




Snowbird Energy Efficiency & Environmental Responsibility

Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort recognizes its responsibility to efficiently use resources. The Resort's commitment to reducing energy consumption also brings economic advantages while promoting a healthier atmosphere. Providing a cleaner, safer and healthier environment for our guests and employees is a welcome component to using less resources and preserving the environment.

With the rising cost of fuel and energy, reducing consumption is imperative to staying viable. Using less energy reduces emissions from power plants and conserves resources. Our commitment to reducing electricity usage has begun with lighting projects that replace old incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs that last longer and use a fraction of the power. Upgrading linear fluorescent fixtures to highly efficient T8 and T5 bulbs and electronic ballasts is another great fix. Updating heater controls, motors and programming thermostats in the lift shacks and drive buildings saves power. Managing airflow in buildings creates a more comfortable atmosphere while reducing energy draw. Installing air handlers and heat exchanger exhaust fans is another way to positively update buildings and kitchens.

Snowbird is choosing to test a blend of biodiesel in vehicle engines. Biodiesel has a clear price advantage at the pump. Other bonuses include reduced emissions, less dependence on finite, toxic crude oil and lowering maintenance costs. Reduced emissions keep the air we breathe and the snow we ski on cleaner. Cleaner snow results in cleaner water, which is safer for all downstream life. 

In the mid-70s, Snowbird's owner Dick Bass purchased land in the North Fork of American Fork Canyon and with it the ruins of the Pacific Mine and Mill. Since then, Snowbird has been looking at cleaning up the site, but federal law all but prevented private action. Today, a unique partnership with Trout Unlimited has made reclamation of the Pacific Mine possible. The Pacific Mine is located above a wetlands area that was formerly the Pacific Mill tailings pond. In 2004, a quantity of toxic sludge was removed from the site before it was shaped into a series of six oxidation ponds. The sludge was contained in a repository down the road. The oxidation ponds now collect runoff from the waste rock pile and adits above the creek help settle out heavy metals leeching from them. Volunteer Eagle Scouts planted willows around the perimeter of the ponds to further aid in removal of toxins (wetlands vegetation acts to sorb minerals from the water, contributing immensely to human efforts).

Recycling saves resources. When high winds blew down some beautiful trees, they were transformed into useful flower planters with a plaque to commemorate their glorious lives. Recycling paper, cans and bottles saves tremendous amounts of energy. Burning waste restaurant grease in oil heaters provides heat and reduced emissions.

Maintaining a natural environment is a top priority. With the addition of a new high-speed detachable quad chairlift, we felt it necessary to maintain the ridgeline viewshed but also required access to the other side of the mountain. Access to Mineral Basin through a tunnel instead of placing the top of the lift on the beautiful ridge accomplished all goals.

Energy efficiency and environmental stewardship is an important responsibility and Snowbird aims to help through a variety of projects and efforts. Snowbird's ongoing commitment has been awarded The Skiing Company, a Times Mirror Corporation, Golden Eagle Award for overall environmental excellence. Snowbird has also received the Silver Eagle Award for excellence in environmental education and two Silver Eagle Awards for water conservation and waste water management. When the snow melts, water flows downhill from where we work and play in the mountains. It is therefore imperative that we lead by positive example.