REDEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

RAGGED MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

September 2013

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Summary

The Ragged Mountain Recreation Area (RMRA), home of the Camden Snow Bowl, has been part of the fabric of Camden and the mid-coast area for 75 years. Literally thousands of people have learned to ski there, walked with friends on the trails, competed on the slopes, fields and tennis courts, and celebrated events with their families in the lodge. It's a true community treasure, and is often cited as an important reason families chose to move to, and stay in, the area. This Redevelopment and Sustainability Plan addresses how we intend to keep this tremendous resource a vital part of the community for the next 30 to 40 years. The plan provides a current assessment of the area and identifies a vision for the future, disseminating the advice of many professionals and the input of regional residents. The goal of the plan is to redevelop the RMRA infrastructure in order to sustain current programs and expand year round activities. What follows will help explain how we plan to do so.

From its beginning in 1936 until 1981, the Camden Outing Club led the development and operation of the Snow Bowl. Over those 55 years, the Outing Club organized countless volunteer hours, secured funding from two federal grant programs and raised money privately to build and support the recreation area. This post-World War 1 era was symbolized by gala winter carnivals and began the tradition of outdoor events at Ragged Mountain. After World War 2 came the installation of the first ski lift in 1958 and the full development of the ski area over an 18 year period through 1976. Through this period of modernization, the Outing Club survived several challenges; most notably the loss of the original lodge to fire in 1967. In 1981, the Town and the Outing Club agreed to the leasing of the facility to a private operator, but that arrangement proved unsuccessful and in 1983 the operation of the Snow Bowl was assumed by what is now the Camden Parks and Recreation Department. This operational structure continues today.

For the past 34 years, Camden residents have faithfully agreed to support the ski operation as an important and unique aspect of municipal government. This support was buoyed in 1991 by the formation of the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Foundation, a private, non-profit organization formed for the sole purpose of raising funds to support and promote outdoor recreation at Ragged Mountain. Since 1991, the RMRA Foundation has contributed over $250,000 to the programs and facilities at Ragged Mountain. The RMRA Foundation continues its mission today and current Board members are identified in an appendix to this plan. Despite the support and efforts of both the Town and the RMRA Foundation, RMRA facilities remain much as they were in 1976.

In 2006, faced with a continued need to support the annual operating costs of the Snow Bowl and the obvious aging of the facility's infrastructure, the Camden Select Board accepted the advice of Camden's Parks and Recreation Committee to commission a long-range plan and feasibility study of the RMRA. The study was completed by Walter Elander of Horizons Engineering, a firm with expertise in small ski area design and management throughout North America. Their report (attached as an appendix) describes the Camden Snow Bowl as a "survivor" among community ski areas and outlines a list of capital and operating improvements aimed at stabilizing and improving financial performance.

Following the Horizons Engineering report, the Camden Select Board and the Parks and Recreation Committee assembled the RMRA Redevelopment Committee to develop recommendations for the future of the Ragged Mountain Recreational Area and to specifically

explore four-season use of the area. The Committee turned to the RMRA Foundation for financial support for the planning process and assembled a concept plan that was presented to the community in a series of public meetings in 2007 and 2008. Horizons Engineering updated its 2006 report with a Ski Area Concept Plan published in August, 2008. The Committee identified $6.5 million dollars in infrastructure expansion, renovation and replacement projects at RMRA that would be necessary to achieve the objectives of the Horizons report for ski operations and the objectives of the Town for expanded use of the area.

In November 2008, Camden voters supported the concept of issuing a $2 million municipal bond to support the redevelopment of RMRA by a margin of nearly 2:1. This advisory vote gave the RMRA Redevelopment Committee the confidence to move forward on detailed facility design. It also gave the RMRA Foundation the signal to move forward with a $4.5 million private fundraising effort.

At this point, the private fundraising goal is in sight. The necessary replacement of the failed septic system and other projects supported by small grant programs, like the "22 Tacks" multi use trail, has been completed. Construction on the more costly components of the plan will begin when full funding, both private and public, is in place. This plan presents a timeline for the completion of the redevelopment project in the fall of 2015, anticipating that funding will be secure by the end of 2013.

The redevelopment project is envisioned to renovate or replace aging facilities and to expand the services and programs offered at the Ragged Mountain Recreation area during both skiing and non-skiing months. The redevelopment project will not, and should not, fundamentally change the family appeal of the recreation area and its affordable access to outdoor recreation activities. The Committees and individuals involved in the project thus far feel strongly that now is the time to redevelop the facilities at Ragged Mountain in order for the community to enjoy the next 30 to 40 years of local, affordable and healthy outdoor recreation. Now is the time to reinvest in this important community asset. Now is the time to accept the generous donations of Ragged Mountain friends and fans and to leverage every $1.00 of public money with $2.25 of matching privately raised funds. Now is the time to rebuild.

Finally, a recent Economic Impact Study on the current operation of the Camden Snow Bowl (also attached as an appendix) shows that the Snow Bowl contributes $3.7 million annually to our local economy. We hope that Camden taxpayers find this reason enough to support the continued operation of the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area. Thank you for taking the time to review this plan and the additional supporting documents, which are also posted on the Snow Bowl's website: www.camdensnowbowl.com.

We welcome your thoughts and questions about any aspect of this project.

Bob Gordon *Rick Knowlton*

Co-Chairpersons
Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Redevelopment Committee

CORE PLAN PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

This plan outlines capital improvements and financial projections for the future operation of the Snow Bowl and the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area as a sustainable recreation program of the Town of Camden. The core principles and assumptions of this future operation are as follows:

- Governance: The RMRA will continue to be owned by the town of Camden. Municipal ownership eliminates income tax and property tax expenses and lowers the cost of capital by the use of tax-exempt financing. Municipal ownership also provides core staff year-round employment though coordination with other town departments or programs. As a town-owned and operated facility, the future budgets, programs, and decisions will be determined by the normal municipal processes and managed by the parks and recreation department head and Camden town manager.

- New Investment: $6.5 million in facility improvements provide the capacity to accommodate up to 600 skiers per day with adequate parking, lodge space, uphill lift capacity, and ski terrain serviced by snowmaking and enhance year round trail use for hikers and mountain biking. Funding is recommended as a combination of $4.5 million from private sources and $2 million from municipal bond funds.

- Private Financing: The RMRA Foundation will oversee the capital campaign to raise $4.5 million in private funds specifically for the redevelopment of RMRA. This amount was determined by a feasibility study completed in 2008. Private funds will be committed or in hand before public funds are spent.

- Public Financing: As the owner of the real estate (which was deeded to the town in 1936 for the sole purposes of recreation) and in recognition of the contribution the recreation area is to the economy of the community, the Town of Camden has an interest and commitment in supporting RMRA improvements. Camden taxpayers will be asked to match the $4.5 million in private funds with a $2 million municipal bond. The bond amount is roughly equivalent to Camden's investment to maintain the Camden Snow Bowl over the past 30 years.

- Financial Risks and Annual Operations and Maintenance Budgets: The Town of Camden has two "Enterprise" funds: the Camden Wastewater Department and the Camden Snow Bowl. Currently, Camden taxpayers assume the debt obligations of the Wastewater Department and user fees cover all annual operating and maintenance costs. This same financial model is proposed for the Camden Snow Bowl in order to provide access to the programs at RMRA at the lowest possible cost. User fees, primarily through ticket sales, will cover all costs of operations and maintenance of the recreation area. Annual operating budgets, approved by the Camden Select Board, will be set to insure annual expenses are covered by annual revenues over time. Surpluses will remain within the enterprise fund and deficiencies shall be covered within the fund. The Snow Bowl has operated on this basis in recent years. This model reduces the financial risk to Camden taxpayers and limits the municipal budget impact to known annual bond payments.

- Fixed Costs and Increased Risk: The new facilities represent an increase in fixed operating costs estimated at $18,000 annually. These incremental fixed costs present increased financial

risk. The primary drivers of increased fixed costs are expanded snowmaking and heating and operating costs of the new lodge. Additionally, Camden taxpayers will assume responsibility for repayment of the $2.0 million bond at an average annual cost of $110,000 for 30 years.

- Access and Affordability: The RMRA must continue to provide affordable outdoor recreation to residents and visitors. Program fees (e.g., ticket prices, lesson fees, racing clinics) must remain lower than larger facilities as well as continue to encourage family outdoor activities. Additional discounts for Camden residents will continue in recognition of the financial support by Camden taxpayers. Introductory programs, like the 4th grade learn to ski program remain critical to building a local market base. Increases in fees for families will be held to an absolute minimum. It is also assumed that current scholarship programs will continue.

- Strategic Partners: Facility improvements support and complement the preservation and conservation efforts of the Coastal Mountains Land Trust on Ragged and Bald Mountains, improving trail access and conditions and providing an important base from which to access CMLT properties.

- Economic Impact: Realization of this plan will result in the addition of 3.5 new jobs in the community and add $200,000 in annual economic activity for the local economy concentrated in the traditional off-season tourist months of December through March.

FINANCIAL HISTORY AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

Since 1981, Camden taxpayers have invested $1.9 million in the operation and maintenance of the RMRA, with annual costs to the taxpayer ranging from $0 to over $149,000. These investments have been annual discussion items at town meeting each June. On every occasion, the Town has voted to support the programs and needs of the RMRA. A financial summary, including operating income (loss) and Camden taxpayer support since 1981 is as follows:

Year	Operating Revenue	Operating Expense	Operating Profit or (Loss)	Town Toboggan Match	Town Deficit Appropriation	Town Capital Appropriation	Total Town Contribution
1981-1982	$ 20,465	$ 36,003	$ (15,538)	$ -	$ 30,000	$ -	$ 30,000
1982-1983	no audit report this year			$ -		$ -	$ -
1983-1984	$ 35,276	$ 67,857	$ (32,581)	$ -	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 25,000
1984-1985	$ 190,783	$ 211,714	$ (20,931)	$ -	$ 53,085	$ -	$ 53,085
1985-1986	$ 166,825	$ 174,941	$ (8,116)	$ -	$ 60,540	$ -	$ 60,540
1986-1987	$ 315,644	$ 298,848	$ 16,796	$ -	$ 52,424	$ -	$ 52,424
1987-1988	$ 267,247	$ 355,150	$ (87,903)	$ -	$ 90,623	$ -	$ 90,623
1988-1989	$ 296,984	$ 320,701	$ (23,717)	$ -	$ 24,530	$ -	$ 24,530
1989-1990	$ 260,979	$ 307,808	$ (46,829)	$ -	$ 9,902	$ -	$ 9,902
1990-1991	$ 76,897	$ 143,732	$ (66,835)	$ -	$ 149,166	$ -	$ 149,166
1991-1992	$ 260,781	$ 325,501	$ (64,720)	$ -	$ 55,373	$ -	$ 55,373
1992-1993	$ 300,989	$ 321,771	$ (20,782)	$ -	$ 14,550	$ -	$ 14,550
1993-1994	$ 307,989	$ 333,976	$ (25,987)	$ -	$ 9,315	$ -	$ 9,315
1994-1995	$ 255,022	$ 294,680	$ (39,658)	$ 15,000	$ 20,000	$ 20,000	$ 55,000

1995-1996	$ 389,621	$ 366,148	$ 23,473	$ 15,000	$ -	$ 20,000	$ 35,000
1996-1997	$ 274,415	$ 324,342	$ (49,927)	$ 15,000	$ 35,000	$ 30,000	$ 80,000
1997-1998	$ 290,445	$ 323,365	$ (32,920)	$ 15,000	$ 20,000	$ 30,000	$ 65,000
1998-1999	$ 253,879	$ 336,307	$ (82,428)	$ 15,000	$ 67,000	$ 30,000	$ 112,000
1999-2000	$ 303,676	$ 313,438	$ (9,762)	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 30,000	$ 55,000
2000-2001	$ 519,730	$ 432,025	$ 87,705	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 30,000	$ 55,000
2001-2002	$ 402,122	$ 409,374	$ (7,252)	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 50,000	$ 75,000
2002-2003	$ 486,019	$ 481,818	$ 4,201	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 70,000	$ 95,000
2003-2004	$ 478,530	$ 509,562	$ (31,032)	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 60,000	$ 85,000
2004-2005	$ 485,578	$ 517,084	$ (31,506)	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 70,000	$ 95,000
2005-2006	$ 398,879	$ 441,554	$ (42,675)	$ 25,000	$ 32,539	$ 70,000	$ 127,539
2006-2007	$ 434,929	$ 444,370	$ (9,441)	$ 25,000	$ 11,474	$ 70,000	$ 106,474
2007-2008	$ 569,763	$ 558,650	$ 11,113	$ 35,000	$ -	$ 70,000	$ 105,000
2008-2009	$ 599,938	$ 521,664	$ 78,274	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 65,000	$ 90,000
2009-2010	$ 630,192	$ 563,257	$ 66,935	$ 20,000	$ -	$ 35,000	$ 55,000
2010-2011	$ 758,835	$ 684,894	$ 73,941	$ 15,000	$ -	$ 20,000	$ 35,000
2011-2012	$ 571,774	$ 628,943	$ (57,169)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
2012-2013	$680,632	$700,829	$(20,197)	$15,000	$ -	$ -	$15,000
Average	$ 375,479	$ 390,477	$ (14,998)	$ 12,333	$ 25,190	$ 25,667	$ 62,851
Cumulative Town Contribution 1981 – 2013							**$1,915,521**

Looking forward, the Redevelopment Plan has the following financial goals:

1) to raise $6.5 million to build/replace/expand major assets at Ragged Mountain, using essentially the same of amount of public funds invested over the past 30 years ($2M) and substantial private funding ($4.5M) to shift the focus from annual maintenance to a major redevelopment and capital improvement program,
2) to replace historic volatility in taxpayer support each June with stable and predictable long-term debt payments, estimated at an average of $110,000 per year over a 30 year term.
3) to continue to operate the Snow Bowl as an Enterprise Fund within the Town. This means that annual revenues from ticket sales and other fees shall be sufficient over time to pay for the operating and maintenance expenses of the facility and its programs.
4) to continue to encourage financial support for the RMRA from the RMRA Foundation

The proposed financial structure is identical to the Camden Wastewater Department, the other Enterprise Fund operation in the Town, and is believed appropriate given Town ownership of all RMRA assets. User fees will be managed to insure adequate income from operations. The Town of Camden has significant borrowing capacity and can assume new debt upon authorization from the voters. Current long term interest rates remain very favorable at approximately 3%.

While this financial plan expects Camden taxpayers to support the RMRA at essentially the same level as they have in the past, a comparison to recent years is appropriate. For the tax year 2012-2013, taxpayer support of the RMRA was $15,000. The annual debt support cost for Camden taxpayers of a $2 million dollar bond could average $110,000 per year for 30 years. Annualized, that's a 2.7 cent increase on the current mil rate of $13.47, or $8.10 per year increase in property tax on a property valued at $300,000. This tax increase must be acknowledged.

For this investment, the Town acquires a redeveloped recreation area that will provide both recreation benefits and economic benefits for the next 30 to 40 years. Alternatively, the Camden taxpayer will surely be faced with significant additional investment to keep the current facilities operating if the Redevelopment Plan is not executed. Ultimately the Town would be faced with the decision to invest significantly or discontinue operation of the ski area.

Most important to the fee-paying users of the area (many of whom are also Camden taxpayers) is a continued focus on affordability. Current ski ticket prices are below industry averages, and this pricing strategy will be maintained. Discounts will be retained for Camden residents, especially for family season pass holders. Ticket sales are projected to return to 2011 actual levels of 11,000 annual day tickets and 1050 season passes. Skier visit days are projected to average 34,000 to 35,000 annually. Average ticket pricing is expected to increase by 10% when all facilities are complete; a level that will remain well below industry averages. Stabilizing skier visits and modest price increases will increase revenue to $800,000 annually.

Operating expenses are projected to increase by approximately 12% from 2013 actuals as a result of the facility improvements. Labor will continue to be the largest single expense; however the new facilities will not demand a significant increase in permanent staff. At projected use levels, only 3.5 full-time-equivalent positions will be added, and only one new permanent year-round position will be created by upgrading an existing half-year position. Seasonal staffing needs will continue to be managed to service level requirements. Electricity costs will increase due to expanded snowmaking, sewage pumping, and lighting, but total motor horsepower for lift operation will be reduced. Lodge heating costs will also increase, but a conversion of the heating system in the existing lodge from oil to propane and the energy efficient design of the new lodge will result in heating costs increasing less than $3000 annually. Fixed cost increases for electricity, heating fuel, maintenance and supplies, and maintenance labor are projected to increase by approximately $13,000 annually.

Budget projections following the redevelopment predict operating surpluses of $30,000 to $40,000 annually, consistent with the earlier Horizons Engineering Ski Area Concept Plan. A summary of revenues and expenses along with detailed budget information is included in the appendix.

Camden also has a Parks and Recreation budget for non-winter maintenance, and summer/fall programs. From April through November the Ragged Mountain Recreation area is maintained as a public recreation facility with grounds keeping and a portion of facility maintenance supported by those funds. The income and expenses associated with those accounts is not expected to change as a result of the redevelopment of the recreation area. In the future as summer activities increase their impact on the budget, the Parks and Recreation Committee will need to review what activities should remain in the Snow Bowl enterprise fund and what activities should be included in the Parks and Recreation department.

RATIONALE FOR REDEVELOPMENT

In 2006 the Camden Parks and Recreation subcommittee for Long Range Planning, at the direction of the Camden Select Board, commissioned Horizons Engineering to look at the facility infrastructure and ski area operations model to determine what would be needed to keep the winter operations viable, while also contributing to more year round use of the facilities. (See Appendix 3: Camden Snow Bowl Ski Area Concept Plan.) The study recommended several improvements to support the continued viability of the operations: 1) upgrade marketing and awareness, 2) continue to upgrade and expand the snow making system, 3) upgrade the tubing hill, 4) expand the lodge, and 5) replace/upgrade the lifts. The study also warned that without a modernization and reinvestment in the facilities, the future financial viability of the area--the ability for ski area operations to operate on a break-even basis--would be in jeopardy.

Paramount in the Concept Plan is the advice to rework the functional capacity of the parking, lodge, lifts, trails, and snowmaking facilities at a matched level. A significant shortfall in capacity in any of these areas will diminish the customer experience and result in reduced repeat visits. Currently, the comfortable carrying capacity of the mountain terrain is approximately 600 visitors, but other facilities accommodate fewer than half that number. The greatest departures from this capacity are the current lodge and snowmaking facilities. The current lodge was built in 1968 to replace the original Camden Outing Club lodge which burned in November, 1967. The current lodge was designed as the center section of a three-wing (approximately 8,500 sq. ft.) complex—the outer two wings of which were never built. As completed, the lodge has seating for 100, which is only 50% of recommended seating. The redevelopment committed researched expansion of the existing lodge as a means to increase seating capacity, but expansion costs, construction logistics, and architectural concerns make new construction more attractive. The redevelopment plan calls for continued use of the existing lodge for certain functions (e.g., race training and events) and for construction of a new 8,500 square foot lodge with expanded seating (for 200) and food service. The plan also calls for reducing the number of lifts from 4 to 3 while increasing the uphill lift capacity. The t-bars will be removed and the full mountain will be chairlift serviced. Snowmaking will be expanded from 40% to over 80% coverage, including the improved novice area and the top of the mountain. All together, these improvements will provide a comfortable carrying capacity of 600 visitors and a peak capacity of 1000 visitors with adequate parking, lodge space, and ski/snowboard terrain, generating an average of 35,000 skier visits annually.

While ski operations are the foundation for specific facility improvements, the plan also addresses the four-season opportunities that expanded facilities offer. The new base facilities will provide an important center for three-season hiking and mountain biking activities. In partnership with Coastal Mountain Land Trust and other landowners, the RMRA is a gateway to miles of hiking and mountain biking trails. (Mountain bike use and trail development is growing at RMRA under the guidance of the Mid-coast Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association. The goal of this group is to develop a trail network on par with other successful destination facilities such as the Kingdom Trails in East Burke, VT.)

In addition, the new lodge offers an attractive venue in the Camden area for event and conference hosting. The 200-person seating capacity fills an identified niche in the area for weddings and community functions.

Other models for summer activity development at ski areas were reviewed by the Redevelopment Committee. Several that would be categorized as amusement-park-type activities such as zip lines and alpine slides were rejected. These were considered inconsistent with the traditional use of the facility, not conducive to repeat participation and visitation, and not likely to be supported by the Camden citizens living nearby. Trail and pond based activities such as mountain biking, hiking, and canoeing were determined to be the best fit for the site as well as the brand and image of Camden and the mid-coast Maine area.

The Ragged Mountain Recreation Area and the Camden Snow Bowl have a significant impact on the local economy. In September, 2013, Camoin Associates completed an economic impact study on the current operation of the Camden Snow Bowl. The study concluded that the Snow Bowl has a direct impact of $2.1 million in local economy sales and earnings and an indirect impact of an additional $1.6 million. The total annual economic impact of the Camden Snow Bowl operation is $3.7 million. The full study can be found in the appendix to this report.

REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND TIMING

In 2007 the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Redevelopment Committee convened community forums, focus-group sessions and meetings with key stakeholders to seek input on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the facility, its programs, and operations. With that information, the Committee hired (with funds from the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Foundation) Terrence J. DeWan & Associates landscape architects to create an initial concept plan for the facility, and Horizons Engineering was engaged to further refine the winter operations design for the facility. (Their design concepts and recommendations are presented in the appendices.)

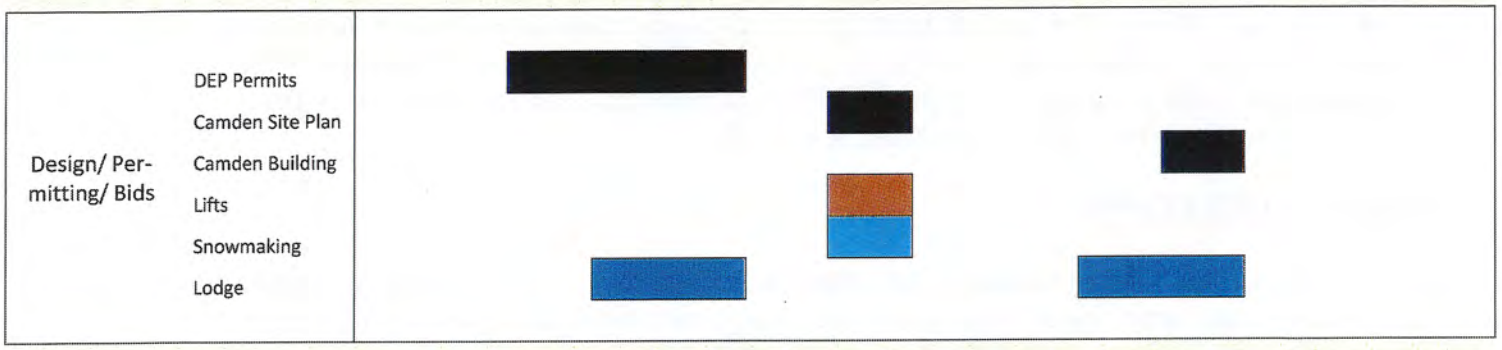
At the same time, the RMRA Redevelopment Committee worked with the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Foundation to initiate private fundraising for the project. (Initially the Foundation engaged BHC Consultants of Bangor to conduct a fundraising feasibility study and to help guide the fundraising campaign. Currently George Mueller, of Midcoast Business Advisors, is the fundraising campaign counsel.) (The RMRA Foundation organized its fundraising plan in the fall of 2008.)

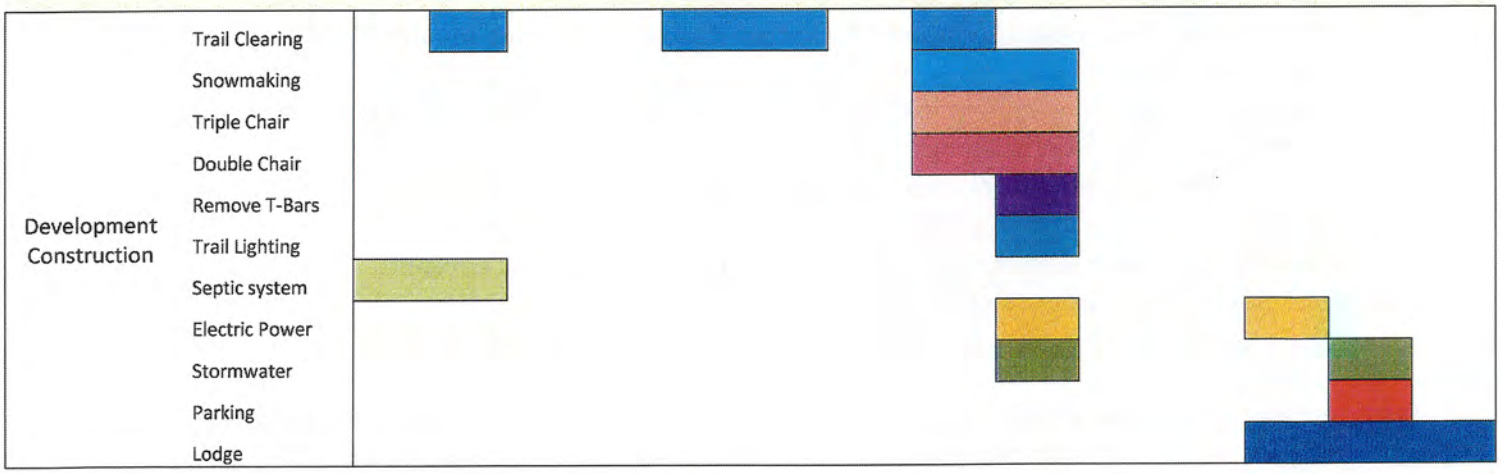
A key milestone of the project was a municipal vote in November 2008 by Camden citizens that measured community support for the town's financial participation in the project and provided direction to the Select Board, Budget Committee, and the RMRA Foundation. Citizens voted 2:1 in support of a non-binding advisory decision to move forward with the project, of which the town would bond $2 million (approx. 30% of the cost of the project).

In spring 2009 the RMRA Redevelopment Committee initiated a public process to hire an architect for a new lodge and base area improvements. The RMRA Foundation began fundraising activities to pursue private and public grant funding.

Projected Timeline for RMRA Redevelopment

		2012		2013				2014				2015			
		Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec
Fundraising ($ millions)	Private Funds														
	Pledge	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.8	4.1	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Available	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.5
	Public Funds														
	Bond Approval						2.0								
	Bond Issuance								0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Available Funds	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.8	4.6	5.4	6.1	6.3	6.5	6.5





In the fall of 2008 twenty three architecture firms from Maine and New England responded to a Request for Qualifications to design a new lodge. Nine were invited for formal presentations and interviews (including three local architects), and the Redevelopment Committee unanimously chose Stephen Blatt Architects of Portland. After initially considering the feasibility of rebuilding and expanding the existing lodge, the architects determined that option to be cost prohibitive and too constraining for necessary ski operation improvements.

Two committees were formed to oversee the design process: a Building Committee and a Land Use Committee. An initial Design Development phase of the lodge, base area, and mountainside improvements was completed in the fall of 2010. However, when all of the components were

added up and costs were estimated it became apparent that the project would be almost $1 million over the $6.5 million budget. The Building Committee and the Land Use Committee carefully reviewed the components of the project, reduced the scope in several areas, and determined that it was not appropriate to build a new 13,600 sq. ft. lodge that would perform all the programmatic functions for the recreation area. In spring and summer 2011 a new smaller lodge was designed (8,500 sq. ft.) with the understanding that the existing lodge would be maintained to house several programmatic elements including the summer youth day camp, ski patrol and first aid, ski club and racing, mountain bike club, and lockers for staff and public skiers. Eventually the 1968 A-frame lodge would be replaced with one or more small simple buildings to provide for those programmatic elements.

Assuming that the vote on the municipal bond could be taken November 2013, final construction documents, permitting and contractor selection could be completed during the upcoming winter and groundbreaking could potentially commence in the summer of 2014. The mountainside work of lift installation, snow making, lighting and trail construction would be completed in one season. Lodge construction would occur in the summer of 2015. With the continued use of the existing lodge it will be possible to continue Snow Bowl and Parks and Recreation activities during construction with as little interruption as possible.

FUTURE OPERATIONS

New facilities at the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area will provide a highly acclaimed venue for exciting winter activities and four-season use. The concept plan highlights the following improvements:

- A new lodge, with panoramic views of Hosmer Pond as well as the mountainside, with seating for 200 people
- Trail improvements to support hiking, mountain biking, alpine skiing/snowboarding, snowshoeing, and Nordic skiing
- Hillside slope reconfiguration with an emphasis on better learning terrain
- Ski lift replacement and reconfiguration
- Snow making improvement and expansion to terrain not currently covered
- Improved vehicle access and parking
- Safer access for the elderly and handicapped

The winter sports operations will continue to dominate the revenue and expenses of the facility, accounting for 94.5% of the operating expenses and 91% of the income. Based on the recommendations and projections of Horizons Engineering, the improved ski area operation is projected to have a profitable operating budget. Additionally, the new facilities are expected to generate new revenue from non-winter activities, primarily from summer lodge rentals, lift and facility use.

The following summarizes the major use areas and the anticipated changes as a result of the redevelopment plan:

Winter Use

The Camden Snow Bowl will remain the backbone of the winter operation and will also continue to be the largest component of the overall budget. With replacement of the lodge, additional

snow making, new trails, and new lifts, more people will utilize the ski area on a regular basis. Projected use will increase from the current average level of 28,922 annual skier visits over the past five years to 35,000 annual skier visits. This represents a 21% increase over the recent five-year average. It is important to note that the winter of 2000-2001 recorded 35,000 skier visits, and the winter of 2010-2011 recorded 33,749 skier visits (both years of heavy snowfall with all trails, including those with natural snow, operational much of the season) so history supports this as a reasonably conservative projection when the project is fully implemented and snowmaking is expanded. Key to this increased use is the development of a beginner slope with its own lift, chairlift-serviced novice-friendly terrain on the south side of the area, and the development of a longer racing and training trail (with snow making). The toboggan chute will remain a unique attraction of the facility, and the US National Toboggan Championships® are projected to remain an important mid-winter event that attracts thousands of visitors to the area, although this event is not expected to grow dramatically. These fee-for-service activities are projected to be profitable at the increased use level. (See Appendix 4: Long Range Plan and Feasibility Study.) Winter trail use for snowshoeing and Nordic skiing is expected to grow in popularity. With the award of a Recreational Trail Program grant from the State of Maine and a donation of the balance of the cost from funds raised by the RMRAF, a new 3.2 km multi-use trail designed for Nordic skiing in the winter and biking, walking and trail running in the warm months was built in the fall of 2011. The existing narrow single track trails remain ideal for snowshoeing. Pond skating will continue to be made available when conditions allow.

Three Season (non-winter) Trail Use

With the expansion of the trail system, an increasing number of hikers, mountain bikers, dog walkers, trail runners, leaf-peepers, and picnickers are projected. Working closely with the Coastal Mountains Land Trust and the Mid-Coast Chapter of the New England Mountain Biking Association, volunteers will continue to provide hundreds of hours of effort in trail maintenance. As the reputation of the mountain biking trail network spreads, more bike enthusiasts of all ages are expected to visit this trail network throughout the year. The new multi-use trail helps round out the trail offerings by providing beginner riding and easy access to some of the best terrain on the hillside. A recently announced vision for an Around-the-Mountain Trail in collaboration with Coastal Mountains Land Trust will further add to the reputation of the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area as the "Gateway to the Mountains." In the past few years there has been a significant increase in out-of-area visitors who have come to ride the trails and experience Maine's first mountain bike Pump Track. Two to four regional level mountain bike events are projected in future years. Between Ragged Mountain, Camden Hills State Park, and other conserved lands, the potential exists for a world-class trail system which will attract many visitors to stay for several days during seven or more months of the year.

For a sense of the potential of an expanded trail network in the mid-coast some statistics from the Kingdom Trails Association (KTA) in remote northeastern Vermont are useful. In the town of East Burke, VT, a hundred-mile trail network has been developed which includes the Burke Mountain ski area. Last year KTA experienced 49,000 mountain biker visits (more than winter skier visits) which were conservatively estimated to have contributed $4.9 million to the local economy through meals, lodging, and other amenities for mountain bikers. These relatively affluent visitors averaged 38 years old; 58% came from households earning at least $75,000. The average group size was five people and they typically stayed for three days and two nights,

travelling 252 miles for the experience. There is a real potential for the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area to develop into a comparable regional trails hub.

Summer Lift Operations
In the future the chairlift will operate regularly during summer and fall weekends for hikers, mountain bikers, and picnickers. With specially designed downhill bike trails intertwined within the network of ski trails, these lift operations are expected to attract regular visitors much as the lift operations in the winter serve skiers and snowboarders. Lift-served mountain biking is experiencing a surge of growth as the result of new specially designed bikes and new design concepts for downhill bike trails. Well designed downhill bike trails are a similar attraction as Terrain Parks at ski areas, and they appeal to an even wider range of ages. The chairlift will be available for private events at times when it is not open to the public.

Lodge Rentals
Rentals of the lodge for private events, non-profit community events, conferences, and outdoor concerts will be an important source of revenue during the non-skiing months. The mid-coast area is becoming more popular each year for destination weddings and family events. With a capacity of 200+ people in an upgraded facility, significant growth in demand is projected for facility rentals. (See Appendix 5: New Lodge Market Demand Analysis.) A higher price for private rentals will be possible with a newer, larger, and more attractive lodge. In order to keep the lodge available for community functions, significant price reductions will be available for local non-profit organizations for events and meetings.

Special Events
In addition to private lodge rentals the Parks and Recreation Department will continue to offer special events in conjunction with local groups. These will include: mountain bike festivals, trail running races, community concerts, traveling circuses, community yard sales, and the annual ski swap. Scattered throughout the year these events will provide additional opportunities for the local community to enjoy the facility and will contribute to the overhead costs of maintaining the lodge and recreation area.

Sports Field and Tennis Courts
The sports field is already heavily used from spring through fall by various leagues including little league, elementary and middle school lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, coed adult softball, youth soccer, and several levels of youth football. Currently there is no fee for the use of the field, which the town maintains as a community recreation expense. In this plan there are no new fees proposed for use of the field. The tennis court was resurfaced three years ago and a practice backboard added. There is little ongoing maintenance required and the courts are expected to remain available on a first-come basis at no cost.

Pond Activities
The boat launch access site on Hosmer Pond is a popular resource. It is used to launch hand-carried boats and small trailer-carried boats. It consists of sand/gravel boat ramp, a double float, and a picnic table. It is also used by anglers, swimmers, and dog walkers. A few people keep small boats on a rack there along with the four canoes of the Parks & Recreation Department. In the future a small canoe and kayak rental service is proposed, allowing visitors to enjoy the pond.

Summer Youth Day Camp
The long-running Summer Youth Day Camp will continue to be based at the recreation area for six weeks each July and August. This affordable program is subsidized 50% by the Parks & Recreation Department for Camden residents but is open to children from any community. For four years now the program has been operated by the Penobscot Bay YMCA. This program currently serves up to 55 children daily from grades two to six for six weeks in July and August.

For further information about any of the items in this document please contact the Parks and Recreation Office or members of the following committees:

Camden Parks and Recreation Committee, 2006 to 2013

Camden Parks and Recreation Long Range Planning Committee (2006)

RMRA Redevelopment Committee

Sam Appleton
Scott Dickerson
Bob Gordon – co-chair
Rick Knowlton – co-chair
Beth Ward
Robert Levine
Fran Moore
Frank Morong
Molly Mulhern
John Scholz
Mort Strom

Building Committee

Tom Amory
Bill Fitzcharles
Bob Gordon
Peter Gross – chairperson
Donna Janville
Fran Moore
Molly Mulhern
Brian Robinson
Ed Zanca

Land Use Committee

Tom Albertson
John Anders
Sam Appleton
Chris Christie
Bill Fitzcharles
Fran Moore
Ian Stewart
Mike White