



A little over a year ago, when Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt terminated temporary wilderness protections on six million acres of wilderness, he imagined he'd get some opposition from Utah environmentalists. What he didn't expect was getting bush-whacked by the business community as well. Peter Metcalf, Black Diamond Equipment CEO, threatened to shift the successful Outdoor Retailer shows, with their annual jolt to the state's economy, elsewhere if that was the way Utah played with its public lands. Other businesses quickly joined Metcalf's crusade.

But there was at least one "green" Utah business that saw an alternative to address the protection of Utah's incomparable public lands. "Who hurts more if the OR shows leave?" wondered Treasure Mountain Inn's Andy Beerman, referring to the projected revenue loss of more than \$20 million in tourist dollars. "I agree with Peter that someone needs to take a stand. However, I disagree with his willingness to hold the hospitality industry hostage. Harming Utah's tourism would not promote a better environmental consciousness."

Instead, Beerman's trying to use his Park City hotel as an environmental model, and fundraiser, for the issues and places he holds dear. "Utah's tourism-based businesses are the best hope for driving forward a more green policy," said Beerman. And he's not all talk. He's gotten his Treasure Mountain Inn in Park City registered with the Green Hotels Association (one of only four in Utah), and is now running his 56-room lodge at the top of Main Street with a progressive approach to pro-wilderness support.

Beerman and his equally-active business partner/wife Thea are doing just about everything a hotel can to be a good steward of the environment, and are always on the lookout for new ideas. Already, they recycle everything possible, and use recycled products—a key step to completing the chain and developing a market for recyclables. For electricity, they subscribe to the Utah Power Blue Sky Program, an alternative energy buy-in program that reduces carbon dioxide pollution by generating power through zero-impact wind farms. All of TMI's common areas use low-energy lighting, and their guests are strongly encouraged ("we almost insist") to use mass and/or public transportation—easily accessible in Park City



Beyond these operational efforts, Andy and Thea host (at no charge) cause-based fundraisers and slideshows in their conference rooms, like the one held by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance last year. Lastly, and this is the really impressive part, the Treasure Mountain Inn donates 10 percent of gross sales to the Conservation Alliance (the trade environmental association for the outdoor indus-

try) whenever an outdoor company stays or hosts a sales meeting at TMI. "Giving back to environmental causes is my attempt to be pro-active," said Beerman. Eventually, he plans to expand the program to include 'give-backs' to other organizations like the Sierra Club and the Nature Conservancy.

Beerman's no greenhorn at environmental action. "I've always been an advocate for the environment," said the former NOLS leader. "I've grown increasingly concerned about American's apathy toward preservation and sustainability. The lodging and travel industry should care more than they do." His aggressive give-back program not only grows dollars for the environment but it breeds good karma, and good word-of-mouth business. In other words, if you know that you will pay the same room rate at two hotels, wouldn't you want to stay with the one who shares your dollars with an environmental charity?

Our environment is our economic backbone so it pays to support it. It's no surprise that Utah has a very outdoor-focused demographic. A 2003 Outdoor Industry Foundation report indicated that more than 80 percent of the state's population participates in outdoor activities each year, making us the third-most-active state in the U.S. We're also home to 90,000-plus rock climbers -the second largest percentage per capita in the country. But how can we recreate if there's no place to play? Sometimes, there's a disconnect between the great access to the wild, natural places in the state, and what's needed to preserve them. Beerman says Utah's future will go hand in hand—up or down—with how we choose to defend those




wild places. "Without our pristine ski slopes, rugged mountain bike trails, and historic red rock formations, we'd have little to draw visitors," he said. "Protecting these places is key to economic growth in the recreation industry."

As to who is right—Metcalf or Beerman—about the best approach to get Utah's leaders out protecting public lands, the answer is: both.

After the Outdoor Industry rallied behind Metcalf's call for action, Leavitt subsequently scrambled, promising to grow a recreational economy in Utah and to invest state money for ad campaigns promoting Utah as the "outdoor recreation capital of the world." Leavitt's replacement as governor is following up on that pledge. "It is my hope Utah will become the world's leading outdoor recreation destination and industry center," said Governor Olene Walker last December. "This industry is a great contributor to our economy and has the potential for the additional creation of new jobs, especially in rural Utah." Though OR organizers have noticed the effort they are not yet persuaded. They recently issued a survey to its members to determine if there might be a better locale for the 2005 summer show.

Meanwhile, Beerman's happy guests are out spreading the word about his hotel, and its principles, bringing in new clients and new contributions to conservation issues. "It's about being on the edge; planting that seed, causing miniature roots to network and eventually expand," said Beerman, who continues his efforts to preserve Utah's pristine beauty, one night's sleep at a time.

For more info on Green Hotels or to contact the Treasure Mountain Inn call 800.344.2460 

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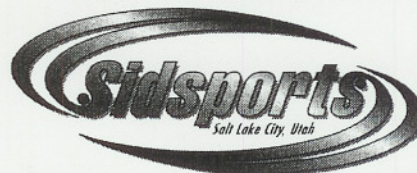
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