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**In Memoriam**

Bill Levitt, 1917 – 2009

**Friends of Alta**

PO Box 8126  
Alta, UT 84092

Jen Clancy, Executive Director  
cell (801) 742-9719  
jen@friendsofalta.org

Christine Doman, Operations Manager

Cover Photo by Bruce Hucko



## Preserving the Nature of Alta

Another winter has come and gone at Alta. We were lucky to enjoy over 100" of snow falling in January alone, and now although the lifts are closed, thankfully the snow keeps coming. Even so, Alta barely saw 400" of snow during the ski season, and warm temperatures mean we were already down to 78% of average snowpack by the end of April according to the National Climate and Water Center.

In this fifth year of drought conditions, the future of Alta is on our minds. The decisions we make about Alta today will have much bigger repercussions in an environment that is increasingly affected by changes to the snowpack. Any new development at Alta will have impacts downstream. Increased traffic by foot, car, bus, or train has the potential to tip Alta's environment towards irreparable damage while at the same time we have an opportunity to improve our community's footprint.

With that in mind, FOA continues to be involved in planning for Alta's future through Mountain Accord and the Town of Alta Commercial Core Plan. In this newsletter, we will update you on our legal actions against a decision made by the Utah State Engineer, upcoming plans at the Alta Ski Area, and potential federal designation of Albion Basin as a Botanical Area. To work towards our goals we are still \$42,000 shy of our \$225,000 contribution goal for this fiscal year, ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. We hope you can pitch in with a contribution today.

With winter on its way out, we are turning our thoughts to a glorious, green, wildflower-filled summer. We have a full roster of events for you to enjoy at Alta throughout the summer. We hope you can take a break from the heat to come visit us this summer.

-Mimi and Jen





## Water Transfer Update by Pat Shea

FOA and Salt Lake City (SLC) are challenging whether it was proper and legal for the Utah State Engineer to allow a transfer of a point of diversion from Sandy up-canyon to Albion Basin. This decision would set a devastating precedent that could result in large scale development by linking dry lots in the canyons with water rights downstream. For that reason, FOA will spend about \$43,000 this fiscal year on representation, and we are expecting to spend at least that much in each of the next several years.

FOA has alleged that the State Engineer erred in granting the change of diversion points of the purported water right, and was improperly influenced in his decision. In April, the Judge ruled in favor of SLC and FOA by denying the defendants' motion for a stay during the pendency of their appeal. As a result, discovery for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cause of action (of 3 actions, with SLC taking the lead on the 2<sup>nd</sup>) ended on May 10<sup>th</sup>. On May 5<sup>th</sup> we received news that the Utah Court of Appeals denied the defendants' interlocutory appeal from the Judge's decision regarding discovery schedule. This only leaves one appeal to the Utah Supreme Court, which we believe will be denied. This denial is very helpful and will set the 2<sup>nd</sup> cause of action up for a good summary judgment motion on the part of SLC and FOA. The litigation is moving in the right direction, albeit at a snail's pace.

## Federal Designation

FOA has joined other environmental non-governmental organizations to support Mountain Accord's federal legislation to create the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area. This legislation is a tool to implement a number of actions from the signed Accord. The legislation would add protections on approximately 80,000 acres of US Forest Service (USFS) land, and add 8,000 acres of new wilderness. The bill would establish the White Pine Special Management Area, and authorize the evaluation of the Albion Basin Special Botanical Area. The bill would direct wilderness boundary adjustments in Little Cottonwood Canyon in order to evaluate transit infrastructure improvements. It would also define ski area boundaries and authorize the USFS to conduct environmental reviews for potential land exchanges between the Cottonwood Canyons' four ski areas and the USFS. The public benefits of added protections are contingent on all the negotiated components of the bill. It is important to note that the proposed legislation is not necessary for the USFS to consider an open-ended administrative land swap with the Alta Ski Area, but it would establish a time frame for the process. If an Alta land swap passes review, FOA will vigorously advocate for an equitable land exchange. We invite you to share your thoughts on Mountain Accord and FOA's role with us.

## Environmental Dashboard

Quite possibly one of our greatest achievements to date with Mountain Accord has been the initiation of an Environmental Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan, nicknamed the Dashboard. On behalf of Mountain Accord, Salt Lake County issued a request for proposal in December. The contract was issued to the Brendle Group and subconsultants from Wild Utah Project, Colorado State University, and the University of Utah. The Dashboard is being modeled after the Colorado Nature Heritage Program, and seeks to compile data collected by various entities throughout the Central Wasatch to analyze ecosystem health now and in the future. The Dashboard is a critical component to thoughtful planning in the Central Wasatch. It provides a common foundation for evaluating uses in the Central Wasatch and additional Mountain Accord proposals.



Photo by Sam Watson

## Town of Alta Commercial Core Plan

Mountain Accord has many people thinking about the future, including the Town of Alta. The town has begun a public planning process with a grant from Wasatch Front Regional Council and the help of Salt Lake City based planning firm Landmark Design, to envision the future of the area of town identified as the “commercial core” of Alta. The process is an opportunity for the public to articulate a vision for the future of Alta. The goals of the project are to locate a Town of Alta community center, explore strategies for safer and more defined pedestrian connectivity within the commercial core, and envision future transit hubs. For a complete summary of project information including the most recent preferred alternative, please visit [www.ldi-ut.com/alta.html](http://www.ldi-ut.com/alta.html)

## Alta Ski Area Proposals

In December, Alta Ski Area (ASA) requested authorization from the USFS for projects that would be completed in the next five years. The projects were included in ASA’s accepted master development plan, are within ASA’s special use permit area, and appear to be consistent with USFS screening criteria, pending additional review. The USFS will analyze and disclose potential impacts to the human environment for these projects in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The USFS issued notice of these projects on April 20. They accepted comments until May 25<sup>th</sup> to guide the Forest Supervisor’s decision whether or not to authorize these projects.

Projects include: removing the Albion lift and replacing the Sunnyside lift, removing Secret lift and replacing and realigning the Supreme lift to start near Alf’s, replacing Wildcat lift with a high speed detachable lift, restoring a lake above Glory Hole, and building additions for Alf’s and Watson Shelter. Planning for snow safety without military artillery is critical for our community, but we have heartburn on the proposals to put Tram from Germania pass to the top of Mt. Baldy, and installing 4-8 GaxEx exploders in each of these locations: Devil’s Castle, East Castle, and Patsey Marley. FOA will submit comments to the USFS.

A full list of projects and their descriptions can be found here: [www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48903](http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48903)



Photo by Dobber Price

## Bill and Mimi Levitt Legacy Circle

We are proud to announce the Levitt Legacy Circle, our first planned giving program. Bill and Mimi Levitt helped found FOA in 1981. Together they served as guiding lights for FOA and led the organization from a fledgling group of passionate volunteers to a well respected community organization. This program will unite the generous people who have included FOA in their estate planning.

Because you care about Alta, we invite you to carry on Bill and Mimi’s legacy and continue a lifetime of support for FOA. By making a bequest to FOA in your will or trust you will help protect Alta’s watershed values, wildlife habitat, and stunning landscapes for future generations.

To join the Levitt Legacy Circle please inform FOA that you have named FRIENDS OF ALTA INC as a beneficiary of your will, trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy. Planned gifts can help you meet your philanthropic goals and offer potential tax benefits, while helping FOA with long term financial planning. Please help us to ensure that Alta’s unique environment and character will prevail.

The information provided here is not intended as tax or legal advice, but as authoritative general information on planned giving. Please consult with your attorney and/or tax advisor. Contact us with any questions.

## 2016 Summer Event Schedule

Visit [friendsofalta.org/events](http://friendsofalta.org/events) for up to date event information

### July

- 1 – Summer Road Opens
- 2 – Alta Ski Area Clean Up – 8am-12pm
- 9 – Town of Alta Restoration Day – 8am-3pm
- 11 – Monthly Alta Bird Survey
- 16 – Owl Prowl with HawkWatch – 8-10:30pm
- 21- Stephen Trimble: Bargaining for Eden– 6-8pm
- 28 – Invasive Weed Pull – 6-8pm
- 30 – Wasatch Wildflower Festival at Alta
- 31 – Accipiter Field Trip with HawkWatch– 9am-1pm

### August

- 13 – Tracy Aviary Alta Bird Study Talk & Survey – 8:30-11:30am
- 19 – ACE Wasatch Art Soirée – 6-10pm
- 25 – Invasive Weed Pull – 6-8pm
- 20 – Alta Kid’s Day – 10am-2pm
- 27-28 – Salt Lake Climbers Alliance Craggin’ Classic

### September

- 9 – FOA Memorial Tree and Seedling Planting – 9:30am-12pm
- 12 – Monthly Alta Bird Survey
- 15 – Weed Pull 3-5pm & Stewardship Social 5-8pm at OLS

### October

- 10 – Monthly Alta Bird Survey

### November

- 14 – Monthly Alta Bird Survey
- TBD- New York City Fundraiser

**Protecting Alta’s natural resources TODAY means a legacy of outdoor recreation and watershed protection that your family and future generations can continue to enjoy TOMORROW.**



Red-breasted Nuthatch by Beryl Armstrong

## Thank You Donors!

### Columbine \$1,000+

- Alta Shuttle
- Alta Mid-Winter Study Group
- David Arnold III
- Sam Bailey
- Nick & Ellen Besobrasov
- Peter Corroon
- Judith & Murray Danforth
- Donna Dean
- Kim & Nancy Faulkner
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- Mimi Levitt
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- Richard & Sheila Schlesinger
- Elfriede Shane
- Stuart & Molly Silloway
- Mark Snyderman
- Vladimir & Yuri Somov
- Carl & Sharon Spaulding
- Bill & Carolyn Stutt
- Lois Swick
- Richard & Susan Thomas
- Eleanor & Fred Winston
- LLWW Foundation
- Anonymous (12)

This is a partial listing of donors for July 2015-April 2016. A full list will be published in the fall.

**We are proud to report we already have support from 100% of our board members for this fiscal year.**



so much positive feedback, that eventually I felt supported enough to come out of my shell. After I realized that personal communication is a strength of mine, I had a great time grabbing passers-by to inform them of our important organization. I gained technical skills fundraising and processing donations. I was also tasked with creating a kids activity book to distribute throughout the lodges next winter.

I loved my time at Alta and will return for a lifetime!

**Maya grew up in Moab, UT, and graduated from the University of Utah in May 2015 with a degree in environmental and sustainability studies.**

**Bill Levitt Fellow Maya Foott Reflects on Her Time with FOA**

As a fairly new skier and brand new graduate, my winter up at Alta was full of discovery. I learned a wealth of information about the community of Alta, and about pushing my own limits as a skier and environmentalist in the workplace.

Snow, rain or shine I documented the birds for the Alta Bird Study that frequented our provided buffet of seed. Partnering with Tracy Aviary and the Alta Environmental Center, Friends of Alta is creating the first inventory of bird species at Alta! I knew little to nothing about bird identification when entering this job, so I was nervous on my first survey! But with training and guidance, I was able to pick up the winter bird species relatively quickly and operate effectively in my position. I fully engaged in our monthly winter bird surveys at the Alta Ski Area. Citizen scientist volunteers from all over joined us to "Ski with the Birds"! This was an incredible opportunity for me, and participants, to combine our love of skiing with our love of environmental study.

Outreach to the surrounding community and winter guests was also a large portion of my fellowship, and a large part of my personal growth in this position. I found myself very nervous and shy at first. I met people from all over the world, and many who were in similar lines of conservation work. I heard



Photo by Dobber Price

**The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Alta Gala**

Friends of Alta partnered with Alta Community Enrichment and the Alta Historical Society to put on the Alta Gala. La Caille restaurant hosted 300 guests for an evening of great food, music, dancing, and more than 100 auction items in their lush pavilion filled with blooming bougainvillea. We honored this year's Stellar Award Winner Dr. Ken Libre of the Alta Medical Clinic who has been a cornerstone of the Alta community for many years. The Gala is an important fundraising event for all three of Alta's non-profit organizations, but it is also an event for the community to come together and celebrate the end of winter and everything that makes Alta special.

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## Ways to Support FOA

We have a whole suite of FOA merchandise ready for the summer season. We have hats and visors, Erni the Ermine, tee shirts, and more. All of these items are available at our office and online.



Mention the Friends of Alta Real Estate Advantage Program program to broker Jim Williams and he will donate \$1,000 to FOA from his commission with the closure of a real estate transaction. [WilliamsRealtyUtah.com](http://WilliamsRealtyUtah.com)



Local photographer John Blumenkamp of Teton Trail Photography donates 50% of the net proceeds from the online Albion Basin Gallery to FOA. [TetonTrailPhotography.com](http://TetonTrailPhotography.com)



Visit [Friendsofalta.org/donate](http://Friendsofalta.org/donate) for more details and links to donate through AmazonSmile or Smith's Community Rewards where your regular purchases support FOA.



## Thank You Alta Shuttle!



We want to send an extra special thank you to Tom and the team at Alta Shuttle. Alta Shuttle continues to be an outstanding supporter of FOA. Their generous donations of 2% of all their winter services to or from Alta have provided FOA with indispensable and reliable revenue year after year. This past ski season they donated over \$11,000. Alta Shuttle understands how precious Alta is, and they do what they can to help conserve Alta's open spaces for future generations.

As Alta's local land trust, the Mission of Friends of Alta is to protect the environment of Alta, including watershed and wildlife habitat areas; to preserve Alta's unique character and heritage; and to encourage stewardship and sustainability of Alta's environment and community.

**Friends of Alta is a 501(c)(3) organization, donations are 100% tax-deductible.**

**Donate today at [friendsofalta.org](http://friendsofalta.org)**

## FOA Partners



## Save Our Canyons



**FOA is a member of**



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