

Annie Smart - Reflection Piece

Bill Levitt Fellow November 2016 – May 2017

Alta has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. When I was young, my parents passed on their love for Alta by taking my brother and me for summer hikes and picnics in Albion Basin and winter skiing, starting out on Sunnyside. I learned to ski the mountain in the Alta Youth Program with kids that are now lifelong friends. Alta is where I made my first powder turns, learned to identify wild flowers, saw my first moose, and where I was able to find my passion for adventure. Now that I am an adult, I go to Alta to feel a sense of peace and to get away from the buzz of the city, as I'm sure many of us do.

I feel very fortunate to have been awarded the Bill Levitt Fellowship this winter and to be given the opportunity to help preserve and protect this special place and work with Jen Clancy and meet Board members and other supporters who are passionate about Alta. This opportunity has fostered a deeper connection to the spirit of Alta by broadening my view of the delicate ecological balance and enriching my understanding of the efforts it took to preserve and defend these open spaces. From learning to recognize many different species of birds on the monthly bird surveys, to helping in our efforts to save Bonanza Flats, working for Friends of Alta has broadened my education and pushed my own limits as an environmentalist and conservationist, and fueled my passion for skiing. Campaigning on behalf of FOA was empowering; to spread a mission I believe in led me to meet many people with whom I share common values and who I was able to inspire to aid in Alta's defense.

Alta has a spirit – you can hear it in the Pine Grosbeak's song, see it in the painted meadows of Albion Basin, and feel it in the wind along Devil's Castle; she is alive and awe inspiring, but we mustn't take her for granted. She has been shaped by the countless individuals

who have brought a sense of place and community, but she would not be here if they had not stood their ground to protect her. I am humbled and honored to have worked alongside many of these inspiring people. This experience has sealed my bond to Alta. Help us protect Alta's spirit and sense of place so that future generations can continue to experience the magic of this wonderland, where you can renew your soul and spirit.