

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



## Success Story

### Not Your Typical Compost Feedstock

In Aspen, Colorado, snow is not the only material piling up—construction and demolition (C&D) debris is being generated nearly as fast as the snow falls. That's why environmentally conscious Aspen Skiing Company—while welcoming the snow—has decided to reuse building materials and create compost out of the remaining materials instead of throwing them away.

When it was time for the Aspen Skiing Company to demolish two buildings in 1999, the company chose to institute a "deconstruction" program—reversing the building process and removing and sorting reusable items instead of sending the waste to the landfill. The company ground up the remaining sheetrock and scrap lumber, turning it into compost. Using this approach, the company kept 84 percent of the old buildings out of the local landfill and allowed the materials to have a second life in new buildings and compost.

Auden Schendler, director of environmental affairs for the company, said, "Although deconstruction may cost more, it has proved to be successful, and the environmental benefits are clear." The only real challenge the company faced prior to initiating the program was identifying a contractor willing to train the laborers to deconstruct rather than demolish.

The most significant environmental benefit of deconstruction is the potential to recycle or reuse materials. The Aspen Skiing Company brought the sheetrock and wood to the local landfill where it was collected for composting. The compost generated is combined with wastewater treatment sludge from other districts and is used for applications such as highway maintenance.

Cost savings is a huge draw for deconstruction. For example, by deconstructing its Sundeck Restaurant, the Aspen Skiing Company realized significant cost savings. Normally, there is a standard tipping fee of \$21.50 per cubic yard on C&D waste, but the landfill manager waived it because he was able to sell the compost—saving the company over \$42,000 in avoided disposal costs. Schendler suggests negotiating contractors fees down by accounting for the reduced landfill fees, as long as the cost savings can be proved. Otherwise, the contractor can capture the cost savings, as was the case with the second Aspen deconstruction project.

For more information, see the Aspen Skiing Company's environmental programs Web site at [www.aspensnowmass.com/environment/](http://www.aspensnowmass.com/environment/)

