Combating Climate Change: Vail Resorts Announces $3.6 Million Across 18 Resorts in Largest Single-Year Energy Efficiency Investment

When we announced Commitment to Zero back in 2017, our sustainability goal to reach a zero net operating footprint by 2030, we also pledged $25 million to achieve 15% energy efficiency savings across our resorts. Each year since then, we've made investments in three key areas—snowmaking, buildings, and lifts—and, now, we're thrilled to announce our biggest single-year energy efficiency investment yet: $3.6 million across 18 of our resorts in 2022. Energy efficiency remains a key strategy in reducing the emissions associated with our operations and, with no time to waste when it comes to combating climate change, we'll continue to advance toward our bold goals.

"One of the many benefits of our integrated network is that we're able to consistently collaborate across all our resorts to share progress and learnings," said Kate Wilson, senior director of sustainability at Vail Resorts. "In fact, some of our upcoming investments, like lift heater controls at Beaver Creek, are thanks to the energy efficiency successes we saw last year at Park City Mountain. With now 40 owned and operated resorts, we have an incredible opportunity to make a major, measurable impact on climate change through the industry-leading commitments we've made."

The $3.6 million in energy efficiency projects will be implemented in 2022. Highlights include:

Snowmaking:

Replacing high-energy snowmaking guns with modern, low-energy options reduces the overall energy for snowmaking and allows us to make more snow in less time. Thanks to our ongoing investment in energy-efficient snowmaking, Keystone kicked off the season two months ago, in October, and Vail had one of its earliest and largest terrain openings in decades.

This year we're replacing 110 high-energy use snowmaking guns at Breckenridge with low-energy snowguns, which reduce energy by consuming significantly less compressed air. With this investment, 100% of the snowguns at Breckenridge will be low-medium energy. Okemo and Stowe will receive a number of low-energy snowguns as well, allowing us to open more terrain with far less energy.

Lifts:

Chairlift stations have heaters to keep equipment at a functional temperature, which need to be properly monitored and controlled. In 2020 at Park City Mountain, we installed heater controls on all 36 of our lifts, which saves over 1.6 million kilowatt hours of electricity each year.

Now that we know what a huge success this investment was at Park City, we're installing heater controls at 17 lifts at Beaver Creek, expected to result in huge energy savings.

Buildings (LED retrofit):

We're replacing older, inefficient interior lighting with new LED high-efficiency lighting across 17 resorts. What are the benefits of LED lighting? It uses significantly less energy and lasts longer. Plus, the guest experience is improved due to increased lighting level.

Resorts receiving this upgraded lighting include Mad River, Paoli Peaks, Boston Mills, Brandywine, Alpine Valley, Snow Creek, Roundtop, Jack Frost, Liberty, Mt. Brighton, Stowe, Crested Butte, Keystone, Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, Stevens Pass, Whistler Blackcomb.

To date, including this year's $3.6 million investment, Vail Resorts has spent $9.6 million of our $25 million energy efficiency

commitment. Read more on Commitment to Zero and the progress we've made toward a zero net operating footprint (we recently reached 85% renewable electricity across our North American resorts!) in the 2020/21 EpicPromise Progress Report.

Note: This post was edited in April 2022 with resort and project updates.

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