



Embargoed for Release: 3am Tuesday December 1st

Contacts:

Patricia Hickson, Land Use Campaign Associate, Sierra Nevada Alliance: 530-542-4546 X 313
Paul Joyce, Research Director, Ski Area Citizens Coalition: 970-385-9833

CALIFORNIA RESORTS RECEIVE HIGH MARKS FOR WATERSHED, HABITAT PROTECTION; POOR PERFORMANCE ON ENERGY

California leads resorts in the intermountain west for high environmental scores

The 9th annual release of the Ski Area Citizens' Environmental Report Card showed strong scores from many resorts around the west for watershed and habitat protection. Of the 83 resorts evaluated 60 scored a 'B' or better for their watershed protection policies and 57 resorts scored a 'B' or better for their habitat protection policies. For those highest scoring resorts this meant little or no disturbance of sensitive watershed or habitat areas, and no documented water quality violations. California/Nevada resorts were consistent with this trend with 16 of the 20 CA/NV resorts evaluated scoring a 'B' or better for their watershed protection policies and 17 out of 20 scoring a 'B' or better for their habitat protection policies. To view each resort's score and to see resort performance in each of the four categories, visit: www.skiareacitizens.com.

In contrast, many of these same resorts did not achieve as high a grade for addressing climate change, or for their environmental policies and practices. More than 50% of the western ski areas evaluated received a D or an F in these two categories. California and Nevada resorts as a whole fared only slightly better than western resorts as a whole, with 8 of 20 CA/NV resorts scoring a 'D' or worse in the climate change category and 9 failing with respect to their environmental policies and practices.

"We're happy to see California ski resorts are not trampling meadows and wetlands or bulldozing into sensitive wildlands this year," said Patricia Hickson, Program Associate with the Sierra Nevada Alliance, a member organization of the Ski Area Citizens Coalition. "We were disappointed however that ski resorts were not excelling in reducing greenhouse gases. California and Nevada ski areas should be more motivated than any other industry given we could lose 90% of the Sierra snowpack this century from climate change."

"Some resorts that scored points for buying renewable energy credits last year lost those points this year because they discontinued the program", said Paul Joyce, Research Director for the Ski Area Citizens Coalition. "In some cases it sounded like a cost cutting measure. Ski resorts will likely be one of the most impacted industries by climate change. As such, resorts should be a leader in showcasing awareness and conscious action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

Many resorts lost points in the climate change portion of the report card because of unsubstantial use of biodiesel as fuel for diesel vehicles or other equipment. Resorts also lost points for not

purchasing alternative energy off-sets, such as energy credits from wind, solar and geothermal sources. Such energy credits help to off-set greenhouse gas emissions created in powering ski lifts and other resort operations. Very few resorts in the west generate renewable energy on site.

The Ski Area Citizens Coalition (SACC) is endorsed by more than 20 conservation organizations in the west. The SACC steering committee consists of Colorado Wild, the Sierra Nevada Alliance, Friends of the Inyo and Under the Sleeping Buffalo Research Center (UTSB). The Ski Area Environmental Scorecard (now Report Card) has been published consecutively since 2000. The report card analyzes resorts in five regions of the west, CA/NV, CO/NM, ID/MT/WY, OR/WA, and UT/AZ.

This year, for the first time, the coalition grouped the suite of criteria with which the ski resorts were evaluated into four categories – providing a more descriptive picture of the work being done to address environmental impacts. Ski resorts are graded by a suite of 35 criteria such as: preservation of sensitive lands within the ski resort areas, actions related to water conservation and quality, and demonstrated commitment to green programs such as recycling and alternative energy use. More detailed information about the grading criteria that make up each category can be found on-line at www.skiareacitizens.com.

The Coalition hopes skiers and riders use the Report Card to let their favorite resorts know they care about their environmental practices – whether it's giving the resort accolades for their protection of sensitive habitat, or calling them out for inefficient use of water or energy.

Overall, of the 83 ski areas evaluated across the west, none completely failed, 15 received Ds and 15 areas received As. In California/Nevada only two resorts scored a 'D' making the CA/NV region the highest ranking for environmental performance among all ski areas across the intermountain west. Squaw Valley was the highest ranking resort among all the 83 resorts evaluated. Alpine Meadows followed closely behind, ranking as the fifth highest scoring resort for environmental performance.

"Though there are some outliers, as a whole we're happy to see that resorts appear to be taking their environmental performance and practices more seriously," said Ryan Bidwell, Executive Director of Colorado Wild. "That speaks well for future of the industry."

Grouping scoring criteria into the four categories highlighted significant differences in resort performance from region to region and resort to resort. While overall averages demonstrate general trends, the new format of the report card also shows that even with scores improving across the spectrum, more than half of resorts still receive a 'D' or an 'F' in at least one category. The spreadsheet below displays the score card grades in each category for California/Nevada Ski Resorts in order of performance.

Skiers and snowboarders can easily send emails to resorts through the website, www.skiareacitizens.com. The website allows visitors to thank resorts for their environmental stewardship or encourage them to improve their environmental policies and management.

Report card data is obtained from an annual survey, public records from government agencies, and from the resorts themselves. Freedom of Information Act and Public Records Act requests are filed with appropriate land managers to identify ski area development projects and management plans each spring. Resorts are also asked to fill out surveys and regarding their on-mountain environmental programs. All source documents can be viewed on the website.



2009/2010 Ski Area Environmental Scorecard Grades for California/Nevada Ski Resorts in Order of Performance

Resort Name	Overall Grade 2009/2010	Habitat protection	Protecting watersheds	Addressing global climate change	Environmental policies and practices
Squaw Valley USA	A	A	B	A	A
Alpine Meadows	A	A	A	A	C
Homewood Mountain Resort	A	A	B	B	A
Sugar Bowl Ski Resort	A	B	A	A	A
Boreal Mountain Resort	B	A	B	B	C
Kirkwood Mountain Resort	B	C	B	A	A
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area	B	A	B	B	C
Mt. Rose - Ski Tahoe	B	A	B	D	F
Mountain High Resort	B	A	B	D	F
Sierra-at-Tahoe	B	B	A	A	B
Mt. Shasta Board and Ski Park	B	A	B	D	F
Snow Summit Mountain Resort	C	A	A	D	F
Northstar-at-Tahoe	C	C	D	A	A
Bear Mountain Resort	C	A	B	F	F
Dodge Ridge	C	B	F	A	F
Sierra Summit Mountain Resort	C	A	B	F	F
Snow Valley Mountain Resort	C	A	B	F	F
Heavenly Mountain Resort	C	B	F	C	B
Bear Valley Mountain Resort	D	F	A	B	C
Las Vegas Ski & Snowboard Resort	D	B	C	F	F

To view each resort's score and to see details on resort performance in each of the four categories, visit: www.skiareacitizens.com.