

Managing Food Scraps

At Mountainside Resort at Stowe

Interview with Lindsay Toye, Mountainside Resort at Stowe

(Interview edited for length & clarity)

How is Mountainside Resort set-up?

Mountainside Resort has 88 condos within 10 residential buildings and hosts all types of guests and owners. Fifty-five of our condos are owned by individuals and 33 are timeshares. The office currently rents all available condos, and the owners can rent their condo through our office as well.

Some owners live on-site year-round, some individuals rent through Airbnb, some owners live here 6 months and spend their other 6 months in Florida, but most of our stays are week-long timeshare guests.



How did the resort start separating food scraps from the trash?

I originally contacted Elly from Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District (LRSWMD) because I had no idea where to start. Elly and her AmeriCorps volunteer came to Mountainside to listen to our struggles and concerns, and even walked around the resort so we could brainstorm a plan together. We began composting at the end of June 2020.

Why did the resort start separating food scraps from the trash?

I had heard of the composting law coming into effect and wanted to learn more. I have a personal passion for the environment... Once we heard the law would go into effect for July 2020, it was "go time"! My property manager and I started the conversation.



How do you collect food scraps?

We have small countertop compost bins in each timeshare unit that are marked "food scraps" (see photo), with a labelled 5-gallon bucket at every trash location. Each residential building has two trash locations: one at a low level and one near the top of our (mostly) 4-story condo buildings. **Elly's best advice to us was to purchase twist-off lids for the 5-gallon buckets.** They are AWESOME! These lids make our system successful! They are animal-proof, easy to use, and simple to clean.

I purchased custom stickers from Vistaprint online—a roll of 2" stickers for the countertop bins and car bumper stickers for the 5-gallon buckets. The bumper stickers are perfect for Vermont's weather and they are large and mark our containers clearly.



About twice a week, often depending how busy we are, maintenance grabs each 5-gallon bucket and replaces it with a clean 5-gallon bucket. We own two sets of buckets so we can swap them out as needed. The food scraps are consolidated into as few full buckets as possible and then taken to the Stowe Transfer station. This is an effective system because maintenance can see what is placed in the buckets and can snag any non-compostable items and place them in the trash. It only costs \$1 per bucket to dispose of the food scraps at the Stowe Transfer Station!!!



What is working well in your food scrap management system?

Using two sets of 5-gallon buckets has been so effective for staff. A huge concern for us was staff time. I wanted to ensure our maintenance staff would not be overwhelmed with new duties in their already busy days managing this property... Maintenance can properly clean and sanitize our buckets every time they do a pick-up of food scraps. Our system is time-effective, simple, and easy to explain to guests who inquire on how they can get started at home.



What feedback have you gotten from staff and guests?

Lots of curiosity! Many of our rental guests are genuinely attracted and curious about what exactly the 'Vermont' lifestyle and experience entails.

I am proud to say we have not received any negative feedback, simply owners/guests looking for education and ways to ensure they are helping and not hurting the task. *We wanted to create a warm and welcoming transition into this system full of consistency, education, and an open mind to change.*

Have you adjusted your system over time to make it work better or to address any challenges?

Not yet. We are very open to change though! Once we see leaf peepers and skiers on-site, if we need to switch to large compost totes, we would be happy to do that! It has been an interesting process to learn that just because something says it's biodegradable, that does not mean it is accepted at the transfer station for composting. When we learn something new—I try to pass it along to our owners ASAP via email.

Do you have any tips for hotels or resorts that have just started to separate their food scraps?

Don't be intimidated by the project; talk to people in your community; and be open to change!

Learn more about Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, composting, and waste management at VTrecycles.com or by calling VT DEC at 802-828-1138.