

CHAPTER 5

CUSTOMER, EMPLOYEE, AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In practice, many of the environmental strategies discussed in this notebook occur “behind the scenes.” That is, with some exceptions, most pollution prevention (P2) and energy efficiency (E2) practices are not obvious to ski area customers and even many “rank and file” ski area employees. While behind-the-scene changes may anchor a ski area’s environmental improvement efforts, programs focused on customers, employees, and community are an essential component to a comprehensive ski area EMS (defined in Chapter 2). Moreover, NSAA’s Sustainable Slopes features education and outreach as a core principle, stated as follows:



- Use the natural surroundings as a forum for promoting environmental education and increasing environmental sensitivity and awareness
- Develop outreach that enhances the relationship between the ski area and stakeholders and ultimately benefits the environment

This chapter provides examples of how Arapahoe Basin (A-Basin) and Aspen Skiing Company (ASC), the two ski areas participating in the Colorado project, implemented customer, employee, and community environmental programs. For consistency with the focus of this document on resource consumption and waste generations, examples in this chapter exclude programs addressing the natural environment around ski areas (such as SKE-COLOGY™, a NSAA and U.S. Forest Service collaborative effort to increase conservation education programs. For more information about SKE-COLOGY™, visit <http://snowmonsters.com/skeecology.cfm>).

5.1 CUSTOMER PROGRAMS

Heightened skier awareness of environmental issues can do more than improve solid waste recycling in restaurants – better awareness can stimulate participation in other customer programs that can improve a ski area’s environmental performance. Examples described in this section include printing trail maps on recycled paper, creating “green-cards” for skiers, and transportation programs. Each of these programs is briefly described below.

5.1.1 Trail Maps On Recycled Paper

Many ski areas use recycled paper for various purposes; however, trail maps require special consideration because they are exposed to snow and subject to rough handling and folding. Nevertheless, papers suitable for trail maps are available that contain up to 50 percent post-consumer waste content. General information about recycled paper is included in Chapter 6.

CASE STUDY: ASC TRAIL MAPS GO GREEN



Until the 1998/1999 ski season, ASC's trail maps were printed on glossy, high-quality, 10 percent recycled content (no post-consumer waste content) paper. This was an obvious "target" identified during the P2 assessments completed at ASC as a participant in the CDPHE ski areas project. During the summer of 1999, ASC personnel responsible for producing trail maps were skeptical about the quality and durability of paper with recycled content, but agreed to try paper with higher recycled content. In the 2000/2001 season, ASC printed all of its trail maps (over 300,000) with soy inks on chlorine-free paper with 100 percent recycled content, 50 percent post-consumer waste. The cost for using this paper (New Leaf Paper, see www.newleafpaper.com) was 10 to 20 percent higher than if ASC used paper with no or low recycled content; however, ASC accepted this "premium" by printing fewer maps and because it is a highly visible expression of its environmental policies (ASC prints the recycled content on the trail maps).

ASC also began using recycled content paper for its brochures and cut the volume its orders. In 1999, ASC noticed that it had stacks of leftover brochures. Although the excess brochures were recycled, ASC felt that it should focus on source reduction; that is, printing fewer brochures initially. As a result, ASC cut the print runs, eliminating 4.8 million sheets of paper. According to ASC, in one year the combination of using recycled paper and printing fewer brochures saved 583 trees and eliminated 52,848 pounds of solid waste, 58,147 gallons of water, 75,844 kilowatt hours of electricity, and 96,061 pounds of greenhouse gases.

For the 2000/2001 season, A-Basin and Vail Resorts also produced trail maps with 50 and at least 20 percent post-consumer waste, respectively.

5.1.2 Promoting Environmental Awareness

Both ASC and A-Basin recently created environmental awareness devices such as cards, table tents, and environmental kiosks targeting skiers. These devices convey information about the ski area's environmental programs and what skiers can do to protect the environment while at the ski area and at home. For the 2000/2001 ski season, ASC created and printed 3,000 "Green-Cards" (small enough to fit in a wallet) to improve skier awareness about environmental issues. ASC revised the card and printed 3,000 for the 2001/2002 ski season; the content of the revised card is shown on the following page.

In addition, through the Sustainable Slopes program (see Chapter 2), NSAA is actively promoting skier awareness of how they can contribute to environmental protection. NSAA's "6 Steps to Sustainable Slopes" for skiers is also shown on the following page.



ASPEN SKIING COMPANY

Green Card – Front Side

The environment is out business.
We hope you want to make it your business, too.

For more information, visit
www.aspensnowmass.com/environment

5 WAYS ASPEN SKIING COMPANY IS HELPING PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

1. The Cirque lift on Snowmass is entirely wind-powered.
2. Our employee-run Environment Foundation has donated \$360,000 to environmental protection over four years.
3. Energy saving projects have cut 350,000 lbs of CO₂ emissions annually, helping to protect our climate.
4. The Sundeck Restaurant on Aspen Mountain is one of the first certified green buildings in the U.S., and is partly powered by wind.
5. Our brochures and trail maps are printed on 50% post-consumer, recycled, chlorine free paper.



ASPEN SKIING COMPANY

Green Card – Back Side

5 WAYS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE IN ASPEN/SNOWMASS

1. Ride our free RFTA bus system.
2. Ask your hotel NOT to wash your linens daily.
3. Please turn off heat and lights when leaving your room.
4. Please recycle #1 and #2 plastic, glass, and aluminum in our on-mountain bins. No cups, please!
5. Educate yourself with a naturalist-led snowshoe tour at Aspen or Snowmass Mountain.

5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THE PLANET

1. Drive an efficient car, take mass transit, carpool, walk, and bike.
2. Weatherize your house, install an efficient showerhead, compact fluorescent bulb, and recycle.
3. Contact elected representatives about environmental issues, and VOTE.
4. Shop locally, and support green businesses.
5. Contact your local utility to buy clean, renewable energy for your home.



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

Get online at www.nsaa.org for participating resorts and events that promote Sustainable Slopes.

5.1.3 Transportation Programs

One of the largest energy uses and environmental impacts associated with the ski industry is due to transportation to and from ski areas. Additionally, transportation around ski areas and the local community often contributes to serious air quality and congestion issues. The CDPHE ski areas project that developed this Handbook did not focus on transportation because the issues involved are often larger than the typical ski area can address by itself and require a unique solution for each area depending on many factors.

Ski areas are encouraged to make existing development and especially new developments as safe and friendly for pedestrians (and bikes in the summer) as possible. Ski areas are also encouraged to work with local and regional governments to provide seamless transit service to reduce the need for private autos with no or few passengers. This can be done in a variety of ways including carpooling incentives (see the case studies below), employee housing, employee van pools, various sizes of shuttle buses, and easy access to bicycles in the summer. The air quality impacts of ski area vehicles can also be reduced by the use of alternative fuels such as natural gas or oxygenated fuels (see Section 7.10).

Examples of ski area mass transit programs are included in the first annual report on Sustainable Slopes dated June 2001 and in the NSAA Green Room (see www.nsaa.org/environ/index.asp). These programs are vital to preserving air quality in mountain valleys where air pollutants, especially particulates, are easily trapped by common winter weather conditions. Additional information on potential solutions to transportation and air quality issues is available at the following websites:

<http://www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/newslets/news1198.html#efficient>
http://www.epa.gov/otaq/transp/publicat/pub_fact.htm
<http://www.greenfleets.org/>

CASE STUDY: A-BASIN IMPLEMENTS CARPOOLING REWARD PROGRAM



A-Basin rewards skiers that carpool (with four or more per car) with a 30 percent discount on lift ticket prices. The skiers are required to report together to the ticket office for their discounted lift ticket. To further encourage carpooling, A-Basin also operates a “Rideboard” on its web site (<http://environment.arapahoebasin.com/ride.html>) for skiers seeking rides or with car space available.

CASE STUDY: KEYSTONE IMPLEMENTS CARPOOLING SWEEPSTAKES PROGRAM



Beginning in the 2001/2002 ski season, Keystone is implementing a carpool sweepstakes as a carpool incentive. Ski area patrons that have traveled to the ski area with at least 4 people in the vehicle can mail in a post card that will automatically enter them in a monthly drawing held at the end of each month and a grand prize sweepstakes drawing to be held on Earth Day, April 20, 2002. Prizes include:

- | Monthly Prize | Grand Prize |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • 1 pair of skis or a snowboard | • 4 2002/2003 Keystone season passes |
| • 1-day Keystone lift ticket | • 4 pairs of skis or snowboards |
| • 1-day of free parking at Keystone | • 1 2002/2003 parking pass |

For more information, call the Keystone Environmental Department at (970) 496-3645.

5.2 EMPLOYEE PROGRAMS

As with any corporate program or initiative, employees must be aware that (1) the company is “serious” about the program and (2) widespread employee participation is a critical success factor. There are numerous opportunities and strategies for involving employees in a ski area’s environmental efforts; examples range from training to employee-sponsored environmental events like adopt-a-highway, tree planting, and trail restoration projects. Some innovative employee programs at ASC are described below, others can be found in the NSAA’s Sustainable Slopes Annual Report and its electronic “Green Room” (link from www.nsaa.org).

Training Employees Early!

During employee orientation at Vail Resorts, each employee is given a reusable mug and shown a video featuring Vail Resorts’ Chief Operating Officers emphasizing their commitment to sustainable operations. The purpose of presenting this information at orientation is to reinforce Vail Resorts’ commitment to and support of sustainable activities by its organization and all employees.

CASE STUDY: ASC AND A-BASIN ESTABLISH EMPLOYEE-FUNDED “ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATIONS”



In 1998, ASC employees founded the Environment Foundation, a non-profit employee organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the regional environment. A twelve-member Board of Directors comprised of ASC employees governs the Foundation. It is funded primarily through a volunteer payroll deduction plan where each dollar contributed to the Foundation is matched by a contribution from the Aspen Valley Community Foundation (a local nonprofit) and ASC. With employees donating as little as one dollar a week and with those donations doubled through matching funds, ASC has granted over \$360,000 in 4 years to numerous local environmental organizations or efforts.

The Environment Foundation funds projects that provide environmental educational opportunities, foster responsible stewardship of natural resources, protect mountain ecosystems, or preserve and create unique opportunities for outdoor recreation. Projects must be innovative, have measurable results, and there must be a community or regional need. The Foundation board looks for programs with a provocative, direct-action agenda for change and a strategic plan for achieving the organization's goals, and is backed by a strong citizen support. For more information about ASC’s Environmental Foundation, visit www.skiaspen.com/environment.

A-Basin also created an employee-sponsored Environmental Fund wherein employees can voluntarily make pre-tax donations by payroll deductions, which A-Basin matches up to \$1,000 per year per employee. Each December, employees on the Environmental Fund Committee consider distributions of funds to local environmental organization. Eligible environmental organizations must have activities in Summit County (where A-Basin is located), be non-profit, and have values consistent with A-Basin’s environmental policy. For more information about A-Basin’s Environmental Fund, see <http://environment.arapahoebasin.com/fund.html>.

CASE STUDY: ASC PUBLISHES “THE GREEN LETTER”



The ASC environmental manager produces and distributes a 1-page monthly environmental newsletter known as “The Green Letter.” The purpose of the newsletter is to keep employees informed about environmental issues and actions associated with ASC. Some example topics in past issues of The Green Letter include:

- History of ASC’s hazardous waste generation
- Announcements of environmental awards for ASC
- Energy and water efficient laundry machines in employee housing
- Local beef purchasing initiative
- Environment Foundation updates
- Company-wide recycling updates
- Upcoming events

In addition, each issue of The Green Letter contains a section called ‘Eco-Star Performers.’ This section recognizes ASC employees for particular actions that protect the environment; examples include:

- Implementing a fluorescent light bulb recycling program
- Switching to recycled content trail maps and brochures
- Implementing and overseeing recycling programs
- Reducing printing requirements
- Creating environmental web page
- Organizing highway cleanup efforts

5.3 COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Ski areas have numerous opportunities to become involved in local, regional, national, and international community programs. Two community programs implemented by ASC are described below.

CASE STUDY: UNIFORMS TO KOSOVO AND HUNGARY



In October 1999, in collaboration with Refugee Direct Aid, a Denver-based not-for-profit relief organization, ASC shipped 189 boxes of uniforms to Kosovo. The boxes contained roughly 5,000 ski school sweaters, pants and jackets, fleece outfits, and insulated Gore-Tex parkas – clothing that ASC “retires” about every 6 years in the course of normal operations.

The shipment was coordinated by the ASC Environmental Affairs Department, which wanted to keep the uniforms from being thrown away. Domestic uniform donation was not considered due to concerns over donated uniforms “reappearing” on skiers at the ski area. NATO peacekeeping troops escorted the shipment to distribution points. Most of the uniforms were donated to 739 needy families around the village of Orahovac, where many of the houses were severely damaged or were completely destroyed. Also in October 1999, ASC made a second shipment of 3,000 pieces of clothing to Hungary, where floods left many villagers destitute and homeless.

CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



ASC's Environmental Scholarship Program began in 1999. Each year, it rewards five local high-school seniors for demonstrating outstanding environmental stewardship through research, hands-on work, partnerships with local organizations, or other environmental initiatives. The purpose of the \$5,000 scholarship is to foster creative environmentalism among young people, encourage related work in college and beyond, improve and protect the environment, and draw attention to important causes.

CASE STUDY: SPRUCE UP COLORADO



One day each spring, every adopt-a-highway group from Vail Pass to Dotsero, including Vail Resorts, participates in the highway cleanup activities. At the end of the day, the 45-mile stretch of highway is lined with orange trash bags from the cleanup activities, reminding drivers of the cleanup effort and hopefully discouraging their littering habits.