



Newsletter

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Photo: Alta Ski Area, John Shafer

Renaissance Rangers - By Nathan Bramhall

Whether you're a long-time patron of Alta Ski Area or you've just joined the community, if you haven't taken a tour with our rangers, you're missing out on a enlightening opportunity! The [Tour With a Ranger](#) is a complimentary one-hour ski around held every weekend and holidays that starts at the top of Sunnyside lift at 1:30 pm. There, you'll meet with a jovial group of naturalists wearing bright blue jackets. These folks are volunteer educators from the [Cottonwood Canyons Foundation](#) and, needless to say, have an extraordinary amount of knowledge about the Cottonwood Canyons' geology, history, winter ecology, watershed dynamics, wildlife, and the list goes on. On the tour, your group

will follow the guide down a groomed path off Sunnyside lift, intermittently pausing at viewpoints along the way to have a chat about what it is you're observing. I had the opportunity to attend one of these tours the first month on the job in December, and was humbled by how much there is to Alta Ski Area. Not only does Alta have a rich mining history, but tied with that history is an even more fascinating story of community-based environmental restoration efforts that played a major role in how Alta is laid out today. At any rate, the next weekend or holiday you're at Alta, I highly recommend everyone take an hour with our rangers and enter a world of natural revelations.

Birds in the Snow

Look, up in the sky, it's a bird...no...yes, it's a bird. Birds are one of the most visible, yet probably least seen wildlife in nature. Think about it, when's the last time you strolled around town or hiked anywhere and didn't hear the birds chirping? It would be a bad horror-flick if we didn't have birds singing away in the background, reassuring us all is well in the world. The funny thing is they are actually telling us how well the world is. There are so many of them, each with their own niche and if you pay attention to them you might just get a clue on what the status of those bark beetles are, or the cone crop of the limber pine, or the air quality (rest in peace canaries, thankfully an outdated practice).

Some of us in Alta have gotten so bird-brained we ski around one morning each month with Tracy Aviary birders to listen and look for all these crazy birds that have made Alta their winter home. They are so little, yet they brave freezing temps, high winds and deep snow...they are true Alta folk. Our obsession for these birds has also deepened our partnership with [Tracy Aviary](#) and [Friends of Alta](#), and we will be placing bird next boxes all over and working with skiers to check in on them every once in a while. Skiing and Birds, what a great combo! If you are interested in joining us for a [monthly bird survey](#), becoming a nest box monitor, or supporting our bird efforts contact us at environment@alta.com. For a real bird extravaganza we will be hosting our 2nd [Skiing & Birds](#) fundraiser Saturday, March 11th, tickets are on sale now!

P.S. If you have any doubts on how cool or fascinating birds are just remember, birds can fly! We can't just flap our arms and soar in the sky, it is one of the ultimate super powers and birds have got it.

Top Photo: [Friends of Alta](#)—red breasted nuthatch.

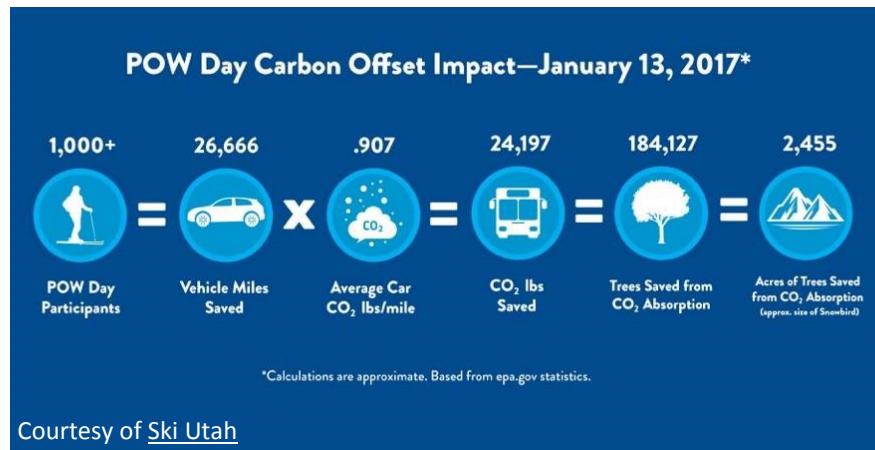
Bottom photo: 1/13/17 ACE event building & repairing bird nest boxes for [Alta Bird Study](#).





"Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads."

Thoreau



Courtesy of [Ski Utah](#)

folks came prepared for POW day: several cars were completely packed with skiers, hoping to get a good parking space. It seemed like everyone who carpooled weren't surprised when I told them they got privileged parking that day. However, I was surprised by the number of folks who drove up solo or and gave me a confused look when I directed them down the parking lot towards the much larger non-carpooling section, which filled up a lot faster. If I had to estimate, the ratio between the number of carpooling and non-carpooling vehicles was about 1:3. Of course, this means that there's some room for improvement, but let's not forget the fact that this was only the 2nd POW Day, and for that, there was a considerably positive turn-out. So mark your calendars for January 13th, 2018 and support the effort by planning your ride on UTA or carpooling up to Alta, and encourage a friend to follow suite. I know I will be!

January - March 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](#).

- **Jan 28 & 29 - Mini-CHaRM:** Collection of Hard to Recycle Materials by Patagonia and the Utah Recycling Alliance for recycling SKIS, bicycles and bicycle parts. More info at [utahrecyclingalliance.org](#)
- **Feb 11 - Summit Gala:** A wonderful opportunity to support Wasatch Adaptive Sports, Snowbird Sports Education Foundation and Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. For more info visit [snowbird.com/events/summitgala](#)
- **Feb 13 - Monthly Bird Survey:** Join Tracy Aviary for this months Bird Survey up at Alta. No Experience necessary, come enjoy the beauty of Alta while participating in a great program! More info at [alta.com/alta-environmental-center/research-education/bird-survey-project](#)
- **Feb 18 - Alta Snowshoe Tour:** Enjoy a fun-filled tour with naturalists from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. Learn more at [alta.com/the-mountain/events/month](#)
- **Mar 11 - Skiing & Birds:** Support the birds in Alta, help us learn from them and join in on the fun. Purchase your early bird ticket today at [tracyaviary.org/upcoming-events/skiing-birds](#)

