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# sustainability report 2018

2017-18 achievements

2018-19 endeavors



## A Big White and Green Winter Ahead

Every winter brings a different experience from the snow to the activities. We are keeping our fingers crossed that the snow is plentiful this winter, but more snow means more energy used. While we can't control the amount of snow we receive, we can work on how much energy we use when it does snow. This season we have a variety of projects to help lower our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and support our skiers carbon footprint reduction goals.

**Carpooling**—For our skiers, we are excited to announce that we will be joining Snowbird's [RIDE app](#). The app helps locals and travelers get to their favorite ski areas in a more carbon responsible manner by helping friends find carpool rides and catch the right UTA ski bus to Alta and Snowbird. To assist the carpoolers and further support the RIDE app we will also be adding a pilot program for a preferred carpool parking area to Wildcat Base parking lot. We hope to have the app up and ready by Christmas. For the extra green commuters, we will be installing a new electric vehicle (EV)

charger also at Wildcat Base for the summer 2019, supported by Rocky Mountain Power and [Leaders for Clean Air](#). For those that remember, Alta installed an EV charger for a designated space at Albion Base last season. It is still up and running.

**Waste Management**—Behind the scenes, we will be continuing our work on diverting food waste from the landfill with [Wasatch Resource Recovery](#) to commence a pilot program starting in February. Alta estimates diverting 10 tons of food waste this season, and up to 30 tons or more in following years. This program has the potential to help the ski area reduce its carbon footprint by 5% of its 2020 20%, and further reduce landfill costs. Additionally, we will be removing all paper "to-go" products from our employee Buckhorn Kitchen and providing reusable, BPA-free, microwavable, freezer and dishwasher safe containers made in the U.S.A. The Buckhorn serves three meals a day and up to 200 plates a day. This project hopes to reduce our landfill waste by a half-ton.

**Reduce Recuse Recycle**—This year Alta's Green Team will be stepping up their commitment by implementing special projects within each department, gaining valuable project planning and monitoring skills, and actively reducing Alta's GHG emissions.

## Winter Sustainability Events

Adventure learning is the best way to go. Here are this winter's fun learning activities for the whole community.

**December-April—Bird Surveys:** Join Tracy Aviary on skis the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday each month to meet some feathered locals. [alta.com/the-mountain/events/birding-on-skis](http://alta.com/the-mountain/events/birding-on-skis)

**January-April—Snowshoe with a Naturalist:** Take a short break from skiing and join Cottonwood Canyons Foundation on a walk through the woods. [info@cottonwoodcanyons.org](mailto:info@cottonwoodcanyons.org)

**January 5-March 31—Tour with a Ranger:** Each Saturday and Sunday, and Alta Earth Day ski and explore Alta's wild side. [alta.com/the-mountain/tour-with-a-ranger](http://alta.com/the-mountain/tour-with-a-ranger)

**December 29—Summit Gala:** Support our Little Cottonwood non-profits in style at Snowbird. Benefits go to Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, Snowbird Sports Education Foundation, and Wasatch Adaptive Sports. [snowbird.com/event/summit-gala](http://snowbird.com/event/summit-gala)

**April 12—Alta Gala:** Everyone in Alta's favorite party to support ACE, the Alta Historical Society, and Friends of Alta. [altaarts.org](http://altaarts.org)

**April 20—Alta Earth Day:** An annual community event building awareness and celebrating the environment. [alta.com/the-mountain/events/earth-day](http://alta.com/the-mountain/events/earth-day)



## The State of Sustainability at Alta: People, Planet, Profit — Maura Olivos, Alta Environmental Center Director

As we roll into the Alta Environmental Center's 10th year, and my 9th year, I'm reminded of all the work and reflection that Alta Ski Area has undergone and accomplished to be where we are now. The question is though, where are we now with sustainability? Being there are 3 legs in sustainability, here are my 3 reviews.

**The *People* or social spectrum.** I don't often use the phrase "I'm proud", but I can honestly say that I am proud of my co-workers' strides in sustainability. This is not because they support me, but because they challenge me and each other to do more. They believe in sustainability. They want to do better in reducing our company's environmental impact. They are willing and working to include sustainability in their departments, because they care for each other and Alta. Sure, there is some tough love, some ups and downs, some feet draggers, as well as losses of great people, but through it all my co-workers have maintained the Alta family. This is important because unlike many corporations, Alta is not just a top-down company, the people that make up this company have a voice, input, experience and dedication to Alta, thereby giving our community a striving chance to reach our sustainability goals.

**The *Profit* or economic spectrum.** In relating sustainability to profit, I often say Alta Ski Area has been here for 80 years and we plan to be here for another 80+. This statement speaks to many aspects of sustainability in maintaining the culture of Alta, having snow to ski, employing career "ski bums", helping support our industry, to name a few. In the winter we know what it takes to maintain hundreds of thousands of annual skier visits and are constantly working to improve this, but there's a whole other season that has been begging for attention, and now it has it. This summer marked the first official year for Alta Ski Area summer operations, and it wasn't without risk or additional investment. We may have a loss this first year, but our team along with community partners are working hard to make the summers sustainable, and I truly mean "sustainable." The ski area is working towards summer operations to pay for the itself, and with over 125,000 visitors in the summer and growing, this will be a feat. Alta summers is where economics meets the environment; summer is about protecting our natural resources through visitor management.

**The *Planet* or environment spectrum.** For Alta there are two sides of this spectrum land conservation and greenhouse gas emissions. Mitigating on-the-ground impact for our lands takes a lot of literal blood, sweat and tears, and dedication. I can say without hesitation we have been doing a good job, especially from within the ski industry. We have many opportunities and resources at our fingertips to continue to progress. As for our carbon footprint, we are consistently recycling about 50% of our waste (with a 75% diversion rate goal), and are continuously and routinely upgrading to energy efficiency technology. Even with these constants, we still have ways to go to meet our 2020 goal. Meeting our environment goal will take a community effort, and I look forward to continuing to work with my Alta friends and family on this trek. Thank you.

## The Climate Challenge

Alta Ski Area continues to meet its [Climate Challenge](#) goal of a 20% carbon reduction by the end of 2020 with the National Ski Areas Association. Alta is working towards an on-site reduction of carbon without buying RECs (Renewable Energy Credits). This takes strategy, research, and planning for the ski area and for our skiers. Over the 2018-19 season the ski area 1) installed an electric vehicle (EV) charger at Albion Base, 2) we conducted an extensive food waste from landfill feasibility study, and 3) completed a preliminary wind energy audit. The results were encouraging with an EV charger average usage of 64% over the winter and summer, and a potential to reduce our footprint by 70 tons by diverting food waste from the landfill, which is about 5% of our carbon reduction goal or 1% of our total carbon footprint.







### Stewardship and Education Conserving Our National Forest and Protected Watershed

Our summer stewardship and education efforts would not be possible without the help and dedication of volunteers and partners. All events were brought to you in support and coordination with [Young Automotive Group](#), [Cottonwood Canyons Foundation](#), [Friends of Alta](#), [TreeUtah](#), [ACE](#), [HawkWatch International](#), [Town of Alta](#), [Tracy Aviary](#), University of Utah—[ENVST](#) and [GCSC](#), US Forest Service Salt Lake Ranger District, and last but by no means least our very own Alta Vehicle Maintenance, Ski Patrol, Lift department and AEC crew—Coleman Worthen, Lydia Keenan, Annalise Bianco, and Jessica Gallafant. Thank you all for a great summer!

- We had 25 partnered stewardship events this summer with 895 volunteers and 4,554 work hours (2017: 703 volunteers and 2,551 hours).
- Planted 1,500 Douglas fir and Engelmann spruce seedlings and over 1,700 native flowering plants grown from handpicked seed.
- We hosted 1,639 “students” from a variety of schools and levels with 6,350 hours of environmental education—assuring our future stewards (2016: 1,333 students and 9,223 education hours).
- Bird watching is becoming an ever increasing activity with Tracy Aviary and HawkWatch surveying 45 miles or 186 acres, and reaching about 170 adults and youth. Birding opportunities will continue with Tracy Aviary the 2nd Monday each month.
- Our AEC crew and partner staff from FOA and CCF, along with volunteers and ENVST students put in over 500 of hours of surveying over 105 acres and pulling invasive weeds within Alta.



### Alta Summer Recreation Program Update

In many ways this summer was no different than the summer before. The norm included tens of thousands of vehicles bringing over 100,000 visitors, spectacular wildflower displays, beautiful sunsets, and lots of pictures. Yet, changes were introduced. Under their special use permit with the Forest Service, Alta Ski Area oversaw visitor management of Albion Basin. Changes included: Alta Ski Area staffing the information booth to limit vehicles into Albion Basin based upon available parking and charging \$6 amenities fee per vehicle at a second booth; the Sunnyside lift replaced the shuttles and ran weekends and holidays with tickets at \$10/adult and \$5/child 12 and under; and the Albion Grill was open 7 days/week with extended hours. A summary of the summer is as follows:

- 53,764 vehicles counted over 79 days from 7am-8pm. An estimate of 134,410 visitors at 2.5people/vehicle.
- 18,624 vehicles drove up the summer road into Albion Basin, that is 34.6% of total vehicles bringing ~46,560 people.
- The limited access potentially diverted up to 65% of all vehicles from the summer road.
- 1.5 hours was the longest wait for the summer road, it was well accepted by visitors due to available parking in the basin.
- The lift and amenities fee revenues fell short of covering the costs for the summer

Overall, the program was well accepted by visitors, the summer road was safer with less traffic, and natural resource impacts were still evident, especially by the trails. This summer would not have been possible without the support and hard work of the summer employees and our partners Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, Friends of Alta, Salt Lake Ranger District, and the Town of Alta. The ski area will continue to work with partners to improve visitor management, mitigate natural resource impact, and support a positive outdoor experience. The summer program still has work ahead and there is no shortage of motivation when looking across Alta’s landscape.



### A Summer to Remember - By Lydia Keenan

Little Cottonwood Canyon has been my second home since I could babble the word “mountain.” Growing up in the Salt Lake Valley gave me access to amazing places to hike, ski, backpack, explore, escape and reconnect. Alta has always held a special place in my heart: craggy peaks, mountain lakes, deep powder and incredible people. This summer was the first time I was able to give back to a place that has given me so much.

Working with the Alta Environmental Center (AEC) on a vast array of projects was rewarding in so many ways. Some of these projects included vegetation and weed surveys, community outreach events, and restoration such as wetland rehabilitation and planting over 3,000 native plants. As a graduate from the University of Utah in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and Geography I have a profound interest in conservation and sustainability initiatives. The AEC gave me the hands-on, direct exposure to many of the things I learned about in the classroom. Working with so many different organizations alongside the AEC provided me with insight into how a strong environmental ethic plays out in the real world; a variety of people working towards similar goals with a shared passion.

When I graduated in 2017 I was overwhelmed with the possibilities and limitations of my degree. Working with the AEC has helped me focus in on my specific career goals and narrow the scope of my future pursuits. I am excited to continue my time at Alta this winter as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) intern. Improving my proficiency in GIS is extremely important to me and I am looking forward to honing my skills and learning new material.

The last few months have brought me incredible joy; the opportunity to learn and work in a place that means so much to me is hard to put into words. I am truly grateful for all that I have learned and will continue to learn in such an amazing place alongside true changemakers.



### Supreme Wetland Mitigation - Progress Update

The installation of the new Supreme lift resulted in the permanent displacement of less than 300 square feet (sf) of wetland. Disturbed wetland areas are being restored with removed wetland soils, and recovery of native vegetation is being observed. An additional 520 sf of wetland is actively being restored through the removal of three old Cecret towers. The ski area and Forest Service are pleased with the progress of a separate disturbed area referred to as the “swale,” as well as the development of new wetland both within the swale and base terminal cut. Restoration efforts by the ski area this summer includes:

- Continued amendment of an estimated 550 sf of disturbed wetland with peat moss, native Alta-sourced biomass and grass seed.
- Planting 3,300+ native flowers, grown from hand-collected Alta seed (plan includes 3000 plants annually through 2020).
- Transplanted approximately 30 sf of native plants into the disturbed areas (to be followed with 50 sf annually through 2020).
- Seeded approximately 3000 sf with commercially sourced native wetland seed mix.



# 2018 sustainability report

our mission is SUSTAINABILITY  
to protect and improve  
the well-being of Alta’s  
environment, ski industry and community