



For Immediate Release: December 7, 2011

Contacts:

Paul Joyce, Research Director, Rocky Mountain Wild: 970-385-9833 or 970-769-8474
 Kaitlin Meese, Regional Program Assistant, Sierra Nevada Alliance: 530-542-4546 x 302
 Joan Clayburgh, Executive Director, Sierra Nevada Alliance: 530-542-4546 x 307

Ski Area Environmental Report Card Grades Released Today Squaw Valley Leads in CA/NV with Homewood Worst

The Ski Area Citizens Coalition released the 11th Annual Ski Area Environmental Report Card today, showing that out of nineteen resorts in California/Nevada Squaw Valley earned the highest environmental grade with Homewood earning the worst grades in the class.

California Ski Resort Report Card Summary

The following table provides links to each resort's detailed report card on the website

#	Name	Grade	#	Name	Grade
1	(A) Squaw Valley USA	92.10%	11	(B) Mt. Shasta Board & Ski Park	68.40%
2	(A) Alpine Meadows	86.90%	12	(B) Snow Summit	68.30%
3	(A) Sugar Bowl	82.40%	13	(C) Bear Valley	67.70%
5	(A) Boreal Mountain	78.70%	14	(C) Sierra Summit	67.40%
4	(B) Kirkwood Mountain	77.6%	15	(C) Mount Rose	67.20%
6	(B) Sierra-at-Tahoe	76.80%	16	(C) Bear Mountain	65.20%
7	(B) Mammoth Mountain	75.40%	17	(C) Heavenly	65.00%
8	(B) Northstar-at-Tahoe	72.50%	18	(C) Snow Valley	64.30%
9	(B) Dodge Ridge	71.7%	19	(C) Las Vegas Ski and Snowboard Resort	60.90%
10	(B) Mountain High	69.80%	20	(D) Homewood Mountain	56.50%

The Full Report Card for all 82 resorts in the western United States and more details can be found at www.skiareacitizens.com.

--more--

“Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are ‘double diamond environmental resorts’ for the second year in a row for California,” said Kaitlin Meese, Sierra Nevada Alliance Program Assistant. “Homewood however is on the beginner slope of environmental stewardship.”

Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows both earned high points for habitat protection. For example they are not building or expanding onto sensitive habitat on public lands or removing old growth trees. They also took actions to reduce greenhouse gases and pro-actively protect the environment.

Homewood however received the lowest grade (D) in the CA/NV region. Homewood resort has plans that are expanding development onto undisturbed lands and their development was noted for potentially impacting over twelve species. They are also increasing snowmaking from approximately 20 acres to over 100 acres which draws water from the local watershed and uses tremendous amounts of energy. There are other impacts to the environment which are detailed in the report card, such as increasing greenhouse gases. To find all California and Western state ski resort grades and links to documents that support the grading visit www.skiareacitizens.com.

The Ski Area Citizens Coalition is comprised of a conservation groups around the west, including Rocky Mountain Wild and the Sierra Nevada Alliance. The Ski Area Citizens Coalition (SACC) has been publishing the Ski Area Environmental Report Card for the past 11 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.

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.

Report Card Producers Pledge more Environmental Scrutiny of Resort Summer Activities for 2012/2013

The Ski Area Citizens Coalition also announced today that for the next season 2012 Report Card they will be scrutinizing more closely summer activity expansion at Ski Resorts. The Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act was just signed into national law making it easier for ski resorts that are wholly or partially located on federal land to get special permits to allow activities other than nordic or alpine skiing. Activities could include zip lines, Frisbee golf and advanced mountain biking.

“The Ski Area Citizen’s Coalition supports injecting revenue during slower months in ski towns using strong environmental stewardship standards,” said Paul Joyce, Ski Area Citizens Coalition Director. “We look forward to evaluating resorts’ expanded summer activities on our public lands to ensure that they are creating jobs that are good for endangered species and clean water.”

Summer ski resort activity if done improperly could have significant environmental impacts. For example, bike trails can be created using best stewardship practices or they can be created in ways that increase water pollution. Zip lines can be put in non-sensitive wildlife areas creating new recreational opportunities – or they can be sited in a way that is a significant threat to local wildlife.

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