

## **SkiLink: A Game Changer for the Utah Ski Industry**

### *Gondola to Connect Canyons Resort and Solitude Mountain Resort*

Park City, Utah, November 17, 2011 - Canyons Resort is upping the ante of the Utah ski experience, proposing a gondola for a new transportation connection between the Wasatch Front and Wasatch Back mountains. Introduced today as [SkiLink](http://www.skilink.com) (www.skilink.com), the transportation connection will create the most unique ski network in the United States, uniting an unprecedented 6,000 acres of existing, interconnected terrain for snowsport enthusiasts to enjoy.

“SkiLink creates a game-changing advantage for Utah and for the U.S. snowsport industry,” said Mike Goar, managing director, Canyons Resort, a Talisker Mountain Inc. resort. “It would establish Utah as the most interesting and convenient mountain destination in the U.S. and will positively benefit our local economies. Utah features ‘The Greatest Snow on Earth(R)’ and with SkiLink now delivers an unrivaled skiing experience of the largest expanse of ski terrain in the country.”

The eight-passenger SkiLink gondola will have the capacity to transport 1,000 people per hour each way and is projected to transport skiers between Canyons Resort and Solitude Mountain Resort in just 11 minutes.

“Connecting the resorts has been discussed for years, but Talisker Mountain Inc. had the vision to link the slopes of the Wasatch Back and Front in the simplest of ways,” said Goar. “Every day during the ski season, out-of-town and local skiers roam between Canyons and the Big Cottonwood Canyon resorts to experience the diversity of terrain each has to offer. Studies have reported that SkiLink would decrease canyon traffic by providing an alternative to the 45-mile drive between the two canyons that can take 45 minutes to an hour depending on traffic. Plus, staying on the slopes during your ski day is a whole lot more fun than driving.”

SkiLink is designed specifically as a transportation-only connection between Canyons and Solitude and will not impact backcountry skiers. SkiLink skiers and snowboarders will enter/exit the gondola at Canyons or Solitude. The gondola will not make any stops at any interim point where riders would exit.

To support the connection between Canyons and Solitude resorts, Congressman Rob Bishop who serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, along with House colleague, Representative Jason Chaffetz and Senators Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee jointly introduced House and Senate companion legislation today providing for the sale of 30.3 acres of land at fair market value on which the project will be constructed.

Under the directed sale introduced in the Bill, the legislation paves the way for environmental studies that are required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act and all other applicable laws to commence. Additionally, Canyons will comply with all regulations for seeking permit approvals from Salt Lake and Summit Counties, and will work with Salt Lake City and Summit County on watershed and water quality assurance.

“SkiLink presents tremendous lifestyle, economic and transportation benefits for Utah residents and our nation,” said Rep. Rob Bishop. “I have great confidence in the preparation Canyons has completed to this point for the proposed connection. I am pleased to support their vision by introducing this legislation, which will facilitate the next steps of this public process.”

“I am very supportive of the SkiLink concept, and I see in it the potential for an exciting future for the Utah ski industry,” said Senator Orrin Hatch. “The idea of connecting Utah’s major ski resorts has been discussed for more than a decade, and I am impressed that SkiLink would enable skiers and snowboarders to move freely among the resorts, significantly enhancing the Utah ski experience with positive long-term benefits for the state’s tourism economy.”

“An economic impact analysis reported that SkiLink would produce more than 500 new permanent jobs for Utah’s travel and tourism industry and could initially infuse \$51 million into our local economy,” said Goar. “An estimated 20-year total economic impact could be \$101 million per year from SkiLink’s ongoing operation.”

A traffic analysis demonstrated SkiLink would reduce ski season traffic through Big Cottonwood Canyon by as much as 18,000 cars per year. Initially that means around 1 million fewer miles driven per year and around 1 million fewer pounds of greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, preliminary studies of the habitats, wildlife, watershed and visual landscape have been conducted of the proposed SkiLink corridor. Findings reported no significant impacts to wetlands, watersheds, listed species habitat, or other sensitive areas. SkiLink would rely on minimally invasive construction techniques. Helicopters would be used for concrete and tower placement.

As part of the public process, Canyons will continue to involve interested parties.

“The SkiLink vision has been in the works for many years and we are glad to be at a point where we can share the details of the proposed project and express our excitement and enthusiasm for the tremendous experience and benefits it offers for Utah and snowsport enthusiasts from around the globe,” said Goar. “We appreciate the efforts, support and assistance of Rep. Bishop, Sen. Hatch, Sen. Lee and Rep. Chaffetz for introducing this legislation that enables the public process to continue. We look forward to the next phases of the process as we work to further support and add to the amazing recreation opportunities our state can offer.”

#### **About Talisker**

[Talisker](#) is a lifestyle development company, and owner of Canyons Resort. Talisker has invested substantially in Utah over the last 10 years, and currently employs approximately 2,000 people in Utah. The Robb Report has touted Talisker as the Number 1 mountain community destination experience in the U.S.

#### **About Canyons Resort**

[Canyons Resort](#), a Talisker mountain destination, offers 4,000 acres of exceptional skiing and snowboarding terrain, 182 trails, 5 world class lodging properties including 35,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and a variety of dining options. Salt Lake City International Airport is just 35 minutes away and provides unparalleled access from anywhere in the world.

#### **About Solitude Mountain Resort**

[Solitude Mountain Resort](#), a year-round, family-friendly destination, receives more than 500 inches of the Greatest Snow on Earth(TM) every year and is located just 40 minutes from the Salt Lake City International Airport.

#### **Press Contacts:**

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#### **Editor Notes:**

1. Mike Goar, Canyons managing director is available for one-on-one briefings between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. MT Nov. 17. Contact Mary Rice at 801-487-4800 x144 or Stephanie Miller at 801-487-4800 x141 to schedule a briefing.
2. Fact sheets for each of the preliminary studies that have been conducted to date are available on the SkiLink website.