



## Sustainability on the Slopes

Resources for Community Facilitators

**This PDF Designed by:**

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Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability  
of future generations to meet their needs.

## **Instructions for Sustainability on the Slopes Bulletin Board Assembly**

- This board will work best with a “wintery” color scheme, such as blue, white, and black.
- Cut out individual pieces of text and put them on the board for best results. Cut out related pieces of text that are on separate lines and arrange them together. For example, the bullet points under the “Problems Associated with Skiing” section should clearly go together.
- The discussions of problems associated with ski areas and the steps that can be taken to reduce ecological damage should be placed side-by-side, around the center of the board, as this is the main focus of the bulletin board. The first section of text should go toward the top and center, while the other pieces, which showcase things that are being done to address this issue, can be distributed around the rest of the bulletin board.
- Certain images should go near related pieces of text. For example, the image of the snowmaking machine should go near the mention of it in the “Problems associated with skiing” section, and the image of the wind turbine should be placed near text mentioning Jiminy Peak Ski Area.

Ever thought about how your favorite winter sports impact the environment?

From deforestation, excessive energy consumption, and tough-to-get to locations that attract SUVs, ski areas are notoriously environmentally unfriendly. Some, however, are looking to change their ways, and you too can help lessen the negative ecological impacts.

## Some Environmental Problems Associated with Skiing and Snowboarding:

- Tree Removal and slope grading
- Some snowmaking machines use chemicals to expedite the freezing process. When this artificial snow melts, the chemicals leach into the soil or become runoff along with

the rest of the melt, harming aquatic wildlife. Furthermore, snowmaking draws water from sources during the late fall and early winter, when there is little recharge, and the aquatic populations need water the most.

- Litter is often found on the ski slopes. An orange peel takes 2 years to decompose. A cigarette butt could take 5 years to degrade.

- Developing a ski area disturbs the wildlife population. The Canadian Lynx, found in Colorado, is an endangered species and its numbers are dwindling more and more every year.
- Ski areas often rely on cheaper, imported labor, thus contributing less to the welfare of the local economy.

## Some Steps You Can Take to Help Mitigate Ecological Damage When You Hit the Slopes:

- Take the train in stead of driving to a ski area. Amtrak offers wintertime deals to several ski areas throughout the West.
- Give cross-country skiing a try. It requires little grading of the slopes, thus causes less deforestation and ecological disruption.
- Don't litter! Follow the "carry-in, carry-out" policy.

- Stay out of restricted areas! These areas often protect the mountain's wildlife. Skiing or boarding in these areas could damage the natural habitat.
- While on your ski trip, eat locally. Not only will you lessen the carbon footprint of the ski resort, but you will also be respecting the local economy and lifestyle.
  - Using the Ski Area Citizens' Coalition Environmental Scorecard, visit the most

sustainable mountains and avoid those ranked low on the scorecard.

The Keep Winter Cool Campaign is a joint effort of the National Ski Areas Association and the Natural Resources Defense Council which encourages ski areas and their patrons to practice eco-friendly habits when hitting the slopes. The Keep Winter Cool Campaign acknowledges the problems global warming can cause for ski areas and the environment in general, and seeks to educate skiers and snowboarders about possible solutions. Olympic skier Picabo Street and snowboarder Ross Powers are just a

couple of the athletes who have voiced support for this campaign.

The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) in 2000 developed *Sustainable Slopes: The Environmental Charter for Ski Areas* which states its commitment to “improving environmental performance in all of our operations and managing our areas to allow for their continued enjoyment for future generations”. The charter targets water use, energy conservation, reduce, reduction, and recycling, and wildlife protection among other areas of environmental concern. In 2008, it rated Jiminy Peak in Massachusetts the most environmentally-friendly ski area in the U.S.

The Ski Area Citizens' Coalition's Environmental Scorecard rates ski areas in the Western United States in terms of their sustainability. It focuses on energy, wildlife, and deforestation issues. Its top three most sustainable ski areas for the 2008-2009 season were Aspen and Buttermilk Mountain, both in Colorado, and Sundance in Utah. The three worst were Colorado's Copper Mountain, and Sun Valley and Tamarack in Idaho.

## Here's What Some Mountains Have Been Doing to Green Their Operations:

- Jiminy Peak in Massachusetts installed a wind turbine which will supply the ski area with one-third of all its power needs.
- Mad River Glen (Vermont) doesn't make any artificial snow and makes an effort to repair its old lifts and facilities rather than rebuild them using new materials.
- Beaver Creek in Colorado installed an 8 person gondola to connect its new high-end green architecture resort to the mountain, eliminating the need for a gasoline-powered shuttle bus.

- By using alternative energy sources such as biomass and wind, Jackson Hole (Wyoming) has been able to offset over 15% of its carbon dioxide emissions, and has plans in place to continue to expand this percentage.
- Whistler, the site of the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, is using green design elements its construction, aims to reduce waste by 540 tons, and is reducing energy consumption.



Snow-making requires lots of energy and water, and sometimes uses harmful chemicals in the process



The Canadian Lynx, an endangered species found in the Colorado Rockies



Cross-country skiing: a fun, more sustainable alternative to downhill skiing or snowboarding



Olympic gold medalist Ross Powers



Olympic gold medalist Picabo Street



The wind turbine which Jiminy Peak uses for its energy needs





Aspen, CO: the most sustainable ski area according to the Ski Area Citizens' Coalition Scorecard



# SUSTAINABLE SLOPES

The environmental charter for ski areas

## WHAT YOU CAN DO 6 Steps To Sustainable Slopes

- 1. PACK IT IN — PACK IT OUT**  
Leave nature how you found it.
- 2. RESPECT WILDLIFE**  
by observing trail closures and ski area boundaries.
- 3. SHARE A RIDE**  
so we can breathe fresh air and see the views.
- 4. BE CONSIDERATE**  
of others' experiences and let nature's sounds prevail.
- 5. GET INVOLVED**  
in your local resort or community's environmental programs.
- 6. SPREAD THE WORD**  
to your liftmates, friends and family.

[www.nsaa.org](http://www.nsaa.org)

Get online at [www.nsaa.org](http://www.nsaa.org) for participating resorts and events that promote Sustainable Slopes.



Text:

<http://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/Copy102162.htm>  
<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/ski-green-ideas-for-eco-friendly-skiing.html>  
<http://www.nwf.org/canadalynx/>  
<http://skigreenguide.com/?cat=35>  
[http://www.nextstepminnesota.org/res\\_detail.cfm?id=1382&xx](http://www.nextstepminnesota.org/res_detail.cfm?id=1382&xx)  
<http://www.skiareacitizens.com/>  
<http://www.fastcompany.com/articles/2007/02/green-ski-resorts.html>

Images:

[http://www.carterindustries.ca/Snowmaking%20\(1\).jpg](http://www.carterindustries.ca/Snowmaking%20(1).jpg)  
[http://www.flatrock.org.nz/topics/older\\_and\\_under/assets/canadian\\_lynx.jpg](http://www.flatrock.org.nz/topics/older_and_under/assets/canadian_lynx.jpg)  
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