



PRESS RELEASE

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# STEAMBOAT RECOGNIZED FOR INDUSTRY-LEADING ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO-WINTER 2010/2011**-One trip up the Gondola with views of the incredible Yampa Valley below will inspire action in protecting the environment and in Steamboat that environmental commitment is woven into every fabric of daily life. The Steamboat Ski Resort & Corporation has introduced industry-leading programs that have reshaped the environmental landscape in the Yampa Valley including its award-winning Zero Waste Initiative.

“Steamboat truly has become one of the premier leaders in the industry for implementing environmental initiatives,” said Chris Diamond, president and chief operating officer of the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation. “Steamboat employees create sustainable programs that span beyond the resort. It is only together and through the wise use of natural resources as well as the preservation and enhancement of the National Forest that Steamboat will go beyond providing just recreation; and, ensure a sound environmental experience for all who come in contact with the mountain, company and community.”

In 2010, Steamboat was recognized with the NSAA Silver Eagle for Recycling and Waste Reduction as a result of the resort’s new Zero Waste Initiative, which aims to eliminate all waste from resort Food & Beverage outlets with recycling, reusing and composting programs. During the inaugural year of the initiative, the resort saw a 62 percent landfill reduction. In addition to the ski industry recognition, Liz Wahl, director of Food & Beverage for the Steamboat Ski Resort & Corporation, was awarded the 2010 Colorado Recycler of the Year from the Colorado Recycling Association.

The Zero Waste Initiative combined with the resort’s award-winning area design, solid-waste recycling, comprehensive on-mountain natural & ecosystem resource management, protection programs and granting program has Steamboat setting a high standard for resort environmental programs. In addition, the resort works to enhance and promote collaboration and build partnerships throughout the entire Yampa Valley community.

## ZERO WASTE & SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

Steamboat Ski Area created the Zero Waste Initiative that focuses on composting for all organic material and paper products, recycling across all F&B outlets and provides reusable products. The resort teamed with the Milner landfill to create a pilot composting program for all of Routt County, and the resort continues to spread the message of waste reduction by working with local community organizations to help them adopt similar Zero Waste programs. In the inaugural year, the resort diverted more than 60% of waste from the landfill through recycling, composting and waste reduction measures.

“Zero Waste is making decisions that impact the environment from the beginning of the process” Wahl said. “By purchasing appropriate materials that can be recycled, reused or composted we are eliminating the amount of waste that goes into our landfills. We can turn organic materials into a resource for the future, which creates a cycle. When you put waste in the landfill, it stops the cycle.”

In addition to this initial push towards food waste, solids from the wastewater treatment plant and beetle-killed wood are also composted as part of a Recycling Resources Opportunities Grant for composting from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The goal is not only to eliminate waste, but to educate guests about environmental practices which they can take home with them, and in essence, continue the process. All receptacles are clearly labeled with recycling and composting instructions; and during high traffic weekends and events, a Green Team will assist people dispose of materials in the proper area.”



In addition to zero waste, Steamboat's commitment to environmental sustainability continues throughout the Food & Beverage division and all resort dining outlets. The following are only a sampling of what is taking place at the resort.

- Free Trade, Organic Coffee
- All Natural Milk
- Eliminated Transfats Five Years Ago
- New Thunderhead Deck Furniture Made Entirely from Recycled Materials
- To-Go Biodegradable Sugar Plastic (utensils & cups)
- Round-Up Room Conversion (80% Waste Reduction)
- Reusable Stainless Steel H<sub>2</sub>O Bottles & Coffee Cups
- Pilot Composting Program
- Bio-Bags/Reusable Bags For To-Go Items
- Eliminated Individual Condiments For Dispenser Version
- Recycle Coffee Grounds
- Recycled Paper Products (tissues, napkins, paper towels)
- Recycling (Front/Back Of House) For All Outlets
- Hemp Hats Worn By All Chefs
- Sustainable Organic & Farm-to-Table Ingredients/Products

The resort utilizes several local and Colorado companies for sustainable, organic and farm-to-table products including River Ranches, Grant Family Farms, Haystack Goat Cheese, Wingtime Sauce, Dean Martin Asian Sauce, Colorado-made gelato and vegetables from micro-greenhouse in Denver.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY, RENEWABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY

**2010 Silver Eagle Award:** Steamboat was recognized with the 2010 National Ski Area Association's Silver Eagle Award for Recycling and Waste Reduction due to its newly implemented Zero Waste Initiative, which aims to eliminate all waste from resort Food & Beverage outlets with recycling, reusing and composting programs. During the inaugural year of the initiative, the resort saw 62 percent landfill diversion rate and 73 percent diversion rate from recycling.

**Recycler of the Year:** The Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation's Food & Beverage Director, Liz Wahl was honored as the 2010 Recycler of the Year by the Colorado Association for Recycling (CAFR) during its annual Summit for Recycling held June 6-8, 2010 in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. CAFR is the leading independent, non-profit organization in Colorado that is actively working to promote and encourage recycling through programs that educate the public, local governments, businesses, and Colorado's elected officials.

**Green Energy Offsets Portion of Total Electric Requirements:** The Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation purchases renewable energy certificates to offset a portion of its total electricity requirements from green energy sources. Steamboat joins a select few ski resorts in the United States to reach this level of renewable energy usage. Steamboat's commitment has the equivalent environmental impact of preventing the release of 899,760 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

Steamboat has been recognized by the US Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership for its leadership in bringing new renewable energy to market. Green power is electricity that is generated from resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, and low-impact hydro facilities.



In addition, Steamboat's program has been recognized by The Green-e Renewable Energy Certification Program, the leading voluntary certification and verification program that sets standards for renewable electricity-based products in three markets for renewable energy: restructured, regulated, and tradable renewable certificates. Nationally, Green-e currently certifies 60 products that are sold by 100 marketers, utilities and brokers.

**Environmental Task Force:** The Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation recently instigated across all resort divisions an employee-driven, initiative-based task force responsible for creating a model resort environmental and sustainability program that reduces waste by controlling supply, educating users, building advocate groups and maximizing recovery.

**Environmental Chairlifts:** The Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation installed the Christie Peak Express, a high-speed six-person chairlift, replacing several base area lifts during the summer of 2007. In 2006, the resort installed Sunshine Express, a high-speed quad in Sunshine Bowl and in 2004, a Leitner-Poma of America fixed-grip triple chairlift, Burgess Creek triple. As a part of its long-standing commitment to the environment, the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation uses alternative energy to power all three chairlifts. Sunshine Express utilizes a combination of solar and wind renewable energy and is believed to be the only chairlift in the nation to be powered using solar energy. Christie Peak Express and Burgess Creek are powered entirely by renewable wind energy.

**Community Wide Zero Waste:** In summer 2009, Wahl directed the successful launch of a community Zero Waste initiative focused on the reduction and ultimate elimination of waste at five large-scale, public community events. In its inaugural year, these all-volunteer events educated approximately 15,000 citizens, businesses and visitors; unified existing environmental groups and efforts; and changed attendees' behaviors to minimize and eliminate waste. In 2010, with Wahl on the Board of the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council and at the helm of the organization's Zero Waste committee, the Zero Waste Initiative will triple in scope.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Water Conservation** - The resort has saved significant quantities of water through the use of low flush toilets and auto shut-off faucets. A low flush toilet uses approximately 64% less water than a regular 4.5-gallon fixture. Decreased use has also resulted in reduced wastewater volume discharge. Currently, 20,000 feet (3.78 miles) of primary snowmaking pipe is being installed that is rated to last an average of 50 years, twice as long as existing pipe and able to handle pressure upwards of 1,000 pounds per square inch. This pipe will essentially eliminate leaks and Steamboat becomes one of the first resorts in the country to use this technology by installing more than 70,000 feet (13+ miles/33km) of snowmaking pipe over the past three years. This year's total pipe length alone equates to stacking 36 Washington Monuments on top of each other.

**Energy Reduction:** Significant strides have been made to reduce energy usage and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across the resort. The snowmaking system has converted to high efficiency guns in many areas (tower guns on Heavenly Daze and Buddy's Run), compressors and sophisticated computer controls. The resort has transitioned to all 4-stroke snowmobile models, uses newer, state-of-the-art snowcats and has replaced kitchen equipment in on-mountain restaurants that are all more energy efficient. The resort utilizes recycled waste oil to heat its Slope Maintenance Facility and is in the midst of a comprehensive light bulb replacement project across the resort.

**Resort Public Transit:** SSRC operates a fleet of people movers to provide shuttle service from a variety of near site parking facilities to the ski resort as well as employee housing The Ponds at Steamboat. The shuttle system, along with the city bus system, transports the majority of guests from remote parking, downtown and area condominiums. These efforts reduce the vehicle miles traveled by guests and employees by approximately 1.2 million miles last year as well as reduced emissions and traffic congestion. Both the resort and city's transportation system is free.

**Resort Collateral:** SSRC produces marketing, sales, and resort collateral as well as food & beverage products using recycled paper and materials. In addition, the numbers of publications as well as the quantity of each publication have been reduced over the past several years moving to electronic versions. Regardless of the medium each piece devotes a segment to the encouragement of environmental consciousness; highlight environmental initiatives at the ski area, and the cooperative efforts with outside agencies.

**Uniforms:** For the 2009 summer, the resort's summer uniform shirt is made from 50% recycled products. In an effort to reuse and recycle, Steamboat donated 22 pallets (one full semi-truck) of uniforms (jackets, pants, vests & fleeces) to the Fort Peak Tribes, located in the northeast corner of Montana in the summer of 2007. In addition, old employee uniforms were sent to Yugoslavia in April 1999 in order to help refugees fleeing Kosovo. Nearly 2,000 items including waterproof parkas, vests, and ski pants, as well as sweaters, fleece vests and fleece pullovers, were sent overseas. Both shipments were airlifted by military planes to Yugoslavia and distributed by AmeriCares volunteers.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

**Educational Programs:** The resort's environmental education outreach programs extend to school and youth groups, the local community, employees and visitors to better help them understand and appreciate the alpine environment. With more than 20 specific efforts, from tree planting to creek rehabilitation and from monetary contributions to nature trails on the mountain, Steamboat along with its environmental partners makes education a daily commitment. These programs received national recognition with the 2002 Silver Eagle for their scope and impact.

**Interpretive Signs at Thunderhead:** A series of informative signs overlooking the Yampa Valley and the ski area were installed on the third floor of Thunderhead. These signs were designed in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and feature wildlife information, local history and points of interest.

**Guided Nature Tours:** Join one of the naturalists from Yampatika's Education Partnership for a free tour and receive interpretive information on the forest, mountain habitat and indigenous flora and fauna. Meet at the top of Why Not at 1:30pm on Tuesday & Thursday. Tours run from mid-December through March.

**Mesa Schoolhouse:** During the 1999 summer, Steamboat employees donated their time to paint the 83-year-old Mesa Schoolhouse at the foot of Rabbit Ears Pass on US. 40. Recently white with green trim, this "little red schoolhouse" was restored to its landmark red color. The one-room building was one of the first schools in Routt County and operated until 1959 when the district consolidated.

**Purchase of Development Rights:** This program allows ranchers and other landowners to sell all future development rights on their land to a conservation trust. In Routt County, PDR established a fund that helps buy ranch development rights, placing the property in protected status. Several ranchers have already taken advantage of this program, ensuring that the wide-open spaces of the Yampa Valley are preserved forever. Tom Baer, the resort's videographer, produced a 20-minute video that was instrumental in convincing Routt County voters to pass the PDR proposal. This particular program is generating national attention and has become a model for other communities.

**Carpenter Ranch/Nature Conservancy Project:** Resort staff traded their regular jobs for hammers and paintbrushes for a day to fix up the Nature Conservancy's Carpenter Ranch. The staff contributed 600 hours of labor in just one day. This project

demonstrated the resort's strong community spirit and its commitment to the Yampa Valley's unique cultural heritage and natural values. The Carpenter Ranch is located 20 miles west of Steamboat Springs in Hayden, CO.

**Tree Planting Project at Rough Rider Basin:** Through a joint project with the U. S. Forest Service and the Boy Scouts of America, more than 800 spruce seedlings were planted at the ski area's kids-only winter adventure park, Rough Rider Basin. Resort staff teamed up with area Cub and Boy Scouts for a day of planting, forestry and environmental awareness.

**Butcherknife Creek Rehabilitation:** The resort donated personnel and heavy equipment to the Strawberry Park Elementary School rehabilitation program at Butcherknife Creek. Re-hab included regrading and revegetating stream banks, as well as improving habitat for fish and wildlife. The fourth and fifth graders learned about the importance and fragility of the environment.

**2002 Silver Eagle Award:** Steamboat was honored with the Silver Eagle Award for Excellence in Environmental Education. The resort edged out finalists, Vail and Whistler/Blackcomb, for the award. The Golden and Silver Eagle Awards were established in 1993 by Mountain Sports Media to recognize and encourage the environmental achievements of resorts.

**Routt County Woolens:** The vast amounts of snow that blanket the high country of Colorado make Steamboat Springs a world class ski resort and also produce some of the nation's cleanest wool. From the mountain meadows, river valleys and rolling sage country of northwest Colorado, Routt County Woolens, LLC brings to you the original, natural, "miracle fiber" used in making these premium quality wool products. Wool is naturally water and soil resistant, will keep you warm and cozy, and is an all-natural fiber made by Mother Nature herself. These American-made products are created with high quality standards in an effort to supply you with a true keepsake of the American West. In fact, Routt County Woolen blankets have been presented to Steamboat Grand owners and purchased by the ski area for special events, functions & gifts. [www.coloradowool.net](http://www.coloradowool.net)

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP

**Mountain Pine Beetle:** The mountain pine beetle is affecting the western region of the United States and Canada, including Colorado. The beetle is part of nature's eco-cycle, which typically sees its effect every 20 to 30 years. A dramatic change has taken place across the lower mountain as a result of extensive pine beetle mitigation. For the better part of a decade, the resort has been dealing with this epidemic moving from individual tree treatment to mass removal of dead trees. The ski area enjoys a diverse forest where Steamboat is fortunate that the forest cover on the mountain is comprised primarily of Engelmann Spruce, Subalpine Fir, Lodgepole and Aspen as well as a few Douglas fir. Fifty acres of trees have been removed below Rough Rider Basin and another 30 acres on the Thunderhead Express and Burgess Creek lift lines are currently being removed.

**Area Design:** Techniques such as trail edge feathering, scalloping, and glading are utilized by SSRC to reduce the visual impact of cross cutting ski trails on Mt. Werner. Prior to upgrading or expanding trails, a visuals management plan is developed which addresses the ultimate visual compatibility with surrounding areas. Today, computers are utilized to determine visual, water and soil impacts before a single piece of dirt is touched.

**Trail Development:** Most of the hiking and biking trails on the mountain were built by hand to minimize impacts. Trail design and improvements are based upon environmental factors such as wind throw, exposure, and maintenance of healthy tree stands, wildlife concerns, and visual impacts. The integrity of natural water courses and wetlands are protected and buffered. In 1992, horses were used to haul heavy equipment during new lift construction, as opposed to building new roads for vehicle traffic. Since 1996, new chairlifts have been installed using helicopters lessening the demands for new roads and minimizing impacts to surrounding areas. In addition, the resort used a "light on the land" approach when developing Pioneer Ridge and Morningside Park expansion areas. Essentially this translates into minimizing short and long term impacts to the ecosystem, as well as through the best management practices, using design standards that provide for high quality aesthetics and land management.

**Habitat Enhancement:** Habitats that support bird and other wildlife populations are studied so that improvements can be made. SSRC specialists count Neotropical birds each spring. Currently, SSRC is working with other agencies, exploring possibilities for improving nesting habitat for migratory birds. A winter bird count was completed during 1994. SSRC employees, with assistance from the Forest Service, performed a Pine Martin survey using trip cameras in 1993/94. With an increased awareness of habitats that are preferred by certain species, SSRC has been able to work toward maintaining a balance between changes made to the mountain and the integrity of natural habitats.

**Re-vegetation Program:** Special re-vegetation practices, which utilize natural grasses and plants provide improved wildlife habitat for many foraging species. SSRC is an active member of the Colorado Native Plant Society and has an ongoing employee education program in place.

**Slash Management:** Where pertinent, management practices on the mountain include stacking low brush or slash, or dispersing brush to provide habitat for the many species that thrive on this type of habitat. This practice also serves to slow surface runoff, return soil nutrients, and provide shade for new forest growth.

**Fuels Management:** An aggressive program to minimize fire hazard is ongoing. This includes removing potential fire fuels, the use of spark arrestors on vehicles and machinery, and general education of mountain users. Several resort personnel have

attained their red card certification from the US Forest Service as well as interagency cooperative programs and training has been implemented. In addition, smoking is prohibited across the entire ski area.

**Mountain Project Day:** The annual spring on-mountain project day, now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, has been organized with more than 100 resort employees working on projects, gathering litter and other materials from across the area. On average nearly 100 gallons of material is removed or recycled from the resort this day.

## ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTING

**Ski Corp. Environmental Fund:** Steamboat is one of a handful of resorts nationally to establish a significant granting program based on environmental needs. Since its inaugural year in 2004, nearly 50 projects have been granted more than \$240,000, representing a variety of nonprofit organizations across the Yampa Valley.

2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04	Total
\$20,000	\$27,000	\$56,552	\$39,715	\$55,028	\$29,300	\$14,330	\$241,925

**Old Chair Sale:** Through the sale of 175 chairs from the old Christie II, Headwall and Preview lifts, the resort raised \$43,750 that went to the Ski Corp. Environmental Fund, housed with the Yampa Valley Community Foundation. Selling out in less than two hours, each chair was offered to the public for a minimum donation of \$250. These three chairlifts were replaced with the Christie Peak Express, a new Leitner-Poma high-speed six-person chairlift, before the 2007/08 season.

## AWARDS

**NSAA National Environmental Awards:** Steamboat has received national recognition with several environmental awards as well as being a finalist for many other awards. Established in 1993, the Golden & Silver Eagle Awards for Environmental Excellence recognize the environmental achievements of ski areas each year by NSAA, the trade association for ski area owners and operators, representing 329 alpine resorts in North America.

- 2010 NSAA Silver Eagle Award for Recycling and Waste Reduction
- 2003 NSAA Silver Eagle Award for Stakeholder Relations--Finalist
- 2002 NSAA Silver Eagle Award for Environmental Education
- 2000 NSAA Silver Eagle Award for Area Visual Impacts--Finalist
- 1998 NSAA Silver Eagle Award for Environmental Excellence in Area Design
- 1994 NSAA Golden Eagle Award for Overall Environmental Excellence in Ski Areas--Finalist
- 1993 NSAA Silver Eagle Award for Recycling Program

**Colorado Recycler of the Year:** The Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation's Food & Beverage Director, Liz Wahl was honored as the 2010 Recycler of the Year by the Colorado Association for Recycling (CAFR) during its annual Summit for Recycling held June 6-8, 2010 in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

## SUSTAINABLE SLOPES & KEEP WINTER COOL PROGRAMS

**Keep Winter Cool:** A partnership between the National Ski Association of America and the Natural Resources Defense Council resulted in Keep Winter Cool, a campaign to lead the fight against Global Climate Change. Learn more - [www.keepwintercool.org](http://www.keepwintercool.org).

**Sustainable Slopes Program:** The National Ski Areas Association developed an environmental charter, Sustainable Slopes, which Steamboat is an active participant. Steamboat celebrated Sustainable Slopes Day and the resort's environmental programs this past season, focusing on several activities and special events including HOV (high occupancy vehicles) rewards program; environmental kiosk exhibit; on-mountain Eco-Tours and environmental partners. [www.nsa.org](http://www.nsa.org)

## PARTNERS

**US Forest Service:** Recreation on this public land is provided by a unique partnership between the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation and the Routt/Medicine Bow National Forest. The resort is committed to the wise use of natural resources, as well as the preservation and enhancement of the National Forest. Join Steamboat in its commitment to preserve this special environment by helping keep National Forest lands beautiful.

**Partnerships:** SSRC fosters creative partnerships with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, the American Birding Association, and various community organizations such as the Yampatika, working toward proper stewardship of the forest and ecosystem management. The resort also participates in fundraising events and contributes to a variety of non-profit organizations including the Nature Conservancy.