



# Sustainability—Green Resorts

*Contributed by Catherine Ohl*

With sprawling mountainside villages, water-guzzling snow machines, and high-powered chairlifts, it's no secret operating a ski resort use lots of valuable resources.

But in recent years, mountains around the country have started taking steps to reduce their environmental footprints by switching to renewable energy, banning single-use plastics, installing water stations, upgrading to water-saving snowmaking machines, and incentivizing skiers to arrive by public transportation, electric cars, or carpools. This is all right and good, but is it enough?

These and other ski resorts are now pushing the envelope, environmentally speaking.

photo by Jeremy Swanson, Aspen



## Aspen Skiing Company

Aspen has long been a leader for its climate change advocacy and forward-thinking environmental operations.

On the ground, the company captures waste methane from a local coal mine to generate carbon-negative electricity to help power the resort and built an industry-leading solar arrays and LEED-certified mountaintop restaurants.

Aspen was a strong advocate for electric services company Xcel Energy's plan to close two Colorado coal plants and replace them with wind and solar.



## Diamond Peak, NV

This 655-acre community-owned ski area on Lake Tahoe's North Shore became one of the first mountains in the country to receive a Stoke certification, a new sustainability accreditation for the ski & surf tourism industries.

Diamond offers shuttles from town to the slopes, electric vehicle charging stations, water bottle filling stations, a children's coloring book featuring plants and animals native to the resort, and millions of dollars of investment into local watershed restoration. Plus, the resort hopes to run entirely on renewable energy by next year.



## Taos Ski Resort, NM

In 2017, Taos Ski Valley became the first ski resort in the world designated as a B Corp, a strict certification process that measures a for-profit company's social and environmental performance, ranging from employee benefits to energy and waste reduction.

Taos has set a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020. The resort upgraded their snowmaking machines, added electric vehicles, and built a geothermal heating and cooling system for the newly built base hotel just steps from the new high-speed quad lift. ■