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**For Immediate Release:** November 26, 2018

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**A Message from Alta Ski Area GM, Mike Maughan**  
**Alta Ski Area's Position on the**  
**Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Act (CWNCRA)**



On November 19, 2018, the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) voted to approve and move forward a version of the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Act (CWNCRA) that excludes Alta Ski Area (Alta) and the Town of Alta. The legislation that the CWC voted to move forward fails to adequately address traffic, congestion and parking in the Cottonwood Canyons. Similar legislation introduced through the Mountain Accord process in 2016 stalled at the federal level because it only contained a promise to address transportation while making wilderness adjustments and creating a conservation and recreation area. Alta's position is that transportation solutions should be developed and funded in concert with legislation to create a conservation and recreation area to ensure there are not conflicts and achieve a collaborative solution. In the subcommittee hearing for the 2016 legislation, it was pointed out that it is not good policy to pass collaborative legislation that provides benefits to one side and only promises for the

other. Alta encourages the CWC and our Congressional Delegation to only move legislation forward that provides transportation solutions and environmental protections together.

Alta owns private lands in Grizzly Gulch on which it has provided snowcat skiing for the past 15 years. These private lands are included in Alta's ski area boundary. Alta purchased these lands many years ago to have additional terrain to accommodate recreational growth and because they could be used for an over-the-snow connection to Big Cottonwood Canyon. During the Mountain Accord process, Alta agreed to consider inclusion of private lands in Grizzly Gulch in a land exchange with the Forest Service on certain conditions, one of which was transit improvements, such as a tunnel or other connection, between Big and Little Cottonwood. Given that the Mountain Accord and the CWC have not met this condition and in light of the recreational growth projections along the Wasatch Front, Alta has removed its private lands in Grizzly Gulch from the current land exchange.

Alta's Special Use Permit with the US Forest Service authorizes Alta to provide recreational opportunities, such as lift-served skiing. A portion of Alta's special use permit, Patsey Marley Ridge, is designated as an avalanche control area where skiing and avalanche mitigation work are authorized. As recreational demand increases, Alta can apply to change the authorization of the avalanche control area to allow installation of ski lifts with the US Forest Service. The Forest Service process would take into consideration conditions, a NEPA evaluation, and public input in evaluating whether to authorize lift access in this area. Currently, Alta has no plans to change the status of the avalanche control area in their special use permit but wishes to preserve its right to do so. The CWC and special interest groups have only proposed options that reduce Alta's future rights within the avalanche control area.

Alta did not request to be removed from the CWNCRRA legislation which contains a land exchange authorization. Alta has presented alternatives and supports legislation that includes Alta in the CWNCRRA, protects Alta's private lands and options in Grizzly Gulch, preserves Alta's options within its special use permit and authorizes base areas lands to be exchanged with the Forest Service. Alta would exchange private lands on the north side of Little Cottonwood Canyon and private lands owned in Big Cottonwood Canyon for base area lands which would move private lands into public ownership within the CWNCRRA. Alta Ski Area has over 500 acres of surface rights and 1,300 acres of mineral rights for consideration in the land exchange with the Forest Service. The land exchange authorizations with ski areas allow the Forest Service to focus their resources on the management of forests rather than base area developments and help the ski areas provide infrastructure for the hundreds of thousands of recreational visitors coming to the

Cottonwood Canyons each year. We need solutions that benefit all recreational visitors rather than the special interests of a few groups or individuals.

Rather than support an alternative that respects Alta's current rights and options, the CWC has supported positions backed by special interest groups, such as Save Our Canyons and the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, that reduce Alta's current rights and options. As of the date of this press release, CWC has only presented options that reduce Alta's current private land owner rights and options or Alta's options available under its Special Use Permit. Surprisingly, they have elected to propose legislation that excludes Alta from the CWNCRRA and removes Alta's legislative authorization to exchange lands with the Forest Service. The CWC proposed legislation has less environmental protections than alternatives presented by Alta. This action appears to be punitive in nature or an attempt to bully Alta into including its private lands in Grizzly Gulch in the land exchange. Alta is the only ski area being excluded from the legislative land exchange.

For the past 81 years, Alta has worked with the US Forest Service, Salt Lake City Watershed and the Town of Alta to provide recreational opportunities and protect the environment. Today, we have a world class ski area visited by up to 500,000 people annually with a healthy forest, vibrant wetlands and clean water. We consider ourselves conservationists striving to provide recreational opportunities for current and future outdoor enthusiasts while managing their impact on the environment.

Alta encourages the CWC, the Utah State Legislature and the Utah Congressional Delegation in Washington to draft and move forward legislation that respects the rights of and is fair for all stakeholders. Legislation that helps facilitate and manage the expected growth in a manner that provides access, reduces congestion and protects the environment. Moving forward legislation that only addresses one part of the puzzle is unfair and does not seem like the right thing to do.

*Michael R. Maughan*  
*President and General Manager*  
*Alta Ski Area*

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*Since 1938. This marks Alta Ski Area's 81st winter in operation. Originally a mining town, Alta was the first ski area in Utah to install a lift. Alta is a skiers-only mountain with majestic scenery, diverse terrain and a renowned snowfall average of 545". There is a spirit of Alta we call #AltaMagic.*

*Come for the skiing. Stay for the skiing.*

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