



# Newsletter

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## Westminster Students Researching Sustainability

By Lauren Shaw

Sustainability is a major focus and direction for many universities and colleges now as they have realized that this path is more than a trend, it is here to guide services of all kinds, as well as develop careers in the field. Through an environmental science course at Westminster College, Professor Jennifer Eden sought to guide her students on utilizing the science and research that is needed to analyze, understand and offer sustainable solutions to everyday impacts. Within this class a couple groups of students narrowed in on Alta to see how they could better understand the place they love by addressing their carbon footprint and those that visit Alta.

Students Brett Denney, Katrina Castro and Caressa Pratt held a study on the recycling contamination at Albion Grill this spring. They met and worked with both the Alta Environmental Center and Jude Rubadue, Albion Grill Supervisor. An initial waste observation/audit was held on a Saturday in March to establish what could be improved. The students discovered a major challenge facing the recycling program at the Albion Grill were the confused customers, who not know how to dispose of their waste appropriately. Their test was to create and place new signs that would help the customers have a clearer idea of the proper bin to dispose of each type of waste. The students installed new signs, some 3D examples of what materials could go in each bin, and color coded tape. After which, a second observation/audit was held on a Saturday in April to measure the success of the improved signage.

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Westminster Student Brett Denny sorting and weighing waste, by Katrina Castro, Caressa Pratt



## Alta Ski Area Embraces Leadership in Sustainability

Alta Ski Area with the Alta community and eco-minded industry partners celebrated the 6th annual Alta Earth Day, Saturday April 16th. This local activity sought to support global awareness of climate change through local action by honoring businesses and skiers that work hard to incorporate sustainability and environmental awareness into their brand and message. This festive day brings about great environmental appreciation and awareness, but Alta Ski Area also realized that *more* leadership is needed to support greater sustainability, especially within conservation and economic development.

Respectively, in response to [Mountain Accord](#), an increase in year-round visitors, and a need for greater economic viability Alta's municipality, with its planning commission and local citizens, are working to create a [Town of Alta Commercial Core Plan](#). As a sustainability leader Alta Ski Area presented a formal memorandum and request for "Sustainable Development Considerations for the Town of Alta Commercial Core Plan" at the April Alta Town Planning Commission and Town Council meetings. The 'sustainable development considerations' specifically proposes sustainability policies for both commercial and residential development regarding: design principles for new construction and renovation; water conservation; energy conservation; native ecosystem protection; greenhouse gas reduction; solid waste reduction; and enhanced greenway services. *...continued on next page*



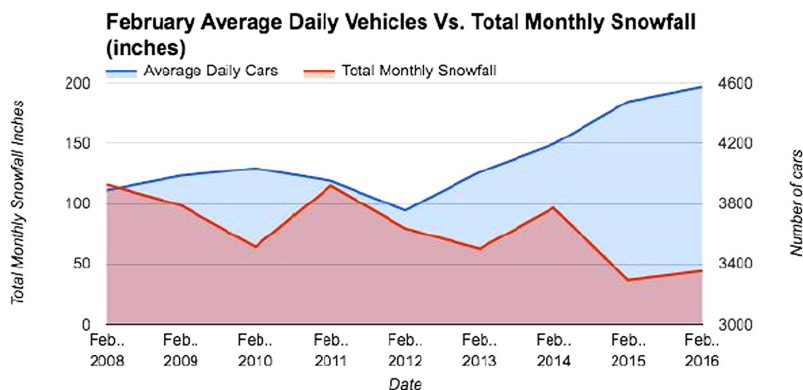


Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

- Aldo Leopold

### *Westminster Students Researching Sustainability - continued....*

With their model, the overall waste contamination was decreased by 13.2%, seeing the greatest reduction in mixed recycling and glass bins. However, contamination in the trash bins after the signs were put up, remained almost the same showing that those who are in the habit of throwing everything in the trash do so regardless of signage. In conclusion, the students encouraged all three of Alta Ski Area's restaurants (Albion Grill, Alf's Restaurant and Watson Shelter) to reevaluate the signage of their recycling and waste program to help decrease waste contamination and increase recycling efforts.



Graph sited from "Little Cottonwood Canyon Traffic Analysis" by M. Wolf, A. Thomas, and K. Puddy, April 21, 2016.

Working with UDOT and the EPA also this spring, Westminster students Meg Wolf, Amber Thomas and Kate Puddy held a different study on the traffic, carbon emissions, and winter criteria pollutants in Little Cottonwood Canyon. They compared daily traffic to the amount greenhouse gases, VOCs (volatile organic compounds,) and PM2.5 (particulate matter) emitted from vehicles within the canyon. The average daily snowfall was also included to understand if there was a correlation between snowfall and traffic in the canyon. This seemed to hold true, as there was a linear relationship between cars and pollutants, but overall

traffic tends to increase on the weekend and decrease mid week. The students research and analysis of data led them to a proposal of a 10%

reduction, or an average 438 vehicles a day, would relieve congestion of vehicles in Little Cottonwood Canyon, meaning a 10% reduction in greenhouse gases, as well as VOCs and PM2.5. The reduction in emissions would be a benefit to the environment, traffic and peoples' health. The best alternatives to these 438 cars would be an increase in the number of buses, frequency of trips up the canyon, and better parking alternatives.

### *Alta Leadership in Sustainability - continued....*

The memo reflects the strategies and philosophy of the Alta Environmental Center (AEC), which has led Alta Ski area's sustainability initiatives around carbon reduction goals, triple-bottom-line analysis, and stewardship over permitted lands within National Forest and a protected watershed. The "AEC's strategy and mission is the sustainability platform for Alta Ski Area's progress and success in realizing concrete goals" states Alta's general manager, Onno Wieringa. Overall the ski area has seen some successes and tribulations over the integration of sustainability within its operations, but it has realized the importance of a viable healthy future and the need for greater implementation of sustainability for the ski area's beloved culture and community. Sustainability as no longer a trend, but a fundamental of survival in the wake of climate change and a growing population.



Alta resident waiting for the bus.



### **Alta Summer 2016 Coming Soon!**

The Alta community has created a jammed packed summer for you from naturalist walks to stewardship events to a KID'S DAY! Next month we will display all our summer events for you to pick and choose and share! You can also follow [Cottonwood Canyons Foundation](#), the [Alta Environmental Center](#), [TreeUtah](#) and [Friends of Alta](#) on Facebook for fast and up-to-date information for upcoming events. See you in a month!