

Green Travel:
10 Ways to make your Steamboat Springs summer vacation sustainable
By Molly Killien

As a savvy, sustainable traveler you're interested in what you can do to make your Steamboat Springs summer vacation as "green" as Emerald Mountain in the month of June, right? Let us help you, guide you and teach you about all Steamboat in the Summertime has to offer! Whether you are looking for eco-friendly activities, lodging, restaurants, local programs or guest services let this simple list assist you.

1. Ride the FREE BUS – Steamboat Springs Transit

De-stress your life and leave the car at the condo. Make your way around Steamboat Springs, Colorado like a local. The Steamboat Springs Transit system (SST) provides a fixed route transit service throughout the City of Steamboat Springs. Access includes the Gondola Transit Center at the mountain base area, old town Steamboat Springs and areas west of town. This year-round, user friendly bus service is provided daily and is a great way to reduce gas usage, meet new people and save money. Schedule information is available on the buses and in brochure racks located throughout Steamboat Springs. It doesn't get much better than FREE! Why wouldn't you use it? For more information about SST please call 970-879-3717 or visit steamboatsprings.net.

2. Local, Reusable Totes

Reusable totes have been on the scene for years; they are eco-friendly, eliminate the need for plastic bags and are fashionable too. Did you forget your collection of reusable bags at home or are you looking to expand your current collection with great bags from the Yampa Valley? Stop by the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association's Visitor Center (125 Anglers Drive) and pick up some new Steamboat Springs swag. Stop by and check out the green Yampa Valley Recycles Bags and the black Buy Local bags that are ready for purchase. Have enough reusable bags? It's a souvenir that everyone one will enjoy and appreciate...and the recipients can pretend they were lucky enough to vacation in Steamboat Springs.

3. Support sustainable businesses

Currently 69 businesses strong, the Sustainable Business Program is one of the most accredited, diverse and encompassing programs of its kind in Colorado. Established in March of 2007 as a collaborative effort between the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association and Environmental Solutions Unltd, the Sustainable Business Program has been changing the nature of business in the Yampa Valley. The program focuses on sustainability and the Triple Bottom Line - financial success, social responsibility, and proactive environmental management. The goal is to leave our planet in as good or better shape for future generations. Find a list of enrolled businesses at steamboatchamber.com/sustainable.

4. Cents for Steamboat

Ever wanted to help make a sustainable difference in a community by...shopping? Cents for Steamboat is a program developed as part of the Sustainable Business Program to raise funds for local "green" projects within the community. The concept and execution is simple; shop at a participating Cents for Steamboat business and make a voluntary donations at the time of check out. Patrons of the participating business can donate 1%, or other amount, of a business transaction which will then be earmarked for sustainability-oriented local projects. All Cents for Steamboat projects will on topics such as water, air quality, land preservation, green building, energy efficiency and sustainable living. Learn more about enrolled businesses at stemaboatchamber.com/cents.

5. League of American Bicyclists - Silver Bicycle Friendly Award

It's no surprise that Steamboat Springs, a mountain community surrounded by many natural areas, earned the Silver Bicycle Friendly award from the League of American Bicyclists in 2007. The award is part of the League's mission to promote bicycling for fun, fitness, and transportation throughout America. The Steamboat Springs community well known as a ski town, now is growing in fame as a bike town. Routt County offers a wide variety of recreational and commuting opportunities for bicyclists. Few cities offer highlights to enjoy with friends and family such as mountain bike trails on Howelsen Hill, Steamboat ski mountain, neighborhood trails, and the Core trail that are accessible right from town.

6. Yampa Valley Sustainability Councils Zero Waste Initiative

A program of the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC), the Zero Waste Initiative is a coalition that is dedicated to keeping waste at bay and spreading awareness of recycling, reusing materials and composting specifically at Steamboat Springs at public events and in large corporations. With the goal of making events zero waste team members help attendees in one of the fastest and most effective strategies for combating climate change. Look for the “Zero Heroes” at public events helping make the Steamboat Springs community greener one item at a time. www.yvsc.org.

7. Yampa River Core Trail

The views, the access and the ease of using the Yampa Rive Core Trail cannot be beat! This paved, seven-mile, multi-use recreation trail which runs along the meandering Yampa River truly is like the spine of Steamboat Springs, especially in the summer months. Use this trail to get around town, for exersice and as a way to see the sights of town. There are several access points from West Lincoln Park, along U.S. 40, throughout downtown, and East to Walton Creek Road. Use the trail for biking, walking, jogging as well as utilizing its picnic areas and botanical gardens. Learn more at steamboatcchamber.com.

8. Local Products

Steamboat’s MainStreet Market, now in its 6th season is quickly becoming one of the largest farmers’ markets on the western slope of Colorado. Featuring locally and regionally grown produce, locally raised grass-fed beef and buffalo, pork and lamb, hand crafted artisan cheeses and bread, prepared food products of all kinds and arts/crafts handcrafted by the vendors, the market offers something for everyone. Meet the producers of these products, ask questions, and become knowledgeable about the importance of knowing your food source. Join the fun and the camaraderie created at this weekly Saturday market, running from June 12 to September 11, 2010. Be sustainable by helping the Yampa Valley’s growers. mainstreetsteamboatsprings.com.

9. Re-Tree Colorado

Make a real difference this summer by participating in Re-Tree Colorado. Scheduled for Saturday, June 26th, 2010, “Re-Tree Colorado” is a community wide tree planting designed to raise awareness on a local and possibly national scale as to the state of our forests during the bark beetle epidemic. The project’s goal is to plant 20,000 trees in one day. This large scale event w require around 400 volunteer at a half a dozen locations around Steamboat Springs to plant up to these trees. Everyone can help make a difference with this project and take ownership of the forest which is an extension of the Steamboat Springs community. Contact Re-Tree Colorado’s project manager Tristan Frolich at retreecolorado.com.

10. Visit the Routt County community Eco-Guide

Eco-Guide is a resource outlining all sustainability-related organizations, services, retailers in Routt County by category. Intended for visitors and locals to have a one-stop-shop to meet their sustainability needs and learn about the many community initiatives.