



Newsletter

January 2020
Issue 93

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A Greener Tune Up

The Alta Environmental Center is always excited when other departments at our ski area take it upon themselves to make positive change for the environment. We loved to hear from Jack Cherry at the Alta Ski Shop about the new ski wax method they are using. Recently, the Wildcat Ski Shop and Albion Ski Shop installed two Wax Future machines. These machines use ultraviolet (UV) light to heat up ski bases for preparation, and application of ski wax. These machines are much more efficient and sustainable than a traditional iron on wax. The UV unit passes over the ski to heat it up, opening the pores in the base material. Then, during a repeat pass, the technician can apply wax directly to the base. This allows for a thinner coat of wax to be applied and soaked into the base of the ski compared to conventional iron on wax methods. The ski then cools and can simply be buffed via a roto-brush, or buff wheel to achieve the desired finish. The resulting waste wax is very minimal.



Photo Credit: Rocko Menzyk

In comparison to doing a traditional iron on wax, the technician will first use the iron to drip wax onto the ski base and then must return and iron the wax into the base material. This applies a thicker coat of wax to the ski base and also results in multiple drips of wax running over the side of the ski and onto the waxing bench (i.e., waste wax). Once the ski is cooled back down to an acceptable temperature, the technician must scrape the ski to remove the excess wax to achieve the optimal wax coat. The resulting waste wax is rather substantial and requires some clean up. In conclusion, the Wax Future machine's benefits are twofold, and include a reduction of time and effort for the technician as well as a significant reduction in waste wax that must be discarded.

A huge thanks to Jack Cherry and the technicians at both ski shops for making this happen!



Photo Credit: Connie Misket

Alta's Black Rosy-Finch Study

Alta is home to Black Rosy-Finches. A rare bird to see, the Black Rosy-Finch resides at high altitude in rugged terrain. Given its habitat, this bird species is one of the least studied in North America. As temperatures around the globe begin to rise, species that rely on higher elevation habitats and cooler temperatures are being pushed to higher elevations, resulting in habitat loss. It is important to understand the survival, movement patterns, and current population size of Black Rosy-Finches; without the proper knowledge, understanding, and baseline information, it is difficult to develop conservation efforts for the protection of this species.

Alta Ski Area, along with Wild Utah Project, Tracy Aviary, Utah State University, and the Utah Department of Natural Resources, have partnered in a study to gain the baseline information needed to keep these birds thriving. Using feeders with radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, birds that have been captured and tagged are recorded when they fly within a certain vicinity of a RFID feeder, allowing scientists to analyze and share information about these birds and their lifestyles. The scarcity of these birds is real: only ten birds were tagged last year during the pilot year of this study, so scientists are in luck when one of them decides to visit a feeder. Efforts to tag up to 100 additional birds are underway this year. (continued on next page)



“The ultimate test of man’s conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.”
- Gaylord Nelson



Photo Credit: Iz La Motte

While several feeders have been installed as part of this study, the feeder at Alta Ski Area is located at the top of the Collins lift on the Alta Ski Patrol building. Thanks to the Alta Ski Patrol for keeping the Collins feeder full. In addition, the Town of Alta houses a feeder on top of the Town of Alta building.

All information is recorded and shared with every single partner involved in this study, fostering a community of learning and building the invaluable baseline information needed to ensure the conservation of this species.

Birding on Skis

Our Birding on Skis tours led by Tracy Aviary and expert birders give a unique look into the wildlife here at Alta. We will be taking a good look at our Black Rosy-Finches, Chickadees, Stellar Jays, and many more feathered friends that call Alta home. Surveys will be held from 9 am to 12 pm on the 2nd Friday of every month to expand our bird list with non-breeding bird surveys at Alta. We hope you can make it!

Please note that all participants must be at least intermediate skiers and 12 years of age or older. Registration is required by noon on Thursday, prior to the survey, and is limited to the first 20 requests. Pre-registration required at this link ---> bit.ly/2qvejU2 [WinterBirdingRegistration](#). Thank you! For more information, email environment@alta.com.

Partnered by: Friends of Alta, Alta Ski Area, Tracy Aviary, and Alta Environmental Center

Upcoming Birding on Skis dates: February 14th, March 13th, April 10th

January—February Sustainability Events

If these highlighted sustainability events catch your eye, check out our full sustainability calendar [here](#).

- **Every Saturday and Sunday—Ski with a Ranger:** Every Saturday and Sunday, learn about our natural history, watershed and geology. Meet at the top of Sunnyside lift at 1:00 PM. [Learn More](#)
- **Jan. 25, Feb. 22, March 28, April 10— Snowshoe with a Naturalist:** Naturalist-led nature tours by Cottonwood Canyons Foundation to introduce you to the winter wonders of ALTA! Look for wildlife tracks in the snow and learn about animal adaptations, trees, and the history of Little Cottonwood Canyon and Alta! [Register Here](#)
- **Alta Community Enrichment:** ACE's mission is to create opportunities in arts, culture and education for the enhancement and well being of the Little Cottonwood Canyon community [Visit ACE's Website](#)
- **Second Friday of each Month—Birding on Skis:** Join Tracy Aviary this winter on skis in search of our feathered friends that call Alta home. Surveys will be held from 9 am to 12 pm on the 2nd Friday of every month to expand our bird list. [Register Here](#)

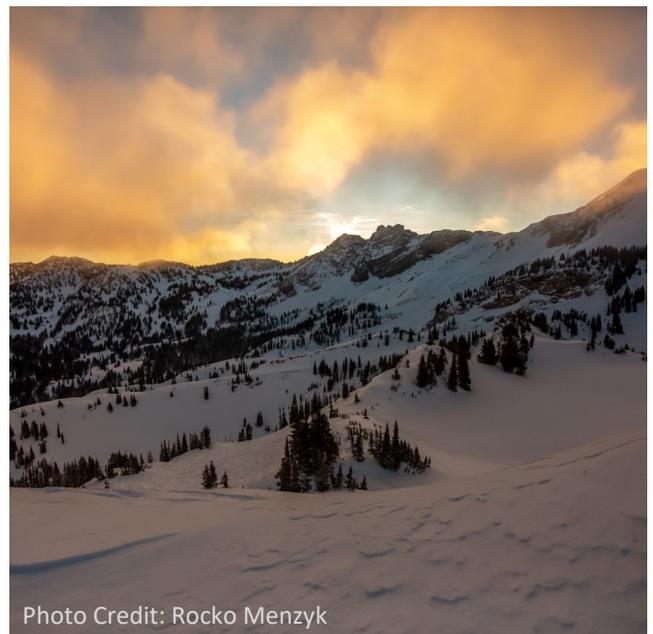


Photo Credit: Rocko Menzyk