



Newsletter

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Responsible Recreation = Stewardship

If you came up to Alta this summer, then you know that it was the year of the wildflowers. This is probably in thanks to our incredible snowpack, as well as the cool spring, that these flowers were finally able to put their energy into a brilliant show. Also, if you came to Alta this summer, you probably saw the thousands of visitors trying to enjoy the flowers in a not so pleasant fashion.

Every year the Wasatch becomes a greater destination for Utah locals and out-of-towners. The reason may vary, to escape the heat or get some exercise, but when they get here no one can help but enjoy the scenery. Whatever the reason may be, the moment you start driving up Little or Big Cottonwood Canyon, you have the opportunity to be more than just a visitor, you can be a steward.

You may be surprised to hear that you don't have to pick up a shovel to be a steward of these great mountains, watershed and your natural resources; it only takes as little as being a responsible recreationist. It may be difficult at first, for bad habits are always a little hard to break, but there are so many options to the ones we see most: instead of picking a flower, smell or take a photo of a flower; instead of walking or riding off trail, come early or late to avoid the crowds; instead of throwing your orange peel in the woods, peel and cut your fruit beforehand; and there is the tried and true practice of "carry in, carry out" made so easy by just grabbing one of your many plastic grocery bags and throwing it in your pocket.

Though the flowers were great this year, visitor impact was greater. It is sad to see closed illegal trails reopened, restoration signs stolen, dead flowers littering the parking lot, and where there should be flowers growing, there are none, replaced with tire tracks and footprints.

It's understandable to want to ride your bike where there are no hikers, or to have your "sound of music" moment in the middle of the flowers, or get that perfect family and wedding photo. The problem is you are not the only one, where you go, thousands follow. So, we ask you to take this saying in positive direction. You can be a good steward, it's easy, just be a responsible recreationist.



Saying Goodbye to Our Hero of Sustainability

It has been just over a couple months since our General Manager and Director of Sustainability departed Alta after over 30 years of serving Alta. Onno Wieringa put on his cowboy hat and raft sandals to enjoy different mountains in more northern country. Before loading up his horse trailer though, the ski industry was able to honor and thank him with the "Hero of Sustainability" award by the National Ski Areas Association on May 6th, 2017.

There were many reasons for Onno's nomination and recognition with this reward. We don't want to bore you with the details, but we will say he didn't let the old saying "because that's the way its always been done" stand in the way, which doesn't mean it wasn't challenging for him and the company. While many people scoffed or avoided sustainability, Onno had the vision, the gumption, and the dedication to discuss, explore and try to understand what sustainability meant for Alta Ski Area and him personally. It is because of this feat, that we don't believe retirement will just be spent waving at the neighbors in a rocking chair on the porch (though we hope at least it's a small percentage of his time). With such a title as "Hero of Sustainability," we believe we will continue to hear and see sustainability from Onno, even in Montana.





*Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife
are in fact plans to protect man.*

— Stewart Udall



Inspiring Future Land Managers

Cassidy Jones, University of Utah George Wright Society Student Chapter President

Early in July, 20 graduate students came together in Alta, Utah for the 2017 George Wright Society Student Summit (georgewright society.org). The summit, a gathering of student chapters of the George Wright Society—a nonprofit dedicated to the preservation and management of parks, protected areas and cultural sites—was hosted by the University of Utah and drew participants from the University of Montana, Kansas State University, North Carolina State University, and Clemson University, as well as the executive director of the George Wright Society, Jennifer Palmer.

Alta Ski Area served as both a setting and inspiration for place-based discussions about planning and conserving wildland-urban interface areas. Guest speakers at the summit described land management challenges and stakeholder engagement and decision-making processes used in the Central Wasatch, and faculty from the University of Utah's Parks, Recreation, and Tourism program shared perspectives on academic research contributions to management issues.

On hikes to Cecret Lake and Sugarloaf Peak, participants enjoyed opportunities to observe recreation phenomena and the natural resources being conserved in the Central Wasatch. The students also joined dozens of local volunteers at the Alta Ski Area Clean-up, where they learned more about the area and helped clean up garbage from ski season use.

To wrap up and synthesize what they experienced at the summit, students divided into groups to discuss the ideas that were most resonant for them. Throughout the fall, student groups will work together to create various projects that demonstrate novel thinking on human dimensions of the wildland-urban interface and generate ways to share their ideas with the public.

Beyond these deliverables, students came away from the summit with new friendships, future professional connections, and a deep understanding of Alta as a special and complex place.

August-September 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.

- **August 19—Bird Walk & Talk:** Join Tracy Aviary in Alta for an intro to our birds! The event will include a light breakfast, a lift ride and Albion Basin tour! To guarantee you get a muffin, please register at alta.com/the-mountain/events/annual-bird-talk-walk.
- **August 25—Parade of Raptors:** Join HawkWatch International for a volunteer driven program which allows audiences to see the diversity of raptor species. Free event, just show up at the Albion Day Lodge, 1-2pm.
- **September 2—Ski Area Tree Planting:** Join us once again to explore the Wasatch mountains while planting 1,500 native trees! Registration required at treeutah.org.
- **September 5—Community Weed Pull:** Your last chance to take all your aggression out on the weeds. Please register at alta.com/the-mountain/events/community-weed-pull-stewardship-social.

