

THE BOULDER OUTLOOK HOTEL 2010 CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Boulder Outlook Hotel is a locally owned and operated facility, dedicated to reflecting the values of Boulder, and setting an example for how hotels can be environmental leaders and active participants in the community. Our desire to pursue these activities stems from our core values as a corporation, our belief that being socially and environmentally responsible is the right thing to do. Each step we have taken shows us how much more there is to learn and how much more there is to do. We believe that our success will not be determined by our own actions, but ultimately by joining with like-minded individuals, groups, governmental authorities, and other businesses. We are optimistic and believe that “the wind is at our backs.” We see other groups breaking ground on new environmental and social initiatives daily. We look forward to learning from them and sharing what we have learned. This Corporate Sustainability Report is an effort to facilitate such learning. We hope that by showing others what we have tried and what we have learned, we will encourage them to start their own initiatives.

When we started many of these programs, we were simply following our values and doing what we thought was right for the community and the environment. We have been pleased to find that the market has supported these efforts. Since beginning our Zero Waste Program we have seen a dramatic increase in business directly related to these efforts. It turned out that not only was it the right thing to do for the environment, it was also the best business decision we could have made. Our zero waste efforts cost us approximately \$600 a month. We have been able to document an increase in business of at least \$10,000 per month as a result of these investments. We believe that other businesses and organization will see similar results.

We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact me directly at dking@boulderoutlook.com or 720.974.7774.

Dan King
The Ambassador of Cool



COMPANY PROFILE

In August of 2003, we officially opened as the Boulder Outlook Hotel. Originally built as a Holiday Inn, the property was struggling. When we took ownership of the place, we made it our goal to breathe life back into the building and use what already existed, rather than tearing it down and starting over—showing from the beginning our commitment to reducing our impact on the environment.

The Boulder Outlook Hotel is a full service, mid-market property that delivers a high level of services to our guests. Amenities include an indoor chlorine-free pool and hot tub, restaurant and bar, business center, and meeting rooms. In addition, we offer massage services, yoga, wellness products, and a variety of resources to help our guests get the full experience of Boulder, Colorado. Our annual sales are roundly \$4,000,000, and we employ 61 people. The two largest departments in the hotel are Food and Beverage, with 26 staff members, and Housekeeping, with 17 staff members. We offer paid vacation benefits for all full-time employees and offer a variety of additional benefits, including health insurance and an IRA to qualified employees. Our highest paid staff member makes 4.2 times the pay of our lowest paid employee.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

ZERO WASTE OR DARN NEAR

In March of 2006, we became the first hotel in Boulder to partner with Eco-Cycle (www.Eco-Cycle.org) to create a Zero Waste Program. This means we do whatever we can to reduce the amount of solid waste we send to the landfill. We do this by diverting solid wastes to recycling and composting facilities, and by constantly examining the products we buy. We always strive to include items that will best serve our zero waste goals. The idea comes from the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, an idea many of us learned as far back as Sesame Street. Currently, we estimate that we have diverted 85% of our waste to either recycling or composting. We are working hard to reduce the remaining 15% with the goal to eventually exceed a 90% diversion rate. If we are ever to become truly zero waste—with 100% diversion—we will need the support and efforts of the surrounding community. Much of the waste that ends up in our trash-stream comes from products that our guests have brought back to the hotel from other places. Once the rest of Boulder is zero waste, we will no longer have to worry about this kind of problem.

Our ability to compost has been paramount to the success of our Zero



Waste Program. Eco-Cycle, who manages our recycling, hauls away our compostable materials (wastes made from organic materials such as food, paper, or plant-based plastics) and takes them to a commercial composting facility. There, the materials are composted in huge piles and turned by bulldozers, generating high heat conditions and speeding up the decomposition process. Within 90 days, the material is reduced to a nutrient-rich soil, which can then be used as a natural fertilizer. As of March 2010 we have sent 94.3 tons of compost back to farms and gardens.

Zero waste policies begin with looking at what products we bring into the system. We no longer purchase plastic or Styrofoam containers or cutlery. All of our to-go containers are either made from paper or other compostable materials such as PLA plastic made from plant cellulose or cornstarch. This allows us to compost or recycle items that would normally have to go to a landfill, which drastically increases our diversion rate.

Besides purchasing more compostable or recyclable materials, we believe in the idea of “closing the loop” and buying products made from recycled materials. We understand that if the materials we recycle are not used again, it will defeat the purpose of recycling in the first place. All paper goods purchased by the hotel, including office paper, toilet paper, and tissues are made from 100% post-consumer recycled materials. We also participate in Eco-Cycle’s “Hard-to-Recycle” program, which recycles nontraditional materials like Styrofoam, shrink-wrap, textiles, and electronics. Our in-room soaps and shampoos are purchased from Pro-Terra, manufactured in an environmentally sensitive manner, and packaged in recycled plastic containers.

Our zero waste policies extend throughout our day-to-day operating procedures, and we encourage our guests to participate in the program. We have installed separate containers for co-mingled containers, mixed paper, compost, and trash in our guestrooms, restaurant, kitchen, and public areas of the hotel. The mixed paper bins are recycled and hand-painted cardboard boxes—items that would have otherwise been sent to a landfill. At our last count, we estimate that about 60% of our guests sort their own wastes. Our staff will sort the other 40% to the point where it is still safe and time-effective. Our goal is to have all our guests become involved in the program through self-sorting.

We try to reduce and reuse in every area of the hotel. Our lobby has a book exchange for guests’ use, which lets many people benefit from the same books. Guests are invited to trade books they have with them for books in the exchange. We collect all packing peanuts and bubble wrap materials that come when we receive deliveries, and donate them to Lumia Organics, a local candle company, to use in shipping their candles around the country. Even the rags our staff uses come from existing materials in the hotel. When linens and towels from our rooms become too old or stained to be used by guests, they are made into rags for the housekeeping and kitchen staffs. Eventually, when these rags cannot even be used for cleaning, they are composted. Additionally, our front desk cuts their paper use in half by using double-sided printing for many projects. Employees save any paper that has print on only one side to be reused on the other side later—unless they are shredded for confidentiality. We hope to begin collecting and reusing one-sided papers from the copy machine in our guest business center, allowing us to cut paper

wastes even more.

Our journey towards zero waste has not been without challenges. Collecting and hauling four different streams of materials (mixed paper, co-mingled containers, compost, and trash) from each of our 162 guestrooms, public areas of the hotel, and the restaurant has required operational changes, a complicated collections procedure, and ingenuity on the part of our staff. Over the first several months the line-staff experimented with different methods of resolving this challenge. We are excited that our line-level staff members have taken ownership of the Zero Waste Program and have become the leaders of the project, rather than the followers of management dictates. They have taken pride in the program and have been the source of the successes we have had to date.

In the first four years of the Program we saved:

- 1,200 30-foot trees
- 1,200 Cubic Yards of Landfill Space (equivalent to covering Boulder's Pearl Street Mall from one end to the other with 9.6 inches of trash)
- 490,000 gallons of water
- 508,000-kilowatt hours of Energy (enough to power 45 average US Homes for a year)
- 4,600 pounds of air pollutants
- 11,700 Cubic Feet of Methane Gas
- Enough energy for 44 homes for a year

Additionally, because of the volume of glass in our waste-stream, we have opted to continue to separate our co-mingled containers from our paper, while the rest of Boulder has gone to single-stream recycling (a recycling method that allows papers to be mixed with co-mingled containers in the recycling bin). With our products sorted, we are able to support higher-quality end products.

Beyond our reduced impact on the environment, perhaps the most exciting part of our Zero Waste Program is the impact it has with our guests. When people come to our hotel from other states or countries, they are exposed to the idea of zero waste, many for the first time. Guests have told us that seeing our program has inspired them to start recycling or composting programs back home, or even get their homes and employers to go zero waste. Our guests can feel as though they have been part of something special by participating in our Zero Waste Program, and they will learn things that will stay with them long after they have left Boulder.



BEYOND ZERO WASTE

JUST SAY “NO” TO PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES

In October of 2007 we stopped purchasing plastic water bottles, to “reduce our waste in the first place.” Previously, we bought single-serving plastic water bottles, which were distributed to our guests at the front desk, in our executive guest rooms, and in our meeting rooms. Although the bottles are recyclable, they still consume resources in their production and we had concerns regarding how much of this plastic was actually reused in recycled products. To replace them, we have purchased 0.6-liter stainless steel water bottles. These bottles are made available to our guests for \$8 per bottle (basically our cost). We have installed water purification systems throughout the hotel for guest use. This way, we are preventing the plastic from being used in the first place, which ultimately uses fewer resources and less energy. The bottles also become a souvenir from our guests’ trip to Boulder, and are something they will be able to use long after they have left our hotel.

WATER CONSERVATION

We have implemented a number of strategies to lower our consumption of water. Most of our guestrooms are equipped with toilets that use 1.6 gallons per flush (as opposed to typical toilets, which use about 3.4 gallons of water per flush^α). All guestroom sinks and showerheads are equipped with aerators, which reduce the flow of water without sacrificing water-pressure. We have installed a waterless urinal in our men’s public restroom. In 2005, we replaced our landscaping with native plants that require a lower level of irrigation. Our pool system adds Panatol, a waxy substance that floats on the surface of the water and will not react or interact with skin. This treatment reduces water evaporation by 80%. All of our laundry machines are high efficiency front-loading machines, which use less water and less energy than conventional machines, and we use a high efficiency dishwasher in our kitchen.



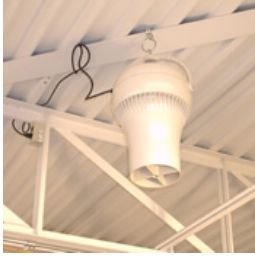
ENERGY CONSERVATION

The Boulder Outlook Hotel has taken several steps to reduce our energy use by implementing energy efficiency measures. In September of 2008, we installed three KVAR Energy Controller systems (www.kvar.com). These systems recapture and store the electrical power used to startup large systems (like the furnace, air conditioner, and pool circulation). The stored energy is readily available to the whole circuit with the KVAR unit. This allows the systems to run more smoothly and efficiently while also eliminating spikes on the hotel’s draw from the grid lowering not only our use but also the rates we pay.



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^α www.waterwise.org.uk



Additionally, in 2008 we installed four Air Pear units, made by Airius (<http://www.airius.us/indexAIRIUS.php>) in the hotel atrium. These systems work to circulate the air more effectively and eliminate the natural stratification that occurs when warm air rises and cool air falls. When the temperature differential is reduced HVAC units work less frequently to make the hotel a comfortable temperature. We predict that the KVAR and Air Pear systems have reduced our energy use by 20-25% since 2008. In addition, we have installed compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) in all guestrooms and public areas. CFLs use up to 75% less energy for lighting than regular incandescent bulbs. We estimate that all of these measures combined have reduced our electrical use 18 to 20%.

ECO GREEN OFFICE

In 2006 we formed a relationship with Eco Green Office (www.ecogreenoffice.com). This organization has made it possible for us to buy office supplies throughout the hotel that help reduce our overall impact on the environment. Currently we purchase only 100% post consumer recycled paper as well as recycled ink toner cartridges, further allowing us to “close the loop” and provide a market for recycled materials.

GREEN CLEANING

In 2006 we stopped using traditional cleaning products throughout the hotel. We replaced these with Green Solution Cleaning Products manufactured by Spartan Chemical Company. These products are Green Seal and LEEDS certified having:

- No persistent, bioaccumulative or toxic chemicals
- No ozone depleting compounds
- No or low volatile organic compound content
- No hazardous waste characteristics
- No phosphates or phosphonates
- No carcinogens, mutagens or teratogens

Non-toxic cleaning products improve the indoor air quality of the hotel, are better for the health and safety of our guests and, most especially, the staff who uses them each day.

Additionally, we have recently started using the ActiveIon Pro from ActiveIon to clean our kitchen (<http://www.activeion.com/default.aspx>). These units use a small electrical pulse to ionize water, causing it to attract dirt and germs. The water and dirt are then easily wiped off of surfaces, leaving them clean and sanitized. These tools allow us to eliminate cleaning many chemicals from our kitchen cleaning procedure. Although the EPA approves this product, we are awaiting approval from the state of Colorado. Once approved, we plan on using these products in our housekeeping department as well, thus



eliminating most chemical cleaning products from the hotel entirely.

WHAT ELSE ARE WE DOING?

We are committed to doing as much as we can to reduce our footprint:

- We use bromine and ozone instead of chlorine to sanitize our pool. These chemicals have a lower evaporation rate and are less irritating to skin and eyes.
- We offer locally produced foods when available and a number of locally produced beverages in our Blues and Greens restaurant.
- We currently purchase almost 30% of our electrical needs from wind power by participating in Xcel Energy's [Windsource Program](#)
- We keep a Lost-and-Found box for guests' items left around the hotel. When items are in the Lost-and-Found for more than 90 days, they are donated to the local homeless shelter, which lets others benefit from perfectly good items.
- Since the purchase of the hotel, we have not sprayed the landscaping with chemicals of any kind.
- We are currently working on a partnership with a student group at CU to help us dispose of our used kitchen oils. CU Bio-diesel will take our used oil and convert it to bio-diesel for use by coop members and other vehicles locally.
- We maintain our own computers and re-use parts ourselves. Extra computers and parts are donated to Boulder Community Computers ([bococo.org](#)), a local non-profit that "bridges the digital divide and prevents electronic waste".
- The front entrance of the hotel features a specially designed landscape of native plants intended to be a butterfly habitat. This gives the butterflies a place to go, and naturally beautifies the front of our hotel.
- To promote sustainable transportation, we have bikes for our guests to use from sun-up to sundown free of charge. These bikes are provided by Pedal to Properties ([www.pedaltoproperties.com](#)). We also offer helmets, of course.





- We keep a small garden on the south side of the hotel, where we grow fresh vegetables and herbs for use in our restaurant and maintain a worm compost bed.

• After an assessment of our landscaping practices, we found that the plants we grow on the hotel grounds more than offset the carbon used to cultivate them. We have achieved this by using hand-powered mowers and other tools. This way, we use far less fuel and emit far less carbon than common landscaping practices.

• We actively encourage and support other local hotels and businesses in their efforts to use zero waste practices.

TRIAL AND ERROR

The road to becoming the most sustainable business we can be has involved many tried and failed experiments. Our hope is that by sharing our failures, as well as our successes, we will be able to help other businesses save money, time, and resources and avoid making the same mistakes.

SUSTAINABLE KEY CARDS

The Boulder Outlook Hotel uses approximately 11,000 keycards every year. Traditional plastic keycards are made from a non-recyclable type of plastic, which means that when they are lost or broken, they must be thrown into a landfill. We have since tried several alternative keycard options to find a better, more environmentally friendly product.

In 2007, we looked into purchasing paper keycards that would be able to be recycled with our mixed papers. However, we found that they did not stand up to the constant wear-and-tear, and that we were replacing them too frequently. Later, we tried to use cards made from corn-based plastic, which would be composted once they stopped working. However, in order for the cards to work, a magnetic strip is glued to the back. This strip is not compostable, and it was too hard to remove it so that the rest of the card could be composted. We are often approached with new solutions and now know what to look for in the right combination of materials. When we take into account both the magnetic strips that are not compostable and plant-based plastics that are not recyclable, we have yet to solve this dilemma.

However, we have recently ordered 500 wooden key cards from Sustainable Cards (www.sustainablecards.com). These cards are made from Nordic Birch and are harvested from a sustainable forest. When these cards fail, they will still not be compostable due to the magnetic strip, but being produced from a renewable resource that is not a food source has some advantages. The cards are significantly more expensive than other alternatives and our ability to use them on an on-going basis will be based on their reliability and longevity.

CHEMICAL SENSITIVE ROOMS

We wanted to accommodate guests who have sensitivities to common chemicals or severe allergies. We did this by creating 10 Pure Allergy Friendly guestrooms (www.purerooms.com) and one Green Room. These rooms were cleaned on a quarterly basis by Pure Solutions, NA, and were equipped with Air Handling Units to purify the air, carbon filter shower heads, micro-fiber mono-filament mattress and pillow case covers, and tea tree oil dispensing units in the ventilation system to inhibit mold growth.

The Green Room for chemically sensitive guests went even further. We started with an Allergy Friendly guestroom, but removed the tea tree oil dispenser, as some people have allergies to this substance. We replaced the linens with organic cotton ones, replaced the drapes with blinds, and replaced the carpet with tile. The linens and towels from this room were washed separately in hypoallergenic detergent, and surfaces were cleaned with a steam cleaner which used no chemicals to sanitize and clean the area.

These rooms allowed us to accommodate some very grateful chemically sensitive guests, however, with every improvement, we found that there were endless other improvements to be made. Our chemically sensitive guests often still had a hard time staying in the room because the chemicals used in the rest of the hotel would seep under the doors or were irritating for them when they were not in their room. We found that it was no longer cost-effective to maintain the rooms, for they were not providing the service we had intended. The rooms are still equipped with air purifiers, and the former Green Room still has blinds and tile floors, but we no longer advertise that we offer this kind of accommodation to our guests.

WIND OFFSETS

When we initially decided to go with wind power for some of our energy needs, we went with a company who sold wind offsets to other businesses. However, the wind-offset business is rife with scams and false advertising. In order for an offset to be real, the money paid for the offset must go towards creating new wind-sourced power production. Companies will sometimes say that they are creating more wind when this is not actually the case. Unfortunately, the company from which we initially bought wind offsets misrepresented their operations and went out of business without supporting new wind power development. We have since switched to Xcel Energy's Windsource Program, which does create more sources of wind power around the Western United States.

HARD TO RECYCLE MATERIALS

Currently, the Boulder Outlook Hotel participates in Eco-Cycle's Hard to Recycle Program, which allows us to recycle nontraditional materials, including textiles, electronics, and some plastics. We were recycling plastic bags from our kitchen, but found that we were having a hard time separating recyclable plastic bags from non-recyclable varieties, especially in the hectic and fast-paced environment of our kitchen. In the end, we found that we were, in fact, contaminating the waste stream with non-recyclable materials, and have since stopped trying to separate plastic bags in our kitchen.

RECOGNITION

CERTIFICATIONS AND AWARDS

- Sustainable Business Gold Medal in 2007 from the Colorado Clean Tech Initiative
- Eco-Cycle 2006 Small Business Award, “Going for Zero Waste or Darn Near”
- Our restaurant became certified by PACE (Partners for a Clean Environment) in 2005.
- Early in 2010, we helped PACE develop a Hotel Certification, and became one of the first hotels to acquire the certification. We are hoping to be able to develop a program to aid other hotels to become PACE certified.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As a business we are also dedicated to supporting and giving back to our community.

NONPROFIT SUPPORT

We have always offered our Executive Boardroom free-of-charge to nonprofit charitable organizations needing a place to meet. We are pleased to have provided support to the following organizations:

MESA—A Program of the Colorado Minority Engineering Association, The Native American Rights Fund, Intercambio, BATCO, Boulder Pride, Burma Life Line, YMCA, The Community Foundation, BVSD, SMESO, Sustainable Resources, CARE, CORE, Boulder Going Local, BIBA, KGNU Public Radio, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Blues Society, National Wildlife Federation, Peace Jam Foundation, Boulder Outdoors Coalition, Eco Arts, Valmont Butte Heritage Alliance, Mission Wolf, Boulder Guitar Society, Boulder Chamber: Student Leadership, Boulder Youth Symphony, Sustainable Tourism, American Cancer Society, City of Boulder, MEP, Boulder County Sheriff’s Office, CU-Visiting Artists, Earth Day 5K, Boulder Off-Road Alliance, CSCPA, Boulder Good Samaritan, TKE, BBYO, Movement in Motion, Center for Resource Conservation, the Leeds School of Business, Blue Sky Bridge, Colorado State Parks, American Mountain Guides Associates, Mountain Whisper Light, Reading to End Racism, Boulder County Arts Alliance, P-3 Colorado, DFC, Museum Training Network, Movement to End Sexual Assault, Women in Business, Community Cycles, and Safe Rides.

We encourage our staff to be active participants in the community. Members of our team have served on the Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Board, Boulder Chamber of Commerce Community Affairs Committee, Valmont Park Planning Committee, Boulder Parks and Recreation Work Group on Recreation Financing, 9News Health Fair, and MESA Volunteer Committee.

CSA PICKUP AT THE HOTEL

Windsor Dairy and Abbondanza Farm use the Boulder Outlook Hotel as a distribution center for their Cow Share holders and Community Supported Agriculture members. In turn we use their products in our restaurant. This allows us to bring attention to these local food products, and keep some of our vegetables and dairy items local and fresh.



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

We have offered ESL classes to our staff. These classes were based on the material and training available from our partners at Intercambio de Comunidades.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Since 2005, we have worked in conjunction with the Boulder Valley School District to offer on-the-job training for students with educational disabilities. In the past, these students have worked in our restaurant twice a week to learn occupational skills by performing tasks appropriate to their skill levels. We did hire one of these students to remain as part of our staff after graduation. He has since moved on to another job.

LOCAL ARTIST PROGRAM

Since 2004, we have offered our lobby space for the exhibition of the works of local artists. Typically these artists display their work for three months, during which time we host a wine and cheese reception at our cost. The artists' work is available for purchase during the exhibition. We do not charge the artist any fees or commissions. Our reward is the pleasure of having the work on display while meeting and supporting local artists.

SPREADING THE WORD

We believe that our efforts in Environmental Stewardship provide an opportunity to educate others and have a positive impact beyond our walls. A part of this occurs by showing our guests from around the country and the world the types of products that are now available. In addition, we have worked formally with several groups, from the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado, the University of Colorado at Denver, Stout University in Wisconsin, and students from middle schools in Kansas and New Jersey. We have been advocates of other businesses adopting environmentally sensitive programs, particularly within the hospitality industry. We have spoken out at industry meetings to encourage other hotels and restaurants to join the Zero Waste Movement.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR

Our goal of reducing our environmental impact and becoming a better member of the community is truly a journey, not a destination. We will continue to look for areas where we can have the most impact. We constantly maintain a list of future initiatives which we update frequently as we learn of other steps that we can take. Several of the initiatives that are high on our list are:

- Replace individual in-room shampoo, conditioner and lotion containers with bulk-dispensing units.
- Progress towards purchasing all of our electrical needs from wind power. We currently have a bid in the works to achieve this goal.
- Divert 90%+ of our waste from landfills.

We look forward to updating this report in the future and discovering new ways to lower our impact on the planet, support our community, and provide a positive experience for our guests, staff, and their families. #