



For Immediate Release  
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### **Cardboard and Vegetable Oil – Looking to tomorrow!**

**Zion National Park, Utah** – August 15, 2011 - Zion Ponderosa Ranch Resort is making great strides toward their goal of achieving stronger environmental practices. Early this season staff and management at Zion Ponderosa undertook an extensive evaluation process of their use, waste and disposal procedures. With a summertime average of 450 people a day who are dining, lodging, and recreating at Utah's Zion Ponderosa Ranch Resort, there is a considerable amount of material that is utilized to accommodate these guests. By collecting detailed data it became readily apparent that cardboard boxes and cooking oil were two of the most used products on the resort property. "We will recycle approximately nine tons of cardboard this year and 2,500 gallons of cooking oil," says Thiago Mairink, a University of Utah Masters student who was hired as a Sustainability Intern at Zion Ponderosa. "Recycling the cardboard was probably the biggest issue we dealt with this year. We wanted to figure out a way to try and recycle more effectively, but our distance from a recycling facility made it difficult to get it done."

Mairink was unable to find a company that would come to the resort and pick up the cardboard, but with some research he found a recycling business in St. George, Utah, that would pay for the cardboard when it was delivered to their location. The amount of compensation was enough to make it worthwhile for the resort to store the cardboard and make a once a year delivery. For temporary storage of the cardboard, resort staff used large sheets of plywood to form a wall around a large flatbed trailer. The plywood walls were painted and two large banners were created to encourage guests, and staff members, to break down boxes and store them within the trailer. "By recycling the cardboard we are actually saving over \$2,000.00 dollars in waste management costs," says Mairink. "The cardboard was filling up our trash containers and we were being charged to have these containers emptied more often."

With 40 gallons of cooking oil to dispose of on a weekly basis, the resort was planning on spending about \$800.00 to properly dispose of the used product. However, Mairink researched options for using the cooking oil for fuel in the tractors of local farmers. Thomas Smith, a local farmer was already using cooking oil, referred to as biodiesel, in his tractors and an arrangement was soon made to deliver this product to Smith on a regular basis. His farm is in a convenient location for staff to drop off the cooking oil, and this will save the resort the cost of the more traditional method of disposing of the oil.

A third effort to conserve resources was undertaken on the property as Mairink worked with Resort

Chef Francesca Van der Stappen to establish an organic garden. A location for the garden was identified along with a method for preparing compost from restaurant scraps. While not highly productive in its first year, Van der Stappen anticipates that the garden will save the resort two or three thousand dollars a year in the costs of vegetables and herbs, and will reduce the carbon footprint of delivery vehicles.

Resort management is working toward a more extensive plastic and aluminum recycling effort and is also evaluating other options for recycling waste. “There is an investment in time and resources to expand any effort to decrease environmental impacts,” says General Manager Michael Kane, “but we see how this will save us thousands of dollars and will allow us to do our part in contributing to the pristine environment of Zion National Park.”

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Zion Ponderosa is a 4,000 acre ranch resort that literally borders the eastern edge of Zion National Park. Learn more at [www.ZionPonderosa.com](http://www.ZionPonderosa.com).





