



Tips for Supporting Sustainable Winter Sports

Those of us who enjoy the thrill of heading down the slopes, cross-country skiing, or snow shoeing understand the benefits of fresh powder and an all around snowy winter. Unfortunately, according to one **recent study**, the snowpack in the Western United States will diminish by 70 percent over the next 50 years! Global warming is expected to become stronger in the Northern Hemisphere during the winter months, making mountain-based winter tourism particularly vulnerable.

Here's a few ways you can reduce your personal environmental impact and support the snow season:

Stay local

Minimize the environmental impact of your trip. With Mt. Hood in Portland's backyard and Mt. Bachelor just next door, Portland has a lot to offer for winter fun. When planning a trip to the mountain, carpool or hop on one of the **local ski buses** that will take you to the mountain. This helps keep gas costs down, reduces your carbon footprint, and decreases the amount of traffic on the mountain, making it a quicker trip for you and your family. If staying local just isn't in the plans and your vacation is a flight away, choose a resort that focuses on reducing their environmental impact. **The National Ski Areas Association** maintains a running list of skiable resorts that are participating in green electricity programs. You can also purchase **carbon offsets** for your own travel.

Clothing and Gear

Many outdoor sporting good companies keep an eye on their environmental impact and consistently create low-impact innovative **clothing and gear**. Look for companies that use rapidly renewable materials and focus on their internal operations. Many outdoor companies even have their own environmental policies. Look for local companies here in Portland that make quality organic clothing and gear. Buying locally also helps reduce the transportation associated with your purchase.

Re-Use

Are those 1980 hot pink ski pants no longer fitting? Good news, the 80's are back! Get some new gear in exchange for your used gear at a ski and snowboard swap, such as the annual **Mt. Hood Sports Swap** or visit an outdoors store that sells used items. With so many outdoorsmen/women in Portland, you are bound to find some barely used gear and some great trendy fashion. You can also donate those old jackets to any number of homeless shelters or donation centers.

Mountain Bound

Once you're bundled up and on your way, consider partaking in lower-impact snow activities such as cross-country skiing, snow shoeing or sledding. Resorts expend a lot of energy running lifts, grooming trails and keeping the resort running, not to mention it's cheaper to use forest **trails open to the public**. If you choose to go off trail and into the back-country, make sure you pack out what you pack in and tread lightly. All these activities still leave an impact on the environment, and please remember back-country skiing and snowboarding is not allowed in National Parks.

Help Out

If you feel like it's your calling, step up and join a **group** that supports winter sports and efforts to reduce climate change. Show support by donating, volunteering or changing just one thing you do this winter.

Here's to a snowy, white winter and a wonderful 2010-2011 outdoor season!