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sustainability report 2016

2016-2017 season endeavors



Predicting the Future

First, we see and pray for over 500 inches of snow and at least a dozen true Alta powder days. That is why we are all here (in Alta) and for the most part why we do all these sustainability efforts. Along with the snow, we have high hopes for our sustainability endeavors for 2016-17.

This season we will continue to identify projects that seek to improve energy efficiency, reduce waste and improve our land, air and water. Projects however must pass a triple-bottom-line (TBL) analysis, which reflects a positive impact economically, socially and environmentally. As stated before this is a difficult task for not all “great” eco-friendly projects are what they are stacked up to be. We also look to our partners, industry manufacturers and innovators to help us find solutions. That is why we would like to challenge everyone to help us with this effort. Will you apply the TBL strategy? Will you reduce, re-innovate and re-build more energy efficiently? We hope so and to show you our

commitment, here are a few of our top efforts this coming season:

- Alta Ski Area is working across departments in the design of the new Supreme lift to assure an efficient and sustainable machine, installation is still to be determined.
- We are continuing to understand and expand our options on renewable energy sources both on and off-site and have created a 5% on-site production goal...for now.
- In an effort to be more resilient and prepare for our changing future we will be conducting a climate impact analysis on all our operations...stay tuned.
- This season began an employee investment effort by bringing professional development opportunities to build skill sets in management, customer service and other cross-cutting areas. Not only has this been fun, but it has brought an enlightened influence to our staff and teamwork. Alta Ski Area will continue on this path in an effort to strengthen our company.

Sustainable Events of the Season

Adventure learning is the best and we hope it never ends. The following are our top community sustainability events this winter.

- **March 11—Skiing & Birds:** Alta is pleased to host our partners Tracy Aviary and Friends of Alta in supporting our Bird Survey Program. Join us for a morning of sliding down the mountain, snowshoeing, birding of course and to be in great company. For more info please contact environment@alta.com.
- **April 7—Alta Gala:** Support and celebrate ACE, Friends of Alta and the Alta Historical Society—it’s a ball! Learn more at altagala.org.
- **April 15—Alta Earth Day:** An annual community event building awareness and celebrating the environment. For more info email environment@alta.com.
- **Monthly—Bird Surveys:** Join Tracy Aviary the 2nd Monday each month to acquaint yourself with Alta’s feathered friends. For more info email environment@alta.com.
- **Monthly—Snowshoe with a Naturalist:** Take a short break from skiing and join Cottonwood Canyons Foundation for a winter-land tour. For more info contact info@cottonwoodcanyons.org.
- **Weekends & Holidays—Tour with a Ranger:** Ski through Alta’s natural history and wild side. For more info visit alta.com/the-mountain/tour-with-a-ranger.



2015-2016 season accomplishments



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

Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

The 2015-16 season marked the first year of a new generation, green groomer climbed the runs of Alta Ski Area. This ‘green machine’ is powered by a diesel electric powertrain, similar to a locomotive. The [PistenBully \(PB\) 600E+](#) was tracked throughout the season to see how fuel consumption compared to the all-diesel PB 600. Fuel savings varied between drivers, but overall there was an average 8% gallons per hour savings with the PB 600E+. Calculating this out this would be an average savings of over 650 gallons of diesel per season per machine. This equates to a reduction of 7 tons of CO₂e per year, again per machine.

In addition to our ‘green machine’ Alta Ski Area also invested in renewable energy production installing a 24kW solar photovoltaic system over 3 buildings in the ski area. This November marks one year for this installation and a total savings of 30,620 kWh, which is [equivalent](#) to powering 2.3 homes for a year and reduces our emissions by 23.7 tons CO₂e.

Where do we go from here? We hope diesel-electric groomers are the wave of the future for the ski industry and we’re looking forward to PB’s upcoming diesel-electric models with reduced emissions.

Until then, we will work to improve our usage of the ‘green machine’ and track our progress throughout the coming season; evaluating fuel savings, maintenance and performance usage. Additionally we will continue to expand and find innovative ways to bring on-site renewable energy—a difficult task in an area where you want white skies, but were up for the [climate challenge](#).

Sustainability Department Highlight — Alta Ski Patrol, By Liz Rocco

The biggest change to the Ski Patrol department last season was the evolution of the avalanche office marking the official changing of the guard with Dave Richards, Jonathan Morgan and Adam Naisbitt stepping up to learn the intricacies of the job after 3 years of training. Dave stepped into the role of director, following Titus Case who has been an everyday presence during the winter season in Alta for over 40 years. Titus was the Avalanche Director for 26 years, Assistant Avalanche Director for one year prior, 3 years as Assistant Patrol Director and 8 years as a line patroller in the beginning! With big shoes to fill, Titus is continuing to provide guidance and mentorship, while Dan “Howie” Howlett remains a steadfast leader in the avalanche office.

As a department, Patrol continues to recycle batteries, cardboard, paper, plastic and scrap metal. We re-use bamboo, rope, signs, and toboggans year after year, re-building and re-purposing when possible. Ron Kane has been diligent in maintaining the toboggans we use for years. Some sleds have been in service for over 50 years and in the oldest pictures of Alta Ski Patrollers they are using early versions of the same toboggans. More recently patrol saw a much needed upgrade to the radio system over the summer. The analog system that has been in place for 14 years was replaced with a more reliable digital system. The new system will have fewer “dead spots” and better “patching” functions which will allow for improved communications with Snowbird, Alta Central, Unified Police Department and other emergency medical operations. The radios also have built in tracking systems which will help us keep better track of our team and allow patrol to respond more efficiently in case of an emergency. In all Alta Ski Patrol sustainability highlights are not just focused around the usual suspects of recycling and reducing, but we work hard to find efficiency and safety improvements that speak to our social and physical well-being.



Photo: Jesse Weeks



My Summer Internship at Alta - By Lauren Stout

The wind swirls around the mountaintops and valleys. The air is fresh with the scent of dew and pine. Curiosity beckons us to take the first step up the mountainside. When we decide to take it; a whole new world is unleashed. We become stewards of these mountains and we will be their voice.

My time here at Alta this summer has changed my perspective on the environment and shown me a whole new world. The seasons, plants, animals and weather have

inspired me. I have noticed that many people value and cherish Alta Ski Area and they are willing to invest their means, time and love into this place. The time and dedication that this forest has received has given it another opportunity to grow and thrive; not only for the ecosystems within it but the people that love to ski and recreate here.

Alta has its own social ecosystem; starting with the people I worked with who showed their trust, kindness and respect that I came to value. Alta has a unique community of people comprised of non-profit and government organizations, volunteers and residents...and they are a family, stewards of these mountains. Even with political and social differences, these people come together to form a community. It moves me to think that Alta is so cherished that people are able to put their own perspectives aside to help.

Now when I venture out to Alta, I sit down somewhere quiet and listen. I close my eyes and take in everything. When the seasons change, when the flowers die, I still come up to admire the scenery and crisp air. I do not limit myself to winter or summer. I have this opportunity to be outside and dedicate my time to nature. My stress and worries seem to float away in that serene place. The simple act of planting and getting dirty felt personal, and I seem to become apart of the land. My footprint is not a scar upon the mountain but rather a trail of lush vegetation. One that will be visible for generations and I hope will inspire others to do the same.

Lauren is a local Utahan and a student at the University of Utah. The AEC wishes her the best in her continued and bright career. Thank you Lauren for your spirit and vigor!



Truckin' Around the Mountain

A major part of conservation work is working on the mountain and to accomplish the summer work Alta Ski Area and the Alta Environmental Center (AEC) partnered with [Young Automotive Group](#) (YAG). Our shared values and efforts were supported with the generous supply of a work truck, and we thanked them by getting it dirty. From hauling tools and trees up to the top to bringing down bags of trash and weeds, getting around in a reliable vehicle that can handle these mountain roads is essential.

There may have been some joshing reactions to seeing the Alta Environmental Center logo on a 4x4 truck and we get it. The AEC though takes a triple-bottom-line approach in evaluating options and efficacy played a role in determining the most appropriate vehicle for the work. Plus, unfortunately a Prius would probably not have been the best fit for Alta's mountain roads, though YAG has hybrids to choose from among their broad options. The AEC crew spends more time on mountain, as it should, rather than on paved roads in the summer.

As for the job, this summer marked no different from summers past with a full and tight 18-week workload. Every year the AEC crew places insecticide on limber pines around Alta to protect them from pine bark beetle, followed by a few weeks of native plant restoration, ensued by 3 weeks of vegetation surveys, afterwards more restoration along with weed surveys and pulls, not to mention all the stewardship events in between. In all it was a great summer and if you are in need of a dependable vehicle, Young Auto Group certainly gets a nod from the AEC for their support of forest and watershed health— more at www.youngautomotive.com.



Corkscrew & Nina's Recovery - Progress Update

This summer was year 2 of a 3-year post restoration commitment for Corkscrew and Nina's Curve runs. The 2014 project included widening and filling of the runs, as well as the removal of a mine overburden disturbing about 4.7 acres requiring soil stabilization with native revegetation. With a projected completion of 2017 we will put an equal level of revegetation efforts each year to facilitate in the native restoration of the two runs and the reestablishment of a riparian area where the mine overburden once stood. The following is a rundown of the work completed this summer:

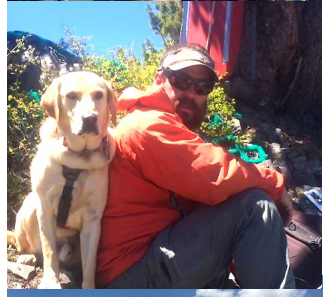
- Hand collected native seed in 2015, then grew and planted over 3,000 native flowers and shrubs (yielding over 6,000 plants since 2015).
- Worked with about 25 volunteers to restore the riparian zone where the mine overburden once laid (yielding over 50 volunteers since 2015).
- Surveyed for invasive weed species and pulled from less than a 1/2 acre, which is down 35% since 2015.

Stewardship & Education - Conserving Our National Forest

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](#), [Utah Conservation Corps](#), 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—Adam Naisbitt, Lauren Stout, Liz Rocco, and Ellie Johnson. Thank you all for a great summer!

- With 22 stewardship events we had a total of over 450 volunteers that provided over 2,000 hours of very hard and dirty work.
- Planted 1,520 Douglas Fir seedlings and over 2,000 native flowering plants grown from handpicked seed.
- This summer we were pleased to host over 750 students from a variety of schools and age groups incorporating stewardship and completing over 2,400 hours of environmental education—assuring our future stewards.
- Bird watching is an educational hit each summer with Tracy Aviary and HawkWatch surveying over 40 miles. Winter birding opportunities will continue in December with Tracy Aviary on the 2nd Monday each month.
- Our AEC crew and partner staff from FOA and CCF put in 100s of hours surveying and pulling invasive weeds over 88+ acres around Alta.
- AEC crew applied Verbenone, a special insecticide, on 300 limber pines throughout Alta continuing to protect them from infestation of the mountain pine beetle.

2016 summer update



Sustainability report 2016

We don't have to sacrifice a strong ECONOMY for a healthy ENVIRONMENT.
- **Dennis Weaver**