SUSTAINABILITY REPORT
2018 - 2019
The following pages describe Aspen Skiing Company’s history and our approach to sustainability. It is a positive story. But there are inherent contradictions throughout, from conspicuous consumption and frivolity to simple energy use. We are not there yet. Instead, as Charles Bukowski wrote, we are:

“Sifting through the madness for the word, the line, the way.”
Aspen Skiing Company’s sustainability work is part of a much longer tale...

In 1894, miners pulled a 2,340 lb. silver nugget out of Smuggler Mine.

Unfortunately, silver had gone bust the year before, and Aspen soon became a ghost town, its population dwindling from over 10,000 to 750.
IN 1945, Chicagoans Walter & ELIZABETH Paepcke reimagined the town. They had a vision: "The difficulty of our time is a difficulty of the human spirit."

It was the first step in turning Aspen into a place of transformation and global thinking. As the program for the Goethe celebration noted:

"Aspen could be a place to escape your usual life, be challenged by new ideas in a beautiful setting where you'd be receptive to them, and go home with a mission to improve the world."

That led to: the Goethe Bicentennial, Albert Schweitzer's visit, the Aspen Institute, the Music Festival and School, and later, the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies.

(What was the point of all that, anyway? Who celebrates Goethe, and what does that even mean?)
Other dreamers had arrived before the Paepckes:

**SKIERS.**

They’d founded the Aspen Ski Club in 1936 and later, led by 10th Mountain Division veteran and Austrian immigrant Friedl Pfeifer, the Aspen Ski Corp. Paepcke bought in soon after he arrived, bringing money and business smarts, and Aspen became...

By the ’70s and ’80s, ski hedonism was in full swing.

Neon one-pieces, dancing in tight jeans at the Tippler bar, and skiing with your ankles locked together were all the rage.

A GLOBAL SKI CENTER!
As a company, we were like the new earth in Genesis: “without form, and void.”

As fun as it was, Aspen had drifted far from Paepcke’s vision. Aspen Skiing Company didn’t have a corporate mission... beyond skiing. In other words, *just a ski area* that alone.
Then, in 1996, a new CEO, Pat O'Donnell, recruited from Whistler but previously at Patagonia, asked a provocative question: “Should work be about more than just a paycheck?”

The answer was yes, and the result was a set of guiding principles.

O’Donnell also created the sustainability department, the Environment Foundation, and a new commitment to customer service. All this planted the seed of broader thinking around, uh, the role of business in society, which was exactly what Paepcke was after.

Coincidentally, the new owners of Aspen Skiing Company as of 1993, the Crown family, were also from Chicago. Two family members later served as board chair of Paepcke’s Aspen Institute...
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

HUMANITY
We treat people the way they’d like to be treated, modeling authenticity, transparency, courtesy, respect and humility.

PASSION
We live our core values and embrace life-long learning and meaningful work.

EXCELLENCE
In business, quality, craftsmanship, guest service and athletic achievement.

SUSTAINABILITY
Of people, profits, the environment and the community so that we are in business forever.
An early manifestation of the guiding principles was The Sundeck, one of the first LEED-certified buildings in the world.

We retrofitted every light bulb in the company, installed 170kW of solar panels, built a 115kW hydroelectric plant at Snowmass, and invested $5.5M in a power plant that captures leaking methane from a coal mine and makes as much electricity as ASC uses annually while destroying three times our carbon emissions.

In the world.
Realizing we couldn’t cut our carbon footprint enough on our own, we helped progressive candidates run in local utility elections. After fifteen or so years, a new board of directors at Holy Cross Energy committed to 70% renewable energy by 2030.

**ASC Carbon Footprint (tons CO2)**

Details: aspensnowmass.com/we-are-different/sustainability-reports
What more could we do?

We asked,

We were building something new:

A company culture.

The Environment Foundation (1998), run and funded by employees, has given away $3.3M.

Our caring for community fund (2016) $175K.

We joined the board of POW(PW) Protourwinters.org

And helped grow that nonprofit with the vision of wielding outdoor industry power around climate issues as effectively as the NRA does on guns. In 2018, we legally intervened in a Colorado Public Utilities Commission proceeding, along with POW and our sister company Alterra Mountain Co., to urge the replacement of two Xcel coal plants with wind and solar power.

We prevailed.

Thanks to the work of partners like Conservation Colorado and Western Resource Advocates, as a result, Colorado’s clean energy will climb to 55% by 2026. Xcel later became the first major U.S. utility to commit to 100% zero-carbon energy—by 2050.
ASC recommitted to affordable housing, and built 40 tiny homes for 112 employees, with 30 more beds coming. We expanded local food offerings and, we have 673 beds now and our target is 1,100. We banned plastic straws. As we evolved, we realized we needed to care about community as much as climate.

Later, Colorado's Governor appointed ASC Sustainability SVP Auden Schendler to serve on the Air Quality Control Commission, which makes decisions about climate and clean air issues like methane regulation and auto efficiency. Instead of advocating from afar, now we have a seat at the table.

"You can see the effects of climate change and scientists have clearly said what path we have to follow. All of us have a responsibility. All of us, small or large. A moral responsibility. We have to take it seriously. We can't joke about it. Each person has their own. Even politicians have their own."

We posted quotes from Pope Francis on our chairlifts to get people to take action on climate. As we evolved, we realized we needed to care about community as much as climate.

We have 673 beds now and our target is 1,100. We expanded local food offerings and, just cuz, we banned plastic straws.
Our CEO, Mike Kaplan, published an op-ed in the local papers titled "We’re Still Here." It reiterated our commitment to tolerance, civility and climate action. A year later, Mike took it national, appearing on one of the biggest op-ed pages in the world — The Wall Street Journal's — arguing that anti-immigration rhetoric and policy was hurting tourism.

We were feeling pretty good about our progress:

- The Paris Accords, marriage equality, health care...
- The country was lining up with our values.

Then the world changed with the 2016 elections, which normalized intolerance and bigotry.

We had to do something to honor what we’d become as a company.
Dear Senator Portman:

I’m writing you as a fellow outdoor enthusiast and supporter of national parks, energy efficiency, and fighting climate change. Ohio’s $24.3 billion outdoor recreation industry is gravely threatened by a warming planet. You’ve been more progressive than your GOP peers on climate, but that’s not saying much. I think you can do more, especially now that it’s clear that inaction means economic decline. As you know, studies show that the whole Midwest region will face crop yield declines of up to 63% by the end of the century due to rising heat and multi-year drought. I ask you to become a leader on climate and to acknowledge science. There’s little risk. Voters want their leaders to embrace action on climate. So, can I count on you to Give a Flake?

Sincerely,

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