



Sverre Engen (engenmuseum.org)

Snow Rangers - By Liz Rocco

"The human spirit is sometimes capable of marvelous dedication and loyalty, and it seems that Alta has enjoyed a generous number of individuals with such a nature." Duane Shrontz

Alta has a unique and varying history from the early days of mining to the modern days of high speed quads. This history is displayed in countless books, articles, pictures, and relic ski equipment. Some of you may have heard of the influences of Alf Engen; but I believe fewer have heard of his older brother Sverre. In the 1940's Sverre was the first employed "Snow Ranger" for the United States Forest Service

(USFS). As a Snow Ranger, Sverre Engen was on the slopes most often alone gaining knowledge of terrain, snow science, and meteorology. Sverre was hired to patrol the slopes and monitor the snow conditions for slide potential; and then given authority to close certain slopes and work with the road crew on the opening of the canyon road. For five years Sverre gained knowledge through observation and record keeping. Then in the late 40's Sverre passed the snow ranger torch on to Monty Atwater and Ed LaChapelle. Monty and Ed took the job of Snow Ranger to the next level by intensely studying the science behind avalanches and weather and also developing techniques to start avalanches with artillery, and the 'avalauncher', a device Monty designed to fire a lit charge of dynamite, which operates on compressed air.

Over the years the USFS Snow Ranger job was absorbed into the job description of an Alta Ski Patroller. As a result of the early Snow Rangers at Alta, Alta is looked upon to this day to be leaders in snow science and avalanche mitigation techniques. Although the duties of the 'Snow Ranger' has changed over the years for the USFS, you can still "Tour with a Ranger." These The Rangers of today are out and about on skis sharing their knowledge of Alta's natural history with all those that desire to learn and explore. In partnership with the [Cottonwood Canyons Foundation](#) and Alta Ski Lifts, highly trained volunteer 'Rangers' will be around throughout the winter to ski with participants and discuss topics from mining history to watershed and winter ecology.

The Tour With a Ranger program is complimentary and operates weekends and holidays, meeting at the top of the Sunnyside lift, from December 19th, 2015 to March 27th, 2016. So get out there, ski with a ranger, or stop in at the Alf Engen Ski Museum in Alf's Restaurant for a cup of hot cocoa while immersing yourself in Alta.



Photo Courtesy of [Cottonwood Canyons Foundation](#)



"One planet, one experiment."

Edward O. Wilson

Tour with a Ranger

Weekends and Holidays

Top of Sunnyside lift at 1:30PM

Learn about winter ecology, canyon history, wildlife and more

**Complimentary
One Hour Tour**



December - January Sustainability Events

If these highlighted sustainability events catch your eye, check out our full sustainability calendar at alta.com/alta-environmental-center/resources#sustainability-events.

- **All December - ZOO Lights:** The Hoogle Zoo celebrates the holiday season with over 250 animated light displays and lots of nightly fun. More info: hoglezoo.org.
- **Dec 19 - Tour with a Ranger:** Led by Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, this program is fun, informative, and complimentary all winter. Meet at the top of Sunnyside lift at 1:30pm. For more info: cottonwoodcanyons.org
- **Dec 20 - Santa Diving:** Santa isn't afraid of sharks, he swims with them! Join the Living Planet Aquarium for holiday fun. For more info: thelivingplanet.com.
- **Dec. 21 - Shannon Corey Piano Performance:** 6:30pm at Our Lady of the Snows in Alta, brighten your winter night with a holiday piano performance. For more info: altaarts.org/events.
- **Dec 26 - Birds in the Lab!:** Join HawkWatch crew to observe live raptors up-close, discover how to identify and learn about conservation efforts. nhmu.utah.edu/events
- **Dec 31 - Snowshoe with a Naturalist:** Join Cottonwood Canyons Foundation for a complimentary 1 and half hour tour in Alta exploring nature at its finest. For more info or to register contact: info@cottonwoodcanyons.org
- **Through Jan 1 - Plastics Unwrapped Exhibit:** Learn what life was like before plastics, how they are made, why they're so convenient and beneficial to use, and what happens after we throw them away. More info at: parkcityhistory.org/event/new-exhibit-plastic-unwrapped-opens
- **Jan 2 - Dead Horse State Park Bird Count:** A christmas time bird count at Dead Horse State Park, outside Moab, Utah. For more information go to: stateparks.utah.gov/parks/dead-horse/events

