increased communications efforts focused on environmental stewardship and sustainability may contribute to improved relationships with environmental groups. The Timberline website does not currently include sufficient information regarding sustainability initiatives on the mountain. A more robust communications strategy could help foster a stronger shared understanding of Timberline’s efforts among customers and concerned members of the public.
- Stakeholders shared that they appreciated the “modest and appropriate scale” of projects proposed for potential inclusion in the draft CMP. R.L.K. and Company’s stewardship ethic and development philosophy appears to be recognized and appreciated by the vast majority of participating stakeholders.

#### KEY THEME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement meetings included a number of local champions who feel passionately about Timberline and the Lodge’s place in the region. Fostering continued relationship building with these community members and organizations is essential to R.L.K. and Company’s continued success.

Stakeholder recommendations:

- Create and support venues for on-going engagement in the design and implementation of projects outlined in the CMP outside of the formal NEPA process. Potential venues include direct targeted outreach, one-on-one meetings, and an emerging recreation collaborative on the Mount Hood National Forest.
- Community members in each of the three communities - Government Camp, Hood River, and Portland - expressed a strong connection to Timberline. Continued public outreach has the potential to foster continued relationship building and bolster the number of local champions and advocates that support the work of R.L.K and Company at Timberline Lodge.

#### CONCLUSION

Timberline Lodge maintains a special place in Oregon’s history, heritage, and current culture and sense of livability. Generations of families have traveled to the historic destination on Mount Hood to ski, enjoy quality hospitality, and to make life-long memories. Timberline’s exceptional reputation is a testament to R.L.K. and Company’s commitment to customer service and hospitality.

Updating the 10-Year Conceptual Master Plan provides an important opportunity to take stock of the last decade of progress and critically evaluate potential future needs and investments. While important new perspective was gained, progress over the past 10 years was poor, thwarted by the aforementioned bike park lawsuit. Not surprisingly, many of the same issues that Timberline faced in 2009 – especially around parking, transportation, and accessibility – have only become more pronounced today. The Pacific Northwest is in the midst of an unprecedented economic and

population boom that will inevitably continue to increase pressures on the facilities at Timberline and around the Mount Hood area. As the longest continually held USDA Forest Service special use permit holder in the country, R.L.K. and Company is uniquely positioned to serve as a strong partner with the communities that it serves and with the Mount Hood National Forest in meeting current and future demand for on-mountain services.

The company's commitment to a development philosophy focused on "quality recreation within the capabilities of the ecosystem," is admirable. It resonates with the public and will continue to serve as a helpful guiding principle, as more demand for on-mountain services could also lead to increased public scrutiny and pressure from some interest groups. There was strong interest among stakeholders in continued investments in the historic preservation of the facilities at Timberline and a clear desire for increased engagement and communications regarding environmental stewardship on the mountain.

The primary objectives of the public outreach and engagement strategy were achieved. Stakeholder meetings focused on gathering input from a diverse range of interests, building and reinvigorating relationships with key stakeholders and fostering a shared understanding of the need for potential future developments at Timberline. The public engagement meetings created new venues that spurred constructive dialogue, creative thinking, and shared learning. The results of this outreach strategy show that there is a deep commitment and strong appreciation for the stewardship of the Lodge by the Kohnstamm family, and, at the same time, stakeholders recognize the pressures facing the region and stand prepared to work together to ensure the experiences they've had at Timberline are maintained and preserved for future generations.