



newsletter

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Alta Is Going Green—slowly, but surely

An Editorial By Maura Olivos – Sustainability Coordinator

The winter always seem to go by faster than anticipated and skiers are left reflecting the turns made over the season – “low snowpack, but quality skiing” – and yearning for more – “next year will be huge!” As I reflect upon the Alta Environmental Center’s winter, I can’t help but recognize similarities to my ski time. The visibility of efforts were difficult to spot, but I can say with satisfaction that they were solid, good, and progress was made. Just like I try to improve my ski form every year in order to enjoy all snow conditions and keep up with my husband, so has been the winter in a nutshell for the Center within Alta and the ski industry.

The Alta Environmental Center accomplished many tasks this winter. Some efforts were highly visible — events, recycle cans and signs, newsletters and reports; and some not so visible — increased support, networking, competition and public relations, grant applications, program development, greenhouse gas and economic calculations, and learning. However, not one task was more important than the other. In following Ecology and the Center’s guiding principles, every task is interdependent and each effort increases diversity, viability, vitality, knowledge and efficiency—or as the Center defines it, sustainability.

In reflection: the Environmental Center utilized the winter to help establish its niche in this community, company, and industry. In yearning: the Center must equally utilize the summer (this also helps from going crazy over thoughts of bottomless skiing). In turn, the Environmental Center will make the most of the next six months to advance relations, further education, discover new adventures, and steward a sustainable lifestyle and environment. However, again the Center’s efforts alone will not allow sustainability to take place. Sustainability requires an intertwined, group effort of continual growth; and we look forward to what your summer will bring to our sustainable efforts next winter (and lots of pow shots).

Summer Reading

By Caroline Olson

Looking for some good reads this summer? As we enter the season of fresh fruits and vegetables, here’s a book that might just change how you think about the foods you eat every day. The Omnivore’s Dilemma is an excellent starting point in becoming aware of food beyond what you see in the grocery store aisle. This highly readable book takes you through four journeys, each centered on a different aspect of the food industry in the industrialized world; and it will help you understand the role you play in your health and in the environment by the choice of the foods you eat. This isn’t a rant against all things delicious. It is simply an outstanding tale of the modern way of eating. If you’ve already discovered this tome, Michael Pollan has written several other outstanding works: The Secrets Behind What You Eat, The Botany of Desire, Food Rules, and In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto.



Keep up with the Alta Environmental Center’s efforts over the summer! Subscribe to the newsletter on line through www.alta.com.

Also, keep an eye out for the next Sustainability Report this spring and a revised Environmental Report this summer.

Nature Nugget: Clarks Nutcracker—A Longtime Alta Lover

By Caroline Olson – Alta Ski School Instructor & Green Team Member



Clark's Nutcracker
Nucifraga columbiana

The days are getting longer and the sun is getting stronger. The inevitability of spring in the mountains is upon us. One of the first signs of the thaw to come is the marked increase in bird activity throughout Alta. While some bird species do spend the entire winter with us, it is in the springtime when their activity is most noticeable. Stunning deep blue and with a black crest, the Steller’s Jays can be seen squawking in the spruces. The Clark’s Nutcrackers, with a distinctive grey body and black and white wings have been scrabbling



Steller's Jay
Cyanocitta stelleri

about the forest in force. Both the Steller’s Jay and the Clark’s Nutcracker are members of the crow family, Corvidae. Birds in this family are known to be bold, intelligent and inquisitive. Both the birds play an important role in the ecosystem at Alta for they feed on the seeds of the conifers that are abundant in our forest. In order to survive the long, cold winter Clark’s Nutcrackers cache, or bury, large quantities of seeds in the ground, often caching much more food than they need. These seed caches ensure a constant supply of food for the birds, but also for many rodents like mice and squirrels. This time of year watch for Steller’s Jays and Clark’s Nutcrackers throughout Alta’s forested areas. You may see them swooping about from tree to tree, but perhaps you will hear them first. When you do find these birds, remember that you are looking at a unique and necessary part of Alta’s ecosystem.

A Summer Without Snow

For some, summer is long over due and a welcomed season, for others it means hot days and no skiing. For those who will not be traveling to the far reaches of the southern hemisphere to ski, but still need monetary prospects to support your weekend trips to higher elevations for scraps of white (or rent) the back of this month’s newsletter might be just the thing for you. This month includes a special edition of Utah Environmental Jobs and Environmental Job Websites, plus all information is available on the Alta Environmental website (www.alta.com) under Stewardship on the About—Sustainable Events page. Good luck, good health and happy adventures this summer!



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