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GORE MOUNTAIN WINS AWARD FOR OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

NORTH CREEK, N.Y. -- The New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) announced today that Gore Mountain was presented with the esteemed Golden Eagle Award for Overall Environmental Excellence at the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) Conference, held in Nashville, TN. The Golden Eagle Awards, overseen in a partnership between *SKI Magazine* and NSAA, are the ski industry's most prestigious honor for recognizing resort environmental programs and projects.

The North Creek ski resort took the top environmental honors in the medium-sized ski area category for consistent leadership on environmental stewardship and enhancing the guest experience in creative ways that help both the planet and its business, with an emphasis upon initiatives accomplished during the last twelve months. Gore Mountain serves as an industry model for development, demonstrating that a growing resort (its acreage and uphill capacity have increased 131 percent and 142 percent respectively over the last 20 years) can at the same time be sustainable.

Gore is one of three New York State owned ski resorts, managed by the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA). The others are Belleayre Ski Resort, in Highmount, and Whiteface Mountain, located in Wilmington.

Pat Barrett, chairman of ORDA, said, "This is tremendous news for Gore, ORDA and the State of NY. Our organization is actively increasing environmental stewardship and awareness and this is yet another step in that direction. To be recognized nationally is a real feather in our cap."

Ted Blazer, president and CEO of ORDA, said, "We take tremendous pride in being good stewards of the environment, while at the same time offer guests at Gore, or any of ORDA's managed ski resorts, the best skiing and riding conditions possible. We want ensure that people can enjoy this sustainable activity for generations to come."

Mike Pratt, general manager Gore Mountain, said, "We sincerely appreciate being recognized with this important industry award. Gore has recently undergone tremendous growth, but at the same time we have reduced our environmental impact. We will continue introducing new initiatives and improving our guest experience in this ecologically-focused manner."

Allen Crolius, *SKI's* publisher and vice president of Active Interest Media's Mountain Group, said, "When *SKI* founded this program in 1993, our goal was to recognize resorts that were actively addressing environmental issues, hoping to encourage other resorts to do the same and also to help publicize templates for similar projects across the industry. It's gratifying to see how far the industry has come in 20 years, particularly with today's vital focus on addressing climate change."

It was noted that the number of applications received for this award was particularly high this year, showing both the strength of Gore Mountain's environmental performance, and also the industry's growing participation in fighting climate change.

Gore's signature project during the last year was the signing of a 25-year solar energy contract for a 5.325 MW system that will offset 113,919 tons of CO2 and 85-percent of Gore's electrical spend. The power purchasing plans received support from NY-Sun through the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA). The 14,589 panels have been constructed and the energy they produce is scheduled to go live on the grid this summer.

Several other initiatives contributed to Gore Mountain's achievement. Gore continued its noteworthy and long-term investments in improving its snowmaking infrastructure, through both the acquisition of high-efficiency guns and by installing variable drives on its pumps. Gore strategically offset energy use through tactical trail modifications and creative earthwork. In 2015 those efforts alone saved 1,680,000 gallons of snowmaking water.

Over the last several years, LED lighting has been replacing fluorescent in several areas of the resort, most recently including the lodge stairways, the gondola terminal, and at the exterior of the Northwoods Lodge.

Gore has also mitigated its environmental impact while reclaiming historic ski trails at the North Creek Ski Bowl. Last year, the mountain introduced service of locally produced foods and will broaden that menu this upcoming skiing and riding season.

Gore Mountain has been a past winner of NSAA environmental excellence awards in the areas of Environmental Group Relations, Environmental Education, and Visual Resource Management, and a finalist for Waste Reduction and Recycling.

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PHOTO COURTESY: ORDA/ Gore Mountain

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Established in 1982, the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) was created by the State of New York to manage the facilities used during the 1980 Olympic Winter Games at Lake Placid. ORDA operates Whiteface, Belleayre and Gore Mountain ski areas; the Olympic Sports Complex at Mt. Van Hoevenberg; the Olympic speed skating oval, Olympic jumping complex and Olympic arena. As host to international and national championships, the Authority has brought millions of athletes, spectator and participants to the region, resulting in significant economic development.