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## **KEEP WINTER COOL: Ski Areas Team With Conservation Group to Fight Global Warming**

### **Operators Spotlight Bottom Line & Environmental Concerns, Lead By Example in Drive for Clean Energy Solutions**

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Denver, Colorado (February 20, 2004) -- This is a great ski season, and the people who run America's ski areas want to see many more just like it. That's why they are teaming up with a top conservation group for Keep Winter Cool, an innovative campaign to fight global warming. Dozens of resorts from coast to coast are educating guests about potential impacts on snow sports, spotlighting solutions, and urging their elected officials to get serious about fixing the problem.

This weekend kicks off the second season of Keep Winter Cool, a joint effort by NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA). They say global warming is a bottom line issue for the \$3 billion ski industry and its employees, as well as a key environmental concern. Protecting the winter climate is also crucial for more than 11.5 million U.S. skiers and snowboarders.

"Winter is short enough already. We want to start fixing the global warming problem now," said Geraldine Link, public policy director for NSAA. "Tens of thousands of people in this industry count on dependable winters for their livelihood. But it's more than just business. Global warming could affect our quality of life in the unique places where we're lucky enough to live and play."

The Keep Winter Cool kickoff marks NSAA's annual Sustainable Slopes Day, Saturday February 21.

Climate experts say without action soon, ski regions could see less snow, reduced snow pack, and shorter, more erratic seasons. The effects of global warming are most pronounced at northern latitudes during wintertime. Snow pack also provides clean water for drinking, agriculture and wildlife. And alpine drought can leave mountains more susceptible to fire.

“Winter climates are where global warming hits first, which is why it is a major concern for anyone spending time on the slopes,” said Dr. Daniel Lashof, science director of the NRDC Climate Center and an avid skier. “The good news is that global warming is a problem we can fix. The problem is pollution from burning fossil fuels; the answer is better technology in our cars and trucks, and cleaner energy choices like wind and solar power.”

### **Practical Action Solutions for a Serious Challenge**

From the White Mountains of New Hampshire to the Colorado Rockies and the Sierras in California, ski areas active in Keep Winter Cool are setting examples with clean energy solutions of their own. They’re also taking their case to Washington.

Last year more than 40 resorts urged lawmakers to support bi-partisan legislation by Republican Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Democrat Joe Lieberman (D-CT) to control global warming pollution for the first time. The pioneering measure came within seven votes of passing the Senate in November, and could come up for another vote later this year.

To demonstrate the opportunities that exist right now, many of NSAA’s 332 member resorts are using available technologies to cut their own warming pollution and presenting easy, available solutions to help skiers and snowboarders do the same.

### **Global Warming 101**

Temperatures fluctuate naturally from year to year, but extensive data shows an unprecedented warming trend now under way. Although some parts of the country may be cooler or hotter from year to year, average temperatures have been going up. In fact, 2003 is tied for the second warmest year on record, just behind 1998. Nineteen of the 20 record years have been since 1980. Scientists say the main reason is too much carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping pollution in the atmosphere.

Winter climates feel the heat most of all: parts of Alaska are 7 degrees F warmer than in the 1950s. A recent report prepared by European researchers for the U.N Environment Program said that in coming years global warming could be especially troublesome for resorts with base elevations below 5,000 feet.

### **Ski Areas Leading by Example**

Resorts are using a variety of measures to reduce global warming emissions in their operations, including pollution-free wind and solar energy to run buildings and lifts and the use of energy-efficient “green buildings.” They’re retrofitting facilities to save energy (and money, too); replacing inefficient compressors in snowmaking operations; and providing or promoting carpooling or mass transit by guests and employees.

NSAA supports Keep Winter Cool as part of its national ‘Sustainable Slopes’ initiative, an industry wide environmental stewardship program. For more information on Sustainable Slopes, visit [www.nsaa.org](http://www.nsaa.org).

Innovative ski resort solutions highlighted on February 21 include:

- California’s Mammoth Mountain is using solar power to generate electricity and forced air heating in its lift shacks. Mammoth has installed solar heating panels on the lift shack at the top of Thunder Bound Express and in other buildings.
- Northstar-at-Tahoe (Northstar) is offsetting approximately 215,600 pounds of global warming emissions associated with the ski area’s energy use by buying more than 150 megawatt–hours worth

of renewable energy credits from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, representing renewable energy produced from non-polluting wind resources located in the Pacific Northwest.

- Hunter Mountain in New York is purchasing enough wind energy credits from Community Energy to power Hunter's 33,000 square-foot beginner and family Learning Center for the entire ski season.
- In Oregon, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort will purchase enough clean, renewable wind energy to run its Shooting Star Express chairlift this season, equaling nearly seven percent of the company's average annual power consumption and avoiding 234 tons of carbon pollution.
- Oregon's Timberline is buying much a large share of its power from the Stateline Wind Farm in Oregon through the Clean Wind™ program of PGE, the local power provider.
- In Utah, The Canyons is using solar powered lighting. The Canyons, Deer Valley and Park City are all participating in Utah Power's Blue Sky Program and are purchasing green wind power for their operations. The resorts will also audit energy use and improve energy efficiency.
- Sundance Resort in Utah has committed to replace 10 percent of its conventional power with wind, placing the resort at Utah Wind Power's Champion Level. Sundance will also provide free public transportation to pass holders, offering a discount to carpooling guests, and using energy-efficient lighting throughout the resort.
- In Wyoming, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort powers two of its chairlifts, Moose Creek and Union Pass, with wind power.
- In Colorado, Keystone Resort purchases 16,500 kilowatt-hours of renewable wind power per month, the maximum available from the local utility. The resort's River Run Information Center is powered by a solar energy system and relies heavily on natural light rather than electric lights during the day.
- Vail Mountain buys 300,000 kilowatt-hours per year of wind energy to power the Wildwood Express Lift, eliminating 300 tons of global warming pollution.
- Aspen Skiing Company uses wind energy to power the Cirque Lift at Snowmass and the Sundeck Restaurant on Aspen Mountain.

### **Helping Skiers Help the Planet**

Resort outreach campaigns for February 21 include:

- Alpine Meadows in California will have representatives from the Green Builders Association on hand to tell guests about using solar power in new buildings and homes, and provide guests with information on Toyota's Hybrid Vehicles which emit less global warming pollutants.
- Northstar-at-Tahoe is offering customers a chance to add a full or Mini-Green Tag to their lift pass in order to help offset the vehicle emissions associated with their trip to the ski area. This means visitors to Northstar can now "Ski Pollution Free."
- Sugar Bowl's "Environmental Spotters" will give raffle tickets to passengers in vehicles with four or more riders and to shuttle bus riders from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Raffle items include a season pass and merchandise from Sugar Bowl's Summit Snowboard Shop and Ski & Sports.

- In Colorado, Arapahoe Basin will kick off its new Climate Club. For \$20, a resort guest may receive discounts at A-Basin as well as cut global warming pollution. By joining the club, a purchaser buys Emission Reduction Credits, which are generated by renewable energy companies. Membership credits account for a one-ton reduction in global warming pollution. Members also can receive discounted lift tickets including a \$15 lift ticket on Sustainable Slopes Day (February 21, 2004) and Earth Day (April 22, 2004). The Climate Club card can be purchased at the Arapahoe Basin Season Pass Office or online at [arapahoebasin.com](http://arapahoebasin.com).
- Steamboat will be rewarding skiers and riders for carpooling or riding mass transit and reducing global warming pollutants. Guests arriving by carpool or by mass transit on Saturday will receive an informational flier and will be entered into prize drawing to win a snowboard, a First Tracks Powder Clinic and a Specialty Ski Clinic.
- Telluride is offering a 2004/2005 ski pass to one participant in its event, "Passport to Environmental Awareness." Stations will be set-up around the mountain at places of environmental interest, and educators will be present at stations to explain the details of each conservation effort.
- Guests of Hunter Mountain, New York can sign up for green energy for their homes. Hunter Mountain will make a donation to the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and the Catskill Center for every home signing onto the Community Energy Program on Sustainable Slopes Day.
- Mount Hood Meadows in Oregon, in conjunction with Green Mountain Energy and 3 Phases Energy, will help sign up guests for wind power in their homes. Guests signing up for green power will receive a voucher worth \$20 off their next lift ticket purchase at Meadows.
- The Canyons will have Utah Clean Energy Alliance staff on hand to sign guests up to purchase wind power on Sustainable Slopes outreach day. Each guest that signs up for wind power will receive a \$20 Off Voucher for The Canyons.
- Deer Valley will make information available to guests in their lobby on the Keep Winter Cool campaign. Resort guests will be able to sign up to purchase wind power for their homes through Utah Power.

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**The National Ski Areas Association** serves as the trade association for ski area owners and operators. The association began in 1962 and is located in Lakewood, Colorado.

**The Natural Resources Defense Council** is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has more than 1 million members and e-activists nationwide, served from offices in New York, Washington, Santa Monica and San Francisco.