



**June 2024  
Issue no. 29**

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**In Memoriam**

Bill Levitt, 1917 – 2009

**Friends of Alta**

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Photo courtesy of Rachel Pierce



## A Season of Renewal

After gracing us with yet another incredible ski season (Alta Ski Area reported an astonishing season total of 628 inches of snow), the muted tones of Little Cottonwood Canyon's snow-covered mountains are quickly giving way to the vibrant colors and hues of a new season. Spring weather in Alta arrives at a time of its own choosing, but its brilliance is always worth the wait.

Spring in Little Cottonwood Canyon means an abundance of hiking and biking trails lined with breathtaking flora and fauna, rock-climbing spots that have helped sharpen the skills of world class athletes, including Olympic silver medalist in men's sport climbing, Nathaniel Coleman, beautiful destinations for the whole family like Cecret Lake and Lisa Falls, and a unique view of the Wasatch Mountains.

Such is Little Cottonwood Canyon, a true jewel of the Wasatch. Unfortunately, it is now firmly in the crosshairs of short-sighted thinking, greed, and the allure of a 'shiny toy' - UDOT's proposal to build the world's longest gondola in Little Cottonwood."

### Shiny Toy Syndrome

"Shiny Toy Syndrome refers to the tendency to focus solely on the development of the latest and greatest technological advancements without considering their actual impact on society or whether they truly serve a useful purpose...without necessarily delivering any real benefits or solving any meaningful problems."- Petek Kabakci, PMP, PCC

It's astonishing that a solution so vehemently opposed by the vast majority of Utahans retains its legs through what is tantamount to ignoring the will of the people, the actual data, and real world common-sense. As Henry Buckley famously stated, "The causes of mistakes are, first, I didn't know, second, I didn't think, third, I didn't care." Little Cottonwood Canyon deserves better.





### The Red Snake Letter

The General Manager of Alta Ski Area, Mike Maughan, recently composed a letter in response to UDOT's selection of Gondola Alternative B, titled the "Red Snake Letter." In the letter, Mr. Maughan points out that nothing in the UDOT's plan addresses any of the issues currently facing motorists. "Whether it's a gondola or it's toll lanes or it's buses," Maughan said, "none of those solutions as proposed are designed to replace the current vehicle volume level in the canyon."

One wonders, if UDOT and the Legislature aren't listening to the citizens of Utah, the elected officials of impacted cities, environmental agencies, or the General Manager of one of the two ski resorts set to "benefit" from the addition of a gondola, who are they listening to?

### Friends of Alta vs The Gondola

On December 4th 2023, Friends of Alta filed a lawsuit against UDOT's selection of Gondola Alternative B, to try and achieve a pause while additional analysis is performed. As Canyon Guard Chair and spokesperson, Craig Heimark stated: "We expect the lawsuit will create the time and space for Utah legislators to review and direct UDOT to consider and test cheaper and more effective transportation solutions by using the \$150M recently authorized BEFORE allocating additional taxpayer dollars or making a final decision."

In my view, litigation should only happen if and when all efforts have been exhausted. Lawsuits

are costly, time consuming, and by definition, contentious. In an ideal world, common sense solutions and cooperation between agencies would render this lawsuit moot. Unfortunately, we live in the real world, and in the real world, we were forced to take a stand and say enough is enough. The time for action is now, and we have taken a stand to move forward. We need you to stand with us.

### How You Can Help

There are several ways to show your support for Friends of Alta and our lawsuit to stop the gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. We currently have a fundraising goal of \$100,000 to support our litigation and we have raised just over half that amount. We need your support!

We are holding a fundraising event at Fischer Brewery on June 4th that you won't want to miss! We will have a 2024 Utah legislative recap, a preview of what to anticipate for 2025, and important facts about the gondola. You'll have the chance to enter the opportunity drawing for some amazing prizes, which include an e-bike from Cranky's Bike Shop, backpacks from Osprey & Black Diamond, Sunday brunch for two at Alta Lodge, climbing passes from The Scratch Pad, sunglasses, live music, and more! RSVP today at [www.friendsofalta.org/event](http://www.friendsofalta.org/event)!

A yellow poster for a fundraiser. At the top, the text "FIGHT THE GONDOLA FUNDRAISER" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below this, in smaller text, it says "Fundraiser for the FOA &amp; Canyon Guard Lawsuit". To the right of the text is a red circle with a diagonal line through it, containing a black silhouette of a gondola. Below the text is a photograph of a mountain valley with a road and a gondola system. At the bottom left of the poster, the website "www.friendsofalta.org/event" is listed. At the bottom right, there is a green box with white text that reads "JUNE 4", "5:30 PM - 8:30 PM", "FISHER BREWING CO", and "\$15 - \$20 TICKET". There is also a blue circular icon with a white arrow pointing down and to the right.



## In Other FOA News

Have you attended a Friends of Alta Speaker Series event yet? Lucky for you there are two more opportunities in 2024! Our Summer Speaker Series event is “Mountain Forests in a Changing Climate,” and will be presented by Associate Professor William Anderegg from the University of Utah. This discussion will cover the future of western US forests in a rapidly changing climate. This event is scheduled for August 15, 2024 from 6:45 PM to 8 PM at Our Lady of the Snows. RSVP at [www.friendsofalta.org/event](http://www.friendsofalta.org/event).

Our Winter event is titled “Utah Air Quality,” and will be presented by Professor John Lin from the University of Utah. Professor Lin will hold a discussion on Greenhouse gases, Air Quality, and Future of the Wasatch Front. Date to be announced soon.

We are proud to host some of the brightest minds in their respective fields as they discuss topics of great environmental significance. We look forward to seeing you there!

For Alta,

Kody R. Fox  
Executive Director





## Letter from Our Board President: ~Time to Pass the Torch~

Dear Friends,

As this newsletter goes “to press”, it will be just a few short months until I step down from my role as President of the Board of Friends of Alta. It has been quite a ride these past five years. However, I won’t be going away, just transitioning to the role of Past President. Board Member and Vice President, Del Draper, will be taking the reins, and I know he will do a fantastic job.

During my tenure as president, I hired our wonderful Executive Director, Kody Fox, virtually “sight unseen”. As it was during the pandemic, it would be some time before I would get the opportunity to meet Kody in person. Zoom Board meetings became the norm. I was so much happier when they returned to “brick and mortar”.

Over the past five years we placed an increased emphasis on education. We partnered with Latinos Outdoors, providing informational hikes, focused on the watershed. We produced both a summer and winter Junior Ranger book geared toward our youth. We started our annual mine tour. These mines provide Alta, Snowbird and the Salt Lake Valley with water. Star parties in the fall, allowed our members to gaze into the “heavens” and be thankful for Alta’s Albion Basin’s “dark sky”. In the past year, we started a Speaker Series, geared to the seasons and looking at what makes Alta and Little Cottonwood Canyon special.

All this said, we can’t ignore the “elephant in the room”, the Gondola. Our quest to defeat the Gondola, slated for Little Cottonwood Canyon, has taken and will continue to take a lot of time and money. I will leave it at that. (Other articles in the newsletter go into greater depth on the issue).

With Kody Fox and Tara Morin at the helm, a great Board, and under the new leadership of Del Draper, I know Friends of Alta will continue to grow and flourish.

Thank you all for being Friends of Alta, we couldn’t do what we do without you.

- Cassie Levitt Dippo  
FOA Board President

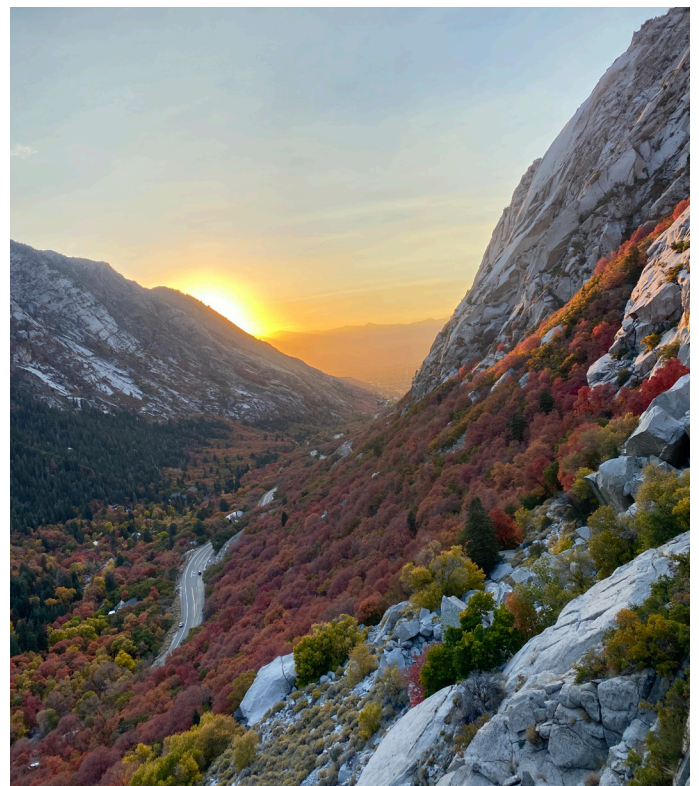
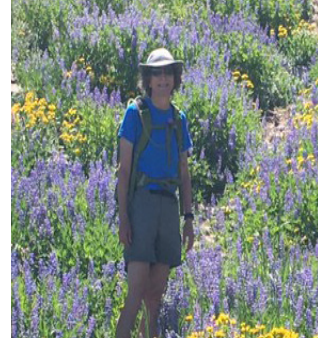


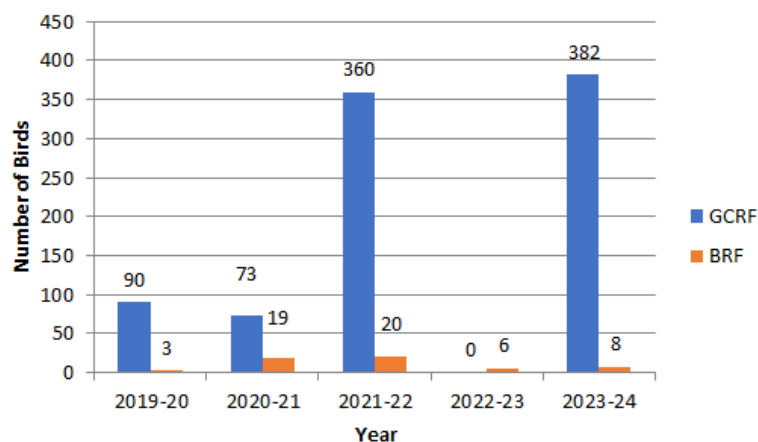
Photo By Spencer Jensen

## Black Rosy-Finch Study Recap

Black rosy-finches reside in the Rocky Mountains, but you'll need to climb cliffs in the highest of mountains to spot one. Climate change is shrinking the rosy-finches' nesting habitat, which has caused many scientists to be worried. Without basic knowledge of their needs, it's difficult to know what to do to ensure these birds are resilient against climate change. Nearly every conservation organization and government agency recognizes rosy-finches are of highest priority for action.

Friends of Alta has been supporting the Black Rosy-Finch study conducted by the Utah Dept. of Wildlife Resources since March 2019. There is surprisingly little information on the Black Rosy-Finch bird species. While their cousin the Gray-Crowned Rosy-Finch migrates next to Canada, the Black Rosy-Finch nests here in the Albion Basin and in the Uinta Mountains. The reason for this is because the Black Rosy-Finch prefer high Alpine environments to nest.

This past season we witnessed an uptick in finches collected at the feeders compared to last year. For the 2022-23 season we noticed 0 Grey Crowned Rosy-Finches and 6 Black Rosy-Finches. We believe that was because of the amount of snow we had last season. For this season, we had 382 Grey Crowned Rosy-Finches and only 8 Black Rosy-Finches.



## We Need Your Financial Support To Preserve Alta And It's Environs

FOA, Canyon Guard v. Utah Department of Transportation (UPDATE)

Friends of Alta (FOA) filed its 95-page lawsuit on December 4, 2023. Salt Lake City, Sandy, and Metro Water District filed a separate lawsuit against UDOT on December 11. Save Our Canyons filed a third lawsuit on December 18, 2023. The complaints in each lawsuit have significant overlap, but each party wanted their own counsel.

In January, February, and most of March, the ten "different" attorneys had regular telephone calls to coordinate strategies. We also spoke with attorneys at Perkins Coie, which is a national law firm and outside counsel for the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT). In our discussions with Perkins Coie, we agreed to prepare a draft scheduling order.

On a separate track, the ten attorneys for the plaintiffs agreed on a motion to consolidate the cases, which has been submitted to the judge assigned to the case, Judge Tena Campbell, United States district judge of the United States District Court for the District of Utah. This consolidation will be helpful for logistics and as a cost saving measure for the plaintiffs.

All three lawsuits will follow the federal Administrative Procedures Act (APA). Under the Federal Court Rules, all cases under APA jurisdiction, like our case, are based on the administrative record created by the administrative agency being sued. In this instance, the two agencies being sued are the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and UDOT. It is anticipated no significant activity will occur until June or July.

-Pat Shea  
Legal Council







## Season Recap

The 2023-24 season is being called the return to “normal” for the winter season in Alta. Over the past four seasons we have experienced a pandemic that caused a season to end abruptly and another requiring social distancing, a season with a historic dry spell, and finally the past season that buried Alta in historic snowfall. So, what is a “normal” Alta season? A normal season for Alta receives 546 inches of snowfall and plenty of powder days. This past season, Alta received 628 inches and only one road closure day after receiving over 20 inches of snow that day.

Besides the endless fun powder days, we were able to host our annual Alta Gala at the Snowpine Lodge for a third year in a row. The Alta Gala is a collaborative fundraiser for Alta Community Enrichment, Friends of Alta & Alta Historical Society. The goal is not only to raise money but to raise awareness of these three 501c3 nonprofits in Alta, Utah. This year we decided to mix things up by having two parties with three ticket options. This year was another record breaker for the Alta Gala! We sold out of tickets within 18 minutes to the Classic Gala Party and we were able to raise approximately \$14,000 for each organization.

During the Alta Gala, we were able to host another opportunity drawing this year. Participants had the chance to win two different prize packages. One option was for an Alta Ski Resort 2024-25 Season Pass and the other option was for one day Heli-skiing package with Powderbirds for two people. Congratulations to Lem Hambrecht for winning the Powderbirds Heli-skiing package and Mark Simon for winning the Alta Ski Resort Season Pass! Thank you to everyone who participated in the opportunity drawing and/or joining us at one of the Alta Gala parties.

## ~ Looking Forward ~

As we move forward, we are hosting our annual summer stewardship events. Some volunteer events will be limited on the number of participants who may attend; therefore, reservations will be required for many of the events. More information on the events are available at [www.friendsofalta.org/event](http://www.friendsofalta.org/event) or [www.alta.com/environment](http://www.alta.com/environment). We will also be hosting several new events that you will not want to miss.

### **Fight the Gondola Fundraiser (June):**

A new fundraiser we are hosting this year will be to help fund the Friends of Alta lawsuit. The Fight the Gondola Fundraiser will be on June 4, 2024, at Fisher Brewing. The goal of the fundraiser is not only to raise money but to raise awareness of the inaccuracies of the gondola being the right choice for Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC). During the event, we will have two panel discussions, a short video, and an opportunity drawing with some amazing prizes in it. Prizes like an e-bike from Cranky's Bike shop, fun day adventures, brunch for two, climbing passes, and lots of great outdoor gear. Tickets for the opportunity drawing will only be available during the event. Ticket for the event is \$20 for the general public and \$15 for students. Tickets for this event can be found at [www.friendsofalta.org/event](http://www.friendsofalta.org/event).

### **Mine and Water Treatment Tour (July):**

We are in the second year of organizing our mine and water treatment tour with Kasey Carpenter the GM of Salt Lake County Service Area #3. We are opening reservations up to our members first before the public. Keep an eye out in your email for that invitation.



## Friends of Alta Speaker Series (Summer and Fall):

During this past winter we hosted two of the four speakers for our speaker series. On August 14th we will see a topic from Professor William Anderegg on the Mountain Forests in a changing climate and our final topic for the year by Professor John Lin on Utah Air Quality this November. Reserving your spot for this is available online at [www.friendsofalta.org/event](http://www.friendsofalta.org/event).

## Memorial Tree Planting (September):

Each year Friends of Alta hosts a memorial tree planting for people interested in planting a tree in honor of a loved one. What's unique about these trees is they are trees harvested from Alta Ski Resort by Alta Environment Center and TreeUtah for us. These trees are going to be removed because of their location on a ski run or other areas in Alta. We are fortunate enough to usually receive around ten (10) trees each year for new trees and re-planting trees that didn't survive the winter. For this year's planting, we have sold out of available trees to be planted as new trees. We do have next year's planting available for pre-purchase online if you or someone you know is interested. More information can be found at [www.friendsofalta.org/memorial-tree-planting](http://www.friendsofalta.org/memorial-tree-planting).

## Friends of Alta Star Gazing Party (September):

We are on our third year of doing the star gazing party with Utah Astronomical Society. This year might look a little different compared to the past two years because we are changing locations in Alta to Albion Base Parking Lot. We are opening registration up for our members first and will open the remainder of available reservations to the public after. Keep an eye out on your email for updated details and registration. More information can be found at [www.friendsofalta.org/event](http://www.friendsofalta.org/event)

## 2024 Summer Event Schedule

These dates are subject to change, please visit [friendsofalta.org/event](http://friendsofalta.org/event) or [www.alta.com/environment](http://www.alta.com/environment) for up to date information and to register for events! All events require registration.

### June

- 4 - FOA Gondola Fundraiser 5:30PM - 8PM
- 20- HawkWatch Bird of Prey Show 1PM - 3PM
- 27 - Tracy Aviary Bird Hike 9AM - 12PM

### July

- 3 - AEC Volunteer Day 3PM - 5PM
- 11 - FOA Mine Tour 9 AM-3PM
- 25 - Tracy Aviary Bird Hike 9AM - 12PM
- 25- HawkWatch Bird of Prey Show 1PM - 3PM
- 27- Tree Utah Tree Harvest 9AM - 12PM
- 28 - Wildflower Festival at Alta 9AM - 1PM
- 31 - FOA/AEC Volunteer Day 3PM - 5PM

### August

- 5 - Alta Ski Area Clean up 8AM - 12PM
- 9 - Alta Kids Day 10AM - 2PM
- 14 - FOA Speaker Series 6:45PM-8PM
- 15 - HawkWatch Bird of Prey Show 1PM - 3PM
- 22 - Tracy Aviary Bird Hike 9AM - 12PM
- 31- Explore Alta's Mining History 8:30AM-11AM

### September

- 13- FOA Memorial Tree Planting 9:30AM - 1PM
- 21 - Alta Ski Area Tree Planting 8AM - 1PM
- 25 - AEC Volunteer Day 3PM - 5PM
- 26 - Tracy Aviary Bird Hike 9AM - 12PM
- TBD - FOA/SLAS Star Party 7:30 PM

### October

- 24 - Tracy Aviary Bird Hike 9AM - 12PM

*All Volunteer Days will include tree planting, weed pulling, and restoration projects. This will be followed by food in the Alta Town Park.*

*Key:*

*AEC- Alta Environment Center / CCF- Cottonwood Canyon Foundation /FOA - Friends of Alta / LO- Latino Outdoors  
SLAS- Salt Lake Astronomical Society /TA- Tracy Aviary  
TU- Tree Uta*

# Meet Our New Board Members

## Eva Chan

Eva Chan is a retired banking executive with 20+ years of finance experience, now fully immersed in the nonprofit sector. As one of the founding members of the New York based nonprofit Youth Construct, for four years, Eva played a pivotal role in shaping the organization, developing fundraising strategy, and implementing key administrative systems and processes for the organization. For three years, she was appointed as a Manhattan community board 11 member, where she advocated to elected officials to improve youth education and quality of life issues in her district.

Eva spends her leisure time hiking, skiing, bird watching, gardening, and developing vegan recipes. She also loves to read, swim, workout, and play the piano. Albion Basin is one of Eva's favorite place on this earth and she is passionate about preserving its natural beauty. Having recently relocated to Utah, Eva seeks to support local organizations in her new home base, applying her experience in financial analysis, governance, marketing, and digital engagement to contribute where she can.

Prior to her retirement, Eva worked in the banking sector for 20+ years. She last worked as an Executive Director at JP Morgan Chase Bank managing large-scale transformational projects for the firm, heavily involved in the development of risk management processes, analytics, systems, and associated control and governance. Before this, she worked at Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Bloomberg, and PwC in a range of areas including developing structured financial products, building financial analytical systems, and establishing governance frameworks.



## John Guldner

I was born and raised in Iowa. Attended the University of Iowa for a BS in Urban Geography and an MA in Public Affairs. I was introduced to and fell in love with Alta during a ski trip with the University of Iowa's Ski Club. Did an internship with Sandy City, whose motto at the time was "Gateway to Fabulous Alta" between undergraduate and graduate school.

Worked as a planner at a regional planning agency in Iowa before graduate school and as a City Planner in the Quad Cities on the banks of the Mississippi River after graduate school.

A friend from Iowa was the town manager of Brian Head and called me to tell me Bill Levitt, Mayor of Alta was looking for an assistant. I called Bill, flew out, attended meetings with Bill and stayed at the Alta Lodge for a week. Bill offered me the job and I readily accepted, thinking it would be only a couple of years. Two years turned into forty-one ½ years!

During that time, I married a wonderful woman I met at Alta, and had two sons, both now grown and still living in the Salt Lake Area. In addition to spending as much time as possible with the family and our two dogs, I enjoy cross country skiing, hiking and swimming.

I first learned of the Alta Defense Fund in my early years with the town, because of the Fund's help with development lawsuits.

I am happy and honored to continue that relationship today with the Friends of Alta.





## Cole Hollis

Cole grew up in the small town of North Smithfield, Rhode Island, where his love for Utah took root during his formative years. His family's tradition of exploring national parks across the nation instilled in him a profound appreciation for Utah's remarkable scenery, cultivated through visits to its iconic national parks and forests. Through coincidence, he moved to Utah in 2021 after a job opportunity presented itself in downtown Salt Lake City. Since then, he has only deepened his love for the state's natural beauty / offerings through recreation and community engagement.

Cole graduated Cum Laude from Bryant University in 2020, earning a degree in International Business. Currently, he serves as an Associate at Goldman Sachs, contributing his expertise to the Corporate Treasury division on the Liquidity Management desk. Beyond his professional endeavors, Cole's passion for outdoor exploration takes center stage. Cole can be found mountain biking, camping and skiing with friends across the picturesque landscapes of Utah, further deepening his appreciation for the state's natural beauty.



## Looking for New Board Members

Friend's of Alta is looking for new board members to join our organization. For board members, we're currently looking for candidates with core competencies in finance/ capital campaign, community development/marketing, and legal professionals. For a full job description see the listing at

[www.friendsofalta.org/jobopenings](http://www.friendsofalta.org/jobopenings) .



Photo By Stephen Gelb

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 Member Program

Become a sustaining donor through the Friends of Alta Membership Program! This new program launched Fall 2023. As a member you will help support the operations of FOA, raise awareness about the Little Cottonwood Environmental Impact Study, the importance of protecting Albion Basin, and the watershed, develop and improve our education program, and provide resources to a more diverse audience and the younger generation about the importance of protecting Albion Basin. In addition to supporting our programs, our membership tiers also include perks such as access to member events, a Friends of Alta calendar, a member refrigerator magnet, priority enrollment for specific FOA events, and discounts on FOA merchandise.

For more information visit:  
[www.friendsofalta.org/membership-information](http://www.friendsofalta.org/membership-information)

Plan Name	Plan Contribution Amount (Yearly)	Benefits	What Impact Your Donation Makes
Pearly Everlasting	\$2,500 +	Base benefits, calendar, priority enrollment 1 for FOA specific events, and 20% discount on FOA merchandise	Shape FOA's future
Columbine	\$1,000 to \$2,499	Base benefits, calendar, priority enrollment 2 for FOA specific events, and 15% discount on FOA merchandise	Shape FOA's future
Alpine Shooting Star	\$500 to \$999	Base benefits, calendar, priority enrollment 3 for FOA specific events, and 10% discount on FOA merchandise.	Take FOA to the next level
Showy Goldeneye	\$250 to \$499	Base benefits, calendar, and priority enrollment 4 for FOA specific events.	Take FOA to the next level
Paintbrush	\$100 to \$249	Base benefits, calendar, and priority enrollment 5 for FOA specific events.	Support FOA's ongoing operations
Lupine	\$25 to \$99	Base benefits and final enrollment for FOA specific events before the public has access	Support FOA's ongoing operation



## Ways to support FOA

Ask your employer if they have a matching gift program and make your contributions to FOA go twice as far! We have a variety of FOA merchandise ready to go home with you. All proceeds go to help fund FOA. Check out our Alta Ski Resort Trail Map Blanket, Pat Bagley Anti-Gondola Artwork t-shirt, and more!



\$25



\$35



\$120



\$30



Alta Shuttle donates 2% of all services to/from the Town of Alta during the winter season to FOA. Special thanks to Alta Shuttle, Tom, the shuttle drivers, and Alta Shuttle's patrons for supporting FOA.  
[Altashuttle.com](http://Altashuttle.com)



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)



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

Proud member of 1% for the Planet and the Land Trust Alliance.



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

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

## FOA Partners



Follow us on social media for updates

