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When Resorts and Communities Work Together: Lessons from the Mountain Collaborative

Born at the first MT2030 summit in 2019, the Mountain Collaborative brings competitors Vail Resorts, Alterra, Boyne and POWDR together on climate. Their examples show towns, utilities and resorts buying renewables, passing waste policy and securing cleaner fuel together, and why one joint voice beats going it alone.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Joint utility deals unlock big renewables.** Salt Lake City, Park City, Summit County, Utah Valley University and two resorts teamed with Rocky Mountain Power on Utah's 80 MW Electron solar facility.
2. **Expect years, and keep going.** Electron took about five years. Montana's clean energy bill, led by Bozeman and Missoula, passed both chambers, stalled at the governor, and returns next session.
3. **Local funding makes waste policy work.** Summit County, Colorado paired Pay As You Throw with the voter-approved Strong Futures levy, whose grants help HOAs and businesses fit bins and recycling sites.
4. **Pooled demand brings cleaner fuel.** Renewable diesel is a drop-in fuel for groomers. A Clean Cities working group built demand in Montana; Big Sky is in its third year using it.
5. **The grid limits building electrification.** Older buildings face utility capacity limits and $1M-plus in-building upgrades. Holy Cross and Xcel are exploring time-of-use and off-peak rates.

WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO

- ☐ **Join or form a utility green tariff group.** Partner with resorts and institutions to add utility-scale renewables to your grid where on-site options are limited.
- ☐ **Find your utility contact.** Work with your co-op or utility on line upgrades, incentives and time-of-use or off-peak rates for electrified buildings.
- ☐ **Pair waste policy with dedicated funding.** Pay As You Throw plus a levy with grants for bigger enclosures and hard-to-recycle drop-off sites.
- ☐ **Pool demand for renewable diesel.** Bring municipal fleet shops into regional working groups with ski areas so suppliers invest in delivery.
- ☐ **Set shared community energy goals.** Summit County resorts did this through Xcel's Partners in Energy, even sharing confidential utility data.
- ☐ **Lead, and bring businesses with you.** Resort support adds weight with utilities and legislators. If a bill stalls, ask the governor's office what to fix.
- ☐ **Treat snowpack and forests as infrastructure.** Mount Bachelor will heat buildings with Forest Service thinnings once burned in piles.

BY THE NUMBERS

80 MW
Electron solar facility near the Great Salt Lake

100%
Park City Mountain's 2025 electricity matched by Electron

44%
Ski areas' average clean electricity, 2025/26 season

~40%
Montana power still from fossil fuels

~330
Ski areas in NSAA, over 90% of U.S. skier visits

10 years
To build Mount Bachelor's forest biomass heating

WATCH OUT FOR

- ! Small buyers struggle with renewable diesel: Arapahoe Basin's tank is too small for a delivery, the fuel is costly in small batches, and it isn't yet sold in Colorado.
- ! Electrifying older buildings can stall on grid capacity and on rates: replacing gas could triple some business energy bills.

RESOURCES

NSAA Climate Advocacy
nsaa.org/climate

Xcel Energy Partners in Energy
xcelenergy.com/partnersinenergy

High Country Conservation Center
highcountryconservation.org

Yellowstone-Teton Clean Cities
ytcleancities.org

CONTACTS

Courtney LaBrie
Director of Sustainability, National Ski Areas Association (moderator)

Raj Basi
VP, Sustainability, POWDR

Tom Bradley
VP of Sustainability, Boyne Resorts

Fritz Bratschie
Senior Director of Environmental and Social Responsibility, Vail Resorts

Mike Nathan
Senior Manager of Sustainability and Planning, Arapahoe Basin (Alterra Mountain Company)

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