



## For Immediate Release

### **Community Composting Effort Earns National Ski Industry Sustainability Award**

Schweitzer recognized at the National Ski Areas Association Convention for environmental stewardship and community collaboration

Sandpoint, ID (May 27, 2026) -- Earlier this month, Schweitzer was recognized as the Golden Eagle Award winner for Community & Partnerships at the annual National Ski Areas Association convention held in Carlsbad, Calif. The award was for a collaborative composting program that involved the University of Idaho Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center (SOAC), Resource Synergy, and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.

“We are so proud to be the recipient of this award, as it represents the power of our Sandpoint community working together to create local solutions that help protect our environment,” said Dani Demmons, VP of family programs at Schweitzer. “Earning the Golden Eagle Award is a big deal in our industry and we couldn’t have done it without our partners and a little bit of patience.”

The idea for the project began in 2021 with a resort-wide waste audit performed by Resource Synergy, a Spokane-based environmental consultant that is contracted to facilitate sustainability initiatives at Schweitzer. The audit revealed that 32% of the weight of waste that the resort produces each year was food waste. In 2022, Schweitzer ran a compost pilot program which resulted in rough projections indicating a potential savings of 17.95 tons CO<sub>2</sub>eq during the ski season alone. This confirmed that a compost program would have both positive environmental and financial impacts.

“While the data was compelling enough to suggest kick-starting a community composting program, the startup hurdles were difficult to overcome. We needed a large capital investment and a space big enough to hold the equipment,” said Demmons. “After several failed attempts working with the county to help secure grant funding and space for the program, we had tabled the idea.”

When the Tribe applied for and received the EPA SWIFR grant and selected Resource Synergy as consultant, things finally came together. The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho used the grant to purchase the equipment and supplies needed, including the commercial in-vessel composting unit, to help create a composting program. Sandpoint Organic Agricultural Center was eager to partner for operation at its campus located at the base of Schweitzer—making the equipment accessible to the resort and the broader community. The Kootenai Tribe will turn ownership of all equipment purchased through this grant to SOAC at the end of the grant period, May, 2027.

“Kootenai’s decision to gift the equipment reflects their commitment to supporting projects that create the greatest impact for their citizens and community,” said Erik Makinson, founder and president of Resource Synergy. “With additional financial support from Alterra to place the equipment, we were able to get the project up and running for the winter season.”

This past winter, Schweitzer’s food waste from all its dining locations made it into the commercial composting vessel and is currently being processed for use by the University of Idaho SOAC. While food waste collections are currently limited to the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and Schweitzer, the program is still in its infancy and SOAC would like to expand collection for other Sandpoint businesses as the program becomes more established.

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Created in 1993, the NSAA Golden Eagle Awards celebrate ski areas working to raise the bar for sustainability and environmental stewardship across the industry. This award recognizes ski areas that foster a collaborative environment in their community, taking advantage of local partnerships to drive results and inspire others into action against climate change.

For more information on the community composting project in Sandpoint, view the [YouTube video](#) or head to [Schweitzer.com](#).

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**ABOUT RESOURCE SYNERGY:** Resource Synergy is a Northwest-based sustainability consultancy that utilizes technology and experience to efficiently manage decarbonization and waste reduction programs. We exist to be a catalyst for positive change that creates a healthier environment, economy, and community.

**ABOUT SOAC:** The Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center (SOAC) is one of two USDA Certified Organic programs in the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs). The center includes an organic fruit orchard, meeting facilities, dormitories for visiting faculty and students, a shop and cider house. CALs and University of Idaho Extension deliver enhanced programming at SOAC to the North Idaho community on organic and sustainable crop production, pest management and soil health management, native plant landscapes, horticulture, organic food processing and marketing, food safety and nutrition. The center includes a certified organic heirloom fruit orchard which produces 68 varieties of apples, eight varieties of pears and eight types of other fruits.

**ABOUT THE KOOTENAI TRIBE OF IDAHO:** The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho is one of several bands of Ktunaxa people with traditional territory spanning what is now known as Idaho, Washington, Montana, British Columbia, and Alberta. Today, there are over 170 Kootenai Tribal citizens, most of whom live within Ktunaxa Territory. The Tribe has built a robust government, with departments that administer a range of programs and services, including a Tribal Court, Police Department, Fish and Wildlife Department, and Health Department. Most importantly, the Tribe continues to honor its promise to the Creator. The Covenant remains the supreme law that guides every decision of the Tribe.

**ABOUT SCHWEITZER:** Located 90 miles from Spokane, Wash. in the rugged Selkirk Mountains of Idaho's panhandle, Schweitzer boasts 2,900 acres of skiable terrain, offering a mix of high angle groomers, gladed tree runs and wide-open bowl skiing and riding. Schweitzer's size as the largest mountain resort in Idaho isn't the only standout feature. Perched 2,000 feet above the picturesque town of Sandpoint and Lake Pend Oreille, Schweitzer's intimate mountain village offers a year-round mix of family-friendly activities, dining, spa, and slopeside lodging. Soak in 360-degree views of neighboring mountain ranges in Montana, Washington, and Canada from the summit top, and enjoy best-in-class skiing at one of the Pacific Northwest's favorite mountains. Schweitzer is a part of the Alterra Mountain Company family and a member of the Ikon Pass community. To learn more, visit [schweitzer.com](#).

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