



Power Talks

March 10, 2014

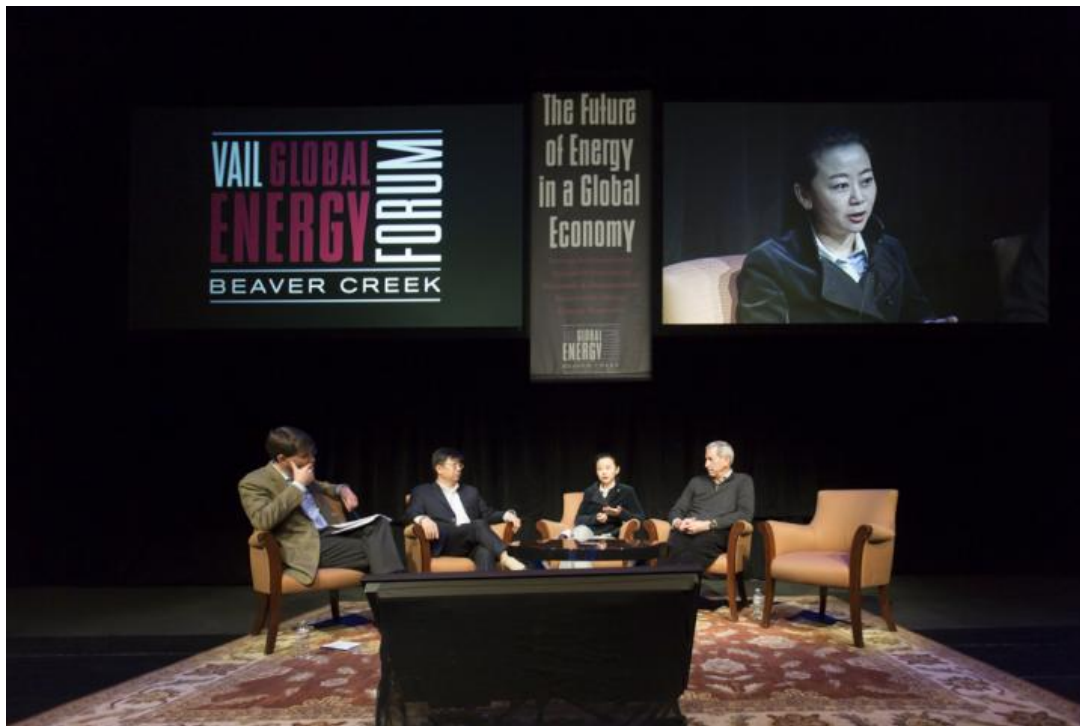
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By: **Julie Dugdale**

Vail Resorts shares its commitment to conservation at the Vail Global Energy Forum in Beaver Creek.

When your company employs 22,000 people and hosts seven million skier visits a year—on the pristinely groomed slopes of 10 resort areas, 18 hotels, 127 restaurants, and more than 200 lifts—energy consumption is a big deal. That’s why Vail Resorts takes its mission to conserve energy so seriously (for a closer look, watch the video [here](#)).

“We need to protect the iconic landscape and beautiful resources that are home to our resorts,” says Vail Resorts’ energy manager, Sean Conboy. “We try to limit our impact. Until recently, we haven’t talked a lot about our efforts; we’ve really focused on *doing* and not talking. But we want to raise awareness. If we can get people to see what we’re doing, and to incorporate even one or two of those things in their daily lives, we can magnify those practices.”

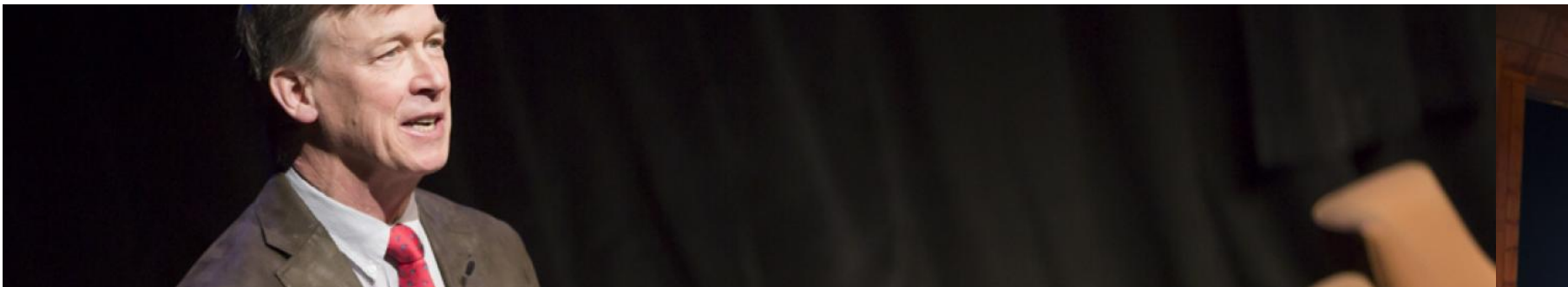


A panel takes the stage at the 2014 Vail Global Energy Forum in Beaver Creek. Photo by Zach Mahone.

Case in point: Earlier this month, Vail Resorts and [Beaver Creek](#) sponsored the Vail Global Energy Forum at the mountain. Hosted by the [Vail Valley Foundation](#), Stanford University’s [Precourt Institute for Energy](#) (PIE), and the [Precourt Energy Efficiency Center](#) (PEEC), the forum gathered experts from across the country to tackle some of the most significant energy issues of our time. Overarching

themes spanned responsible development of resources to balance multiple needs; conservation of energy in the most impactful way to create a secure energy future; and incorporation of renewables into our national energy portfolio. Leaders from organizations like the [Pew Research Center](#) and the [Environmental Defense Fund](#), along with individuals such as Google's vice president of energy Arun Majumdar and Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, converged on the mountain hamlet to hash out energy strategy and best practices. "Our involvement is a great way to connect with the people who are passionate and engaged with energy challenges," Conboy says.

The forum aligned well with Vail Resorts' ongoing stake in resource conservation, as the team is pursuing its own energy challenge: To reduce energy consumption across the company by another 10 percent before 2020. It's called "[The Next 10](#)" initiative, which was launched in 2012 after the company exceeded its first "Target 10 Percent" goal. As of the end of last season, Vail Resorts has saved enough energy to power 2,683 average U.S. homes for a year. "It takes a lot of work," Conboy says. "The second goal is more challenging because we've already gone through the low-hanging fruit. Now, we're talking major changes to the infrastructure, and we're investing millions into those changes."





Left to right: Colorado governor John Hickenlooper addresses the 2014 Vail Global Energy Forum in Beaver Creek; the crowd at the forum listens to a speaker on stage. Photos by Zach Mahone.

Together, five areas account for 91 percent of Vail Resorts' energy consumption: facilities, snowmaking, food and beverage, grooming, and lifts. The key is developing a conservation strategy for each of those areas, building partnerships with programs like [Energy Star](#), [Holy Cross Energy](#), and [Xcel Energy](#), and educating the employees to make behavioral changes. Projects that



Snowmaking at Breckenridge.

range from installing more efficient snow guns to commercial kitchen equipment replacements to GPS technology that helps snowcat operators groom more efficiently are helping Vail Resorts close in on its next goal.



Groomed run at Beaver Creek.

Conboy hopes that holding the Energy Forum in Beaver Creek’s breathtaking Rocky Mountains made an impression on the participants—just as he hopes the landscape moves skiers and snowboarders to be better stewards of our resources every time they set foot on the slopes. “When guests come and see how beautiful our resorts are, hopefully it inspires them to preserve this

beauty for future generations.”

Tags: **Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone, Canyons, Heavenly, Northstar, Kirkwood, Afton Alps, Mt Brighton, Multi-resort, Ski, Snowboard**

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NOVEMBER 8, 2013

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