



environmental center

newsletter

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AEC Thanks It's Partners

Summer is over, Alta awaits snow, and it's a good time to look back on 2012 summer progress. For three years now the Alta Environmental Center has looked to support environmental education through hands-on opportunities to broaden its community, employees and visitors' relationship with our natural lands. AEC also share's a goal with its partners to "build awareness and appreciation for this place we call Alta." To fulfill this goal, AEC partners with the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, Friends of Alta, Tree Utah, Town of Alta, and the Utah Society of Environmental Education to offer exciting outdoor service projects, field trips, and tours for families, children, adults, school groups, and businesses.

Every summer AEC and partners work hard to offer safe, organized, and fun stewardship opportunities and this summer was no different with over **700 visitors** that comprised of stewards, educators, students, and natural resource professionals learning about Alta's wonderful ecosystem, sustainability efforts, and the need to take care of our protected watershed and National Forest. So, **THANK YOU, ALL OF YOU FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SUMMER!!**



Nature Nugget: The Limber Pine – By Tyler Rowe

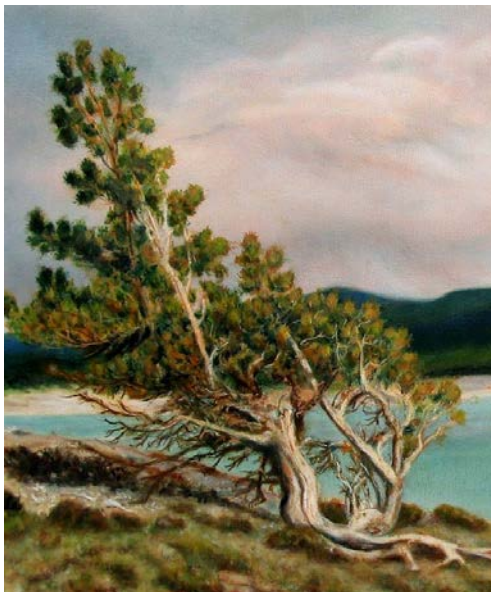


Photo Source: Artbyallan.blogspot.com.

The limber pine (*Pinus Flexilis*) native to higher elevations in Utah and the interior West is a slow growing conifer tree. Limber pines are medium to small in size, averaging 20 inches in diameter and 40 feet tall. They are a long-lived species, sometime taking several hundred years to reach full maturity. In some cases, mature trees may exceed more than one thousand years in age.

Both the common name and *flexilis* refer to the flexible nature of the wood of the limber pine. Having flexible wood is an excellent adaptation for a tree that grows in Alta's harsh environments. The limber pine grows across a wider range of elevations than any other conifer species in the Rocky Mountains, inhabiting some of the driest sites capable of supporting trees. Here at Alta, Limber Pines are found on exposed, rocky, dry mountainsides near the timber line.

Although limber pines have little economic value to humans, their large, wingless seeds that are high in energy content, provide critical food for rodents and birds, like the Clark's Nutcracker, during Alta's winter season.

The nutcracker has a unique relationship with the Limber Pine. While the bird uses the seed for survival during the harsh winters of Alta, it is also the tree's primary seed dispersal source. Seeds are carried to caches, which the bird often does not eat, leading to new limber pine populations. In retrospect without the Clark's nutcracker, limber pine regeneration would diminish significantly.

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Renewable Energy News – Republished Announcement from Sara Baldwin, Utah Clean Energy



Utah Clean Energy (UCE) is thrilled to announce that the Public Service Commission of Utah approved Rocky Mountain Power's Solar Incentive Program on October 2, which will support 60 Megawatts of new distributed solar PV resources in Utah over the next five years (2013-2017). For comparison, that is 6 times more than the current amount of distributed solar PV installed statewide and will generate the same amount of electricity used by 8,750 average Utah homes.

This was long-awaited success, after nearly 8 years of strategic collaboration, 2 regulatory dockets, 171 stakeholder comments (including Alta Ski Area) issued to the Commission, hundreds of hours of meetings and workgroup sessions, nearly 50 action alerts, and a 6" regulatory archive binder, UCE has succeeded in establishing a solar incentive program that will open up Utah's untapped solar market! And, UCE couldn't have done it without stakeholder involvement, support, and

commitment throughout the process. So, thanks to all who've joined in this effort!

This program is paving the way for a strong, stable solar market, new job growth in the state, and it is *uniquely designed to be cost-effective, meaning that it will provide net benefits to Rocky Mountain Power and Utah ratepayers*. In fact, the program's cost-effectiveness analysis shows that for every \$1 dollar invested in the expanded program, ratepayers get a \$1.65 benefit- regardless if they install solar or not. Utah has uniquely established the *Utility Cost Test* as the threshold test to determine program prudence for utility energy efficiency programs and distributed solar; this approach allowed UEC to resoundingly demonstrate that distributed solar is a cost-effective resource that provides net benefits to the utility, ratepayers, the economy and the environment.

For more information on this success visit www.utahcleanenergy.org.

October Sustainability Events

Here are some fun, educational sustainability and stewardship events for adults and the whole family. To view all events available [visit our website](#).

- **Wednesday & Thursday, October 3rd & 4th:** Cache Humane Society Planting – Logan, UT. For more information contact Ross at planting@treeutah.org or call 801.364.2122
- **Thursday, October 11th.** SBK Green Country & Hogle Zoo Recycle Event- South Parking Lot , Hogle Zoo – Salt Lake City: 11am – 3pm
- **Every Wednesday in October:** Wild Wednesday - Ogden Nature Center: 3:45pm – 4:30pm. For more information please visit www.ogdennaturecenter.org
- **Every Wednesday in October:** Halloween Hoot - Tracy Aviary: 11am to 3pm. For more information please visit www.tracyaviary.org
- **Every Wednesday starting October 3rd:** Books and Birds -Tracy Aviary 11am. For more information please visit www.tracyaviary.org
- **Monday & Tuesday, October 15th & 16th:** Castle Valley Planting - With Tree Utah in Castle Valley. For more information please contact Ross at planting@treeutah.org
- **Wednesday, October 17th:** The Great Salt Lake, One Crazy Place - Swener EcoCenter: 7pm. For more information please visit swanerecocenter@usu.edu or call 435.649.1767
- **Tuesday & Wednesday, October 23rd & 24th:** Tremonton City Planting - With Tree Utah in Tremonton City. For more information contact Ross at planting@treeutah.org



Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left.

–Aldo Leopold