



Newsletter

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Leave No Trace - By Marley Hil-Filben

All living creatures leave a trace wherever they go. If you have ever spent time at Alta Ski Area you know this to be true, especially for humans. A mecca for outdoor enthusiasts year round, Alta has seen its fair share of human impact. There is no way to completely eliminate the trace that humans have left in the area, however we can reduce the effects we have on the environment.

Leave No Trace (LNT) is an organization that is dedicated to educating people on responsible use of the outdoors. Their "Seven Principles" can be applied to all sorts of outdoor activities and are easy steps we can all take to protect the environment we love.

The Seven principles are as follows: Plan ahead and prepare, travel and camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize campfire impacts, respect wildlife, and be considerate of other visitors. *Continued on next page...*

Nature Nugget: Cassin's Finch

The Cassin's Finch, *Haemorhous cassinii*, was first collected in the mid 1800's in the southwest mountains by ornithologist John Cassin, who originally noted it as the "pink-tinged" finch. Cassin regarded the bird so much that it was subsequently named after him. Mountain visitors can observe this brightly colored little joy of feathers in Alta and throughout North America's western interior mountains between 3,000 and 10,000 feet. They tend to winter in the lower elevations of their range but return to the mountain life come breeding season.

When looking for this small medium bird (~6 inches tall), keep an eye out for its most distinctive feature the bright bushy red forehead, which is only observed on the male. The female though is not totally void of color; if a good view is made you can see a tinge of yellow on the female's cheek and wings among the strong brown and white stripes that keep her hidden. She also has a bushy forehead feather-do like her male counterpart. When looking for the Cassin's Finch be careful not to confuse it with the Purple Finch, which looks very similar but without the wonderfully ruffled forehead.

If you are walking around Alta keep a look out when in the spruce-fir stands, they tend to prefer the conifers, but you may also observe them in the aspen. Like all finches they have a distinct strong bill built to pick and crack seeds from pine trees and forbs, often foraging for dropped seed on the ground, to plucking aspen buds. However, they also enjoy a good insect like moth larvae, but not without a dash of salt. This little mountain lover bizarrely craves salt and can be seen around mineral deposits or possibly salt licks.

The Cassin's Finch may be considered a common summer bird in Alta, but it has been placed on the [2014 U.S. State of the Birds Watch List](#), which identifies bird "species most in danger of extinction without significant conservation action." The species population throughout North America is declining rapidly, though researchers are not sure why as of yet. For now you may help conserve the Cassin's Finch and other animals by following the "leave no trace" guidelines and refrain from feeding the wildlife.

If you found this article interesting and want to learn more about birds, join us for our Tracy Aviary Bird Walk on August 10th. For more information or to register contact info@friendsofalta.org.





*There is no such thing as "away."
When we throw anything away it must go somewhere.*

Annie Leonard



Leave No Trace continued...

Because we see such a high rate of visitors at Alta, these are important practices to follow. By staying on trails, packing out waste, leaving wildflowers where you find them and following the rules for camping and campfires in the area we can continue to preserve the natural beauty here at Alta.

Not only does practicing Leave No Trace protect the immediate environment and keep our visitors happy, it also protects those that live downstream.

Little Cottonwood Canyon is a watershed for a large portion of Salt Lake City and the surrounding neighborhoods. Those of us that live in these areas are lucky enough to have tap water that is safe to drink. It is very important that we don't contaminate this water source. We can do so by following the Seven Principles of LNT in conjunction with the rules and regulations of the watershed.

First, dispose of waste properly by packing out anything you bring in. Camp and build campfires a half mile from any roads and at least 200 feet from any water source or trail. If no restrooms are present, bury your waste 6 inches deep and 200 feet from water sources and trails. No domestic animals, such as dogs and horses, are allowed in the canyon. Swimming and use of motorized vehicles off-road are prohibited. While ignoring these principles may seem easier in the short term, it is important to make the extra effort so that people can enjoy this area and the water in it for generations to come.

July - August Sustainability Events

If these highlighted sustainability events catch your eye, check out our full sustainability calendar at altaence.com/resources_events.php.

- **July 18 - Alta Restoration Day:** Join the community of Alta for 1/2 day or full day of beatifying Alta—planting native flowers and a little trail upkeep. For more info or to register email volunteer@cottonwoodcanyons.org.
- **July 25 - Wildflower Festival:** The peak of summer in Alta is when all our showiest of wildflowers are in bloom. For more information on the entire weekend festival visit cottonwoodcanyons.org/events/wasatch-wildflower-festival.
- **August 8 - TreeUtah Hike:** Join TreeUtah and the Alta Environmental Center for a fun and educational hike in Alta Ski Area! For more info or to register contact volunteer@treeutah.org. Reserve your spot, space is limited to 15!
- **August 10 - Tracy Aviary Bird Walk:** Join Tracy Aviary at Alta Ski Area for an informative and fascinating presentation on the birds of Alta! For more information or to register please contact info@friendsofalta.org.
- **August 11 - Earth Science Outside!:** Visit the Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter and Geologists for a rocky trek in learning about Utah's great landscape. More info at swanerecocenter.org/education-calendar

Wasatch Wildflower Festival

July 24-26, 2015

Join local naturalists and enjoy spectacular wildflowers!

Learn about the amazing variety of wildflowers at Alta, Snowbird, Brighton and Solitude! Please note, all walks are of moderate grade, take place at high elevation and may have unstable footing. Arrive early with full water bottle, sturdy shoes, snacks, sun protection, rain gear and other items you may need. Walks depart as groups fill and last for 1 to 2 hours. All walks with chairlift or tram ride require a discounted ticket purchase or donation.

For more information:
cottonwoodcanyons.org
(801) 466-6411
info@cottonwoodcanyons.org

Brighton

Friday morning, July 24

Meet at Brighton parking lot

9 a.m., 11 a.m. – Beginner Walks

9:30 a.m. – Advanced Walks

10 a.m. – Intermediate Walks

10 a.m., 11 a.m. – Kids Walks

Solitude

Friday afternoon, July 24

Meet at Solitude Village (Entry 2)

Moderate Wildflower Walks with chairlift ride (\$5 donation to CCF) Depart between 3 and 4 p.m.

Advanced Wildflower Walks with chairlift ride (\$5 donation to CCF) Depart between 3 and 5 p.m.

Beginner Walks on gentle terrain on the lower mountain will be ongoing between 3 and 6 p.m.

Kids Walks along a lower mountain route on gentle terrain are at 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Alta

Saturday, July 25

Meet at Albion Day Lodge parking area

9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m. – Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced Walks

9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. – Kids Wildflower Walks designed with kids in mind

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – Live Music by Bobo of the Weekenders

9 a.m. to 12 p.m. – Ongoing art activities for kids of all ages

snowbird

Sunday, July 26

Meet on the Snowbird Center Plaza Deck, Snowbird Entry 2

Sign up for Wildflower Walks 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

\$5 donation to CCF for Tram ride inclusive hikes.

9:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. – Tram departs for Beginner and Advanced Wildflower Hikes

10:30 a.m. – Tram departs for Beginner hike on Hidden Peak (ride Tram back down) 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. – Lower Mountain Wildflower Walk

10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. – Kids Walks

Low Larkspur
Delphinium
nuttallianum