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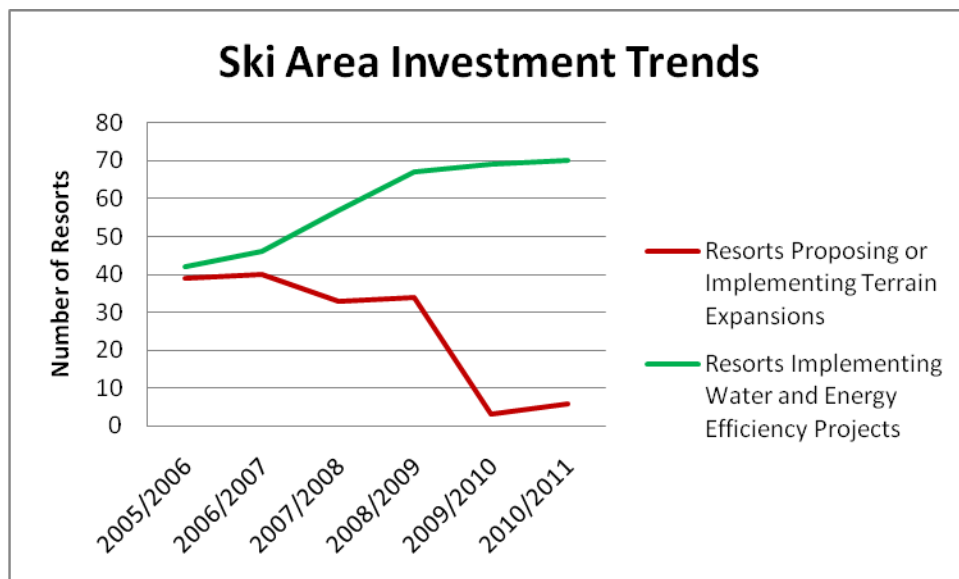
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Green Practices Thrive at Ski Areas During Recession

Will Improved Economy Reverse Trend and See Increased Public Land Degradation?

Ski resorts in California and across the west improved environmental ratings for the fourth year in a row during the recession according to the 2010/2011 Ski Area Environmental Report Card, released each year by the Ski Area Citizens Coalition. The 82 ski resorts scattered throughout the West saw an average improvement of 2% in their overall scores, while California ski resorts saw an improvement of 1.8% over 2009 and 6.6% from 2008. Rating improvement trends resulted from resorts investing in water and energy efficiency projects and for not proposing or implementing terrain expansions into sensitive lands.



“Ski areas are not developing as much new terrain in sensitive areas,” according to Colorado Wild Research Director, Paul Joyce. “Is this due to an environmental commitment? Or when the economy turns will the treads on the bulldozers also turn.”

According to Ski Area Citizens Coalition assistant Norma Ryan “Ski areas spent money on energy efficiency such as upgrading windows, employing solar power and improving public transportation. But this won’t compensate for taking out endangered species habitat or bulldozing a wetland. We hope their environmental efficiency mindset extends to their development strategy as the economy improves.”

“California resorts improved for the 4th year in a row,” said Richard McIntyre, Sierra Nevada Alliance Campaigns Director. “But we’re concerned the environmental trend may be a matter of economic convenience rather than a long-term commitment to resource preservation. Californians well remember the days of bull dozing streams and serving eviction notices to wildlife to add a new ski-run, and trust they are a thing of the past.”

California Ski Resort Report Card Summary

The following table provides links to each resort’s detailed scorecard on the website

#	Name	Grade	#	Name	Grade
1	(A) Squaw Valley USA	90.30%	10	(B) Dodge Ridge	68.30%
2	(A) Alpine Meadows	86.20%	11	(B) Mt. Shasta Board & Ski Park	68.30%
3	(A) Sugar Bowl	80.00%	12	(C) Bear Valley	67.30%
4	(A) Boreal Mountain	78.70%	13	(C) Snow Summit	67.20%
5	(B) Kirkwood Mountain	77.50%	14	(C) Northstar-at-Tahoe	66.50%
6	(B) Homewood Mountain	77.40%	15	(C) Sierra Summit	66.10%
7	(B) Sierra-at-Tahoe	73.70%	16	(C) Bear Mountain	65.20%
8	(B) Mammoth Mountain	73.30%	17	(C) Snow Valley	63.90%
9	(B) Mountain High	69.60%	18	(C) Heavenly	59.70%

“Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows lead the California class,” said Stacy Hamburg, Sierra Nevada Alliance Program Assistant. “Heavenly and Snow Valley bring up the rear. For the Sierra with a lot to lose from climate change shrinking our snow pack, improving environmental stewardship is a good thing.”

The Ski Area Citizens Coalition is comprised of a conservation groups around the west, including Colorado Wild and the Sierra Nevada Alliance. **The Full Report Card for all 82 resorts and more details can be found at www.skiareacitizens.com.** The Ski Area Citizens Coalition (SACC) has been publishing the Ski Area Environmental Scorecard (now Report Card) for the past 10 years. The Report Card evaluates the environmental policies and practices of ski areas based on a system of 35 criteria. The criteria to evaluate performance includes grading ski areas on their preservation of sensitive lands within the ski resort areas as, their actions related to water conservation and quality, and commitment to green programs such as recycling and energy efficiency.

Skiers and snowboarders can easily send emails to resorts through the website www.skiareacitizens.com, thanking resorts for their environmental stewardship or encouraging them to improve their environmental policies and management.

Scorecard 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.

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For more on the Sierra Nevada Alliance visit www.sierranevadaalliance.org