



# Sustainability Report

## 2019

### 2018 -19 Sustainability Initiative Round-Ups



**Buckhorn Kitchen Reusable Containers:** Green Team member Annie Mattison took on the job of running the Buckhorn employee kitchen this last season, and the first thing she wanted to try was using reusable containers. The program was a success in large part to all of the employees who returned the containers. This project allowed the kitchen to avoid purchasing disposable containers over the season, and saved at least \$600 in expenditures even with purchasing reusable containers. This program will continue to be a part of the kitchen's regular operations.

**Preferred Carpool Parking:** Last season, Alta Ski Area's Parking Crew took the preferred carpool parking from an initiative to a reality. The parking crew worked to make sure that on average 25% of the Wildcat parking lot was dedicated to vehicles with three or more people. Alta Ski Area is proud to have a dedicated parking crew and is happy to announce that this program will continue this season.

**Food Waste:** All four kitchens of the ski area, Alf's Restaurant, Albion Grill, Buckhorn kitchen and Watson Shelter, participated in a 2-month pilot program to divert food waste from the landfill to the Wasatch Resource Recovery food digester where food is composted and turned into clean biogas. The result was 3.2 tons of waste diverted from the landfill (equal to 1 ton of CH<sub>4</sub> and 2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>). This is enough energy to run an average household for 251 days. As a pilot project, there is still much to be figured out to make this an efficient effort. The restaurants will review options and refine processes this winter and hope to bring it to employees and guests in the coming seasons.

### Farewell, but not Goodbye - From Maura Olivos

Since 2002, I have been privileged to call Alta my home, and after 17 years, the majority of my adult life, it was time for my spouse, Greg Wilson, and myself to depart Alta. I'm honored to know that the friendships and community we have made are life-long. We will be taking Alta with us in so many ways, and we will be sure to wander back here and there. With all this, I would be remiss not to mention the impact of the Alta Environmental Center (AEC) on me and Alta, so first the greatest thing I can say is, thank you.

At every orientation and presentation, I tended to say the AEC is an entity of Alta Ski Area, and this is so true. The AEC not only challenged my perspective, but everyone's in Alta. It demanded a higher standard of understanding, it evolved and adapted to what sustainability is for Alta. Now it is time for new people to continue the AEC's mission of sustainability, and I have great trust and confidence in our new leaders and the Alta Green Team. There will be a lot to learn during the next year or so for the newest members. It may be challenging, which is the best part of the job. I hope the community of Alta will continue to challenge the AEC and vice-versa. Not for the sake of being difficult, but for the ultimate pursuit of doing a better job and understanding the dynamic and complex system of Alta. If there was one thing I learned early on, is that sustainability is not up to one person, it's up to everyone. Please wholeheartedly welcome Beth and Jen and share your vision of sustainability for Alta, as well as, be open to letting the mission change you, for the better of course.



# Summer Recreation Program Update

Another summer for Alta Ski Area overseeing the summer program and another year of opportunities, changes, and challenges. Construction presented some challenges with the closure of Albion Base and a detour around Alf's Restaurant in Albion Basin. Overall, it was a cool and lovely summer in Alta. Here is a rundown of the results:

### Summer Road

- The information booth operated 63 days between July 16 to September 22 and the fee went from \$6 to \$8.
- A new self-pay program, also known as the iron ranger, was installed and operated for a total of 96 days between July 16 and October 14.
- 15,692 vehicles drove up into Albion Basin and about 86% were visitors (18,624 in 2018 and 89% visitors). *Ski area staff, residents and campground reservations are excluded from the visitor count.*
- A shuttle system was operated out of Wildcat base to assist with the closure of Albion base for 8 days July-August and sold 824 seats.

### Visitor Management

- The Summer Host program continued in partnership with the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation and Friends of Alta serving 26 days and 3,663 visitor engagements.
- In partnership with the Salt Lake Ranger District, Town of Alta, Salt Lake City Public Utilities, and Friends of Alta, a Forest Protection Officer/Ranger was designated to Alta this summer serving 43 days and providing 6,058 visitor engagements.
- Summer stakeholders meetings continue to meet 2-3 times a year with the ski area to discuss operations, goals and objectives.

### Albion Basin Campground

- Alta Ski Area started operating the campground this summer which was open 67 days, of which 57 were reservation days.
- With over 700 reservations (not including walk-ins), campground usage was at about 72%.

# Supreme Wetland Mitigation

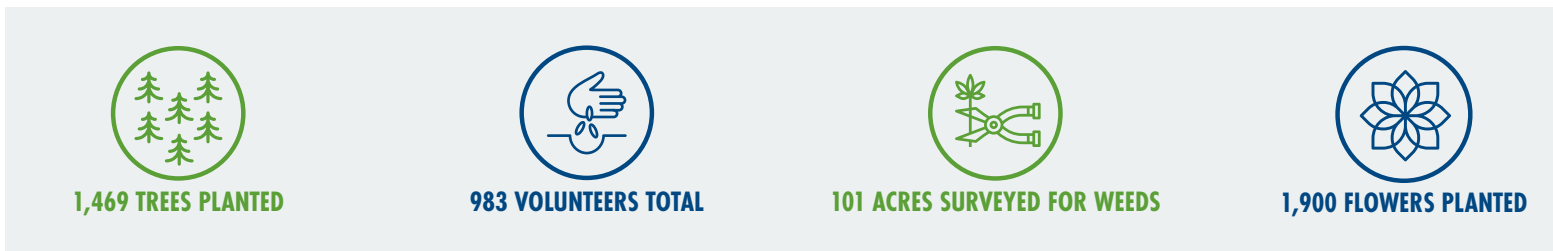
The installation of the new Supreme lift in 2017 resulted in the permanent displacement of 60 square feet (sf) and temporary disturbance of 560 sf of wetland in the Albion Fen within Albion Basin. The Supreme project includes the restoration of disturbed wetland and potential creation of 4,000 sf of new wetland. Restoration/creation of wetland includes: 520 sf of wetland is actively being restored through the removal of three old Cecret towers; 1,480 sf of new wetland is being restored with a swale at the Fen's outlet; and another 2,000 sf of new wetland is being restored in the Supreme base terminal excavation cut. Alta Ski Area and Forest Service are pleased with the progress of the restoration and the new wetland areas. Disturbed wetland areas continue to be restored using nearby wetland soils and plant resources and recovery continues to be observed. Restoration efforts by Alta over the 2019 summer included:

- Planting 857 native riparian & wetland flowers, and 1,715 upland flowers from the base to the top of the Supreme lift, totaling 2,572 flowers all grown from hand-collected seed (plan includes ~3,000 plants annually through 2020).
- Transplanted approximately 100 sf of native plants into the disturbed areas (to be repeated again in 2020).
- Seeded approximately 1,500 sf with native sourced wetland seed from the Fen.

# Stewardship & Education

This summer the AEC held over 20 events working on projects around the mountain and providing education about the environment here at Alta. Tree plantings, wildflower festivals, clean-up days, and bird watching were just some of the fun we had this summer. We were lucky enough to interact with almost a thousand members of our community who generously gave their time to help maintain the watershed and public lands. Over 5,000 hours of time were donated by volunteers in the interest of maintaining our ski area, and this is an effort that is priceless to us here at the environmental center. Our initiatives would be impossible to achieve without the participation of our community members, and we are so proud and grateful of the effort put forth. We would also like to thank our partners for their efforts, dedication, and support.

- Alta Community Enrichment
- Cottonwood Canyons Foundation
- Friends of Alta
- Hawk Watch
- Salt Lake Ranger District - Forest Service
- Town of Alta
- Tracy Aviary
- TreeUtah



# Improvements and Changes

Change is the true constant for any community and Alta Ski Area is no different. Alta looks to its community partners to help identify ways to disperse recreation users, provide important watershed information, and foster a sense of appreciation and stewardship for our natural environment. These are a few of the projects the AEC is working on with partners to address summer management:

- **Albion Meadows Reroute:** The upper trail within Albion Meadows saw a major reroute this summer and now includes a much needed connection to the Catherine's Pass trailhead. Final touches will be completed next summer including restoration of closed areas.
- **Additional Reroutes and New Trails to be Pursued:** This fall the AEC will be submitting additional trail changes to assist with mitigating the impacts of visitors on wildflowers in Albion Basin and offer safer passage to major trailheads off the roads. The hope is to help meet recreation demands without losing the natural experience of Alta.
- **Interpretive Trail Update:** In 2016 the lower Albion Meadows Trail was rerouted to the south end of Little Cottonwood creek. This trail was an interpretive trail and next summer it will be again thanks to the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant program awarded to the Town of Alta. The AEC was honored to work with the Town this summer to help guide the design of these new signs and looks forward to installing them for next summer.



## R.I.D.E. App

In an effort to help reduce traffic congestion in the canyon, Alta is proud to announce that we will be joining the newly created R.I.D.E. app. The app offers solutions to help reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles driving up the canyon.

**How Does The App Work?** Through the app, skiers can find people to carpool to Alta, access the UTA Ski Bus schedule, and earn points for rewards. This winter, all four Cottonwood ski areas (Alta, Brighton, Snowbird and Solitude) will join the R.I.D.E. app with the hopes of more resorts joining in the near future. With all four Cottonwood ski areas onboard, there are tremendous incentives for many skiers to download and use the app on Android or Apple devices. Thank you Snowbird for building and launching the app last winter.



**25% of our Wildcat parking lot is dedicated to cars with 3 or more skiers carpooling together. Get here before 10 AM to snag the best spots!**



**There are two electric vehicle chargers now available at Alta. One is located in the Albion Parking Lot, and the other in Wildcat Base.**

## A New Director



Hi, I'm Beth, the new Director of the Alta Environmental Center (AEC). I will be working closely with Jennifer Melton, the AEC Outreach and Communications Coordinator, to ensure that the incredible program built by the former AEC Director, Maura Olivos, continues. I am excited to work collaboratively with Jennifer to implement the AEC's existing efforts and continue to guide Alta Ski Area in being good stewards of the land and in making decisions that consider its employees, many partners, the environment and overall sustainability. I look forward to collaborating with the Alta community and the AEC's many partners to continue taking care of this beautiful place.

## Winter Sustainability Events

**Bird Surveys:** *December - April, second Friday of the month* Join Tracy Aviary on skis the 2nd Friday of each month to meet some feathered locals.

**Snowshoe with a Naturalist:** *January- April, Monthly* Take a short break from skiing and join Cottonwood Canyons Foundation on a walk through the woods.

**Tour with a Ranger:** *January - March* Each Saturday and Sunday, explore Alta's wild side.

**Summit Gala:** *December 2019* Support Little Cottonwood non-profits in style at Snowbird.

**Alta Gala:** *April 3rd, 2020* The town of Alta's favorite party. Proceeds go to ACE, Alta Historical Society, & Friends of Alta.

**Alta Earth Day:** *April 18th* Annual community event celebrating the beauty of our environment.