

## Xanterra's Gardiner Laundry Services Recycles 3,000 Gallons of Water Daily - By Glenn Hasek 2006-11-03

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At the home of Old Faithful, Yellowstone National Park, laundry personnel at Xanterra Parks & Resorts are working like a geyser in reverse-saving water and energy efficiently. That is a necessity in a park with nine lodging facilities and 11 restaurants.

Xanterra Parks & Resorts, which manages the guest accommodations at the park, cleans more than 2.5 million pounds of linen every year at its Gardiner Laundry Services facility. The linens include bed and bath linen and housekeeping cleaning cloths from more than 2,000 guestrooms. It also includes table linen and kitchen cleaning cloths from the restaurants and employee dining rooms. More than 2.5 million pounds of linen are cleaned every year.

'We are heavily involved in keeping our laundry energy and water costs down,' says Mia Blackie, manager of laundry operations for Xanterra's Yellowstone operations. 'We monitor our washers and dryers closely to make sure they run efficiently. We also make sure that we use the proper formula concentrations.'

Each day, 22,000 to 24,000 pounds of laundry are washed and dried in a 7.5-hour period. A 50-foot-long, eight-pocket tunnel washer is used to wash most of the linens. To conserve water, the rinse water at the back of the system is returned to the front to be used as rinse water again.

'We save 3,000 gallons of water a day this way,' Blackie says.

The tunnel washer is more efficient than the washer extractors used by Gardiner. Those fill, rinse and then dump water repeatedly without recycling the water. To maximize efficiency, about 89 to 92 percent of the park's laundry is washed in the tunnel washer.

Gardiner Laundry Services uses five industrial size dryers, each with a 250-pound capacity. The facility also uses five 125-pound dryers. The dryers save energy by measuring the moisture level in the linens to prevent over drying. All of the washers and dryers give off very little heat-a feature that minimizes the amount of building cooling needed.

### **Detergent Portions Carefully Measured**

Blackie says she currently works with a leading industry provider of wash chemicals but hopes to switch to a more environmentally solution in the future.

'We researched environmentally friendly chemicals and worked with one provider, but we found we had to use twice as much,' she says.

To minimize the amount of chemicals used in the wash loads, Blackie monitors the detergent levels herself.

To save additional energy, the laundry team shuts equipment down when not in use and carefully monitors truck fuel usage. Because of the immense size of the park-it is the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined-it takes more than two hours for the laundry from one of the park's farthest lodging facilities to reach the laundry center. Preventive maintenance on all machines also keeps them running efficiently.

As part of Ecologix, Xanterra's companywide environmental management program, employees are reminded about energy-saving measures through educational programs and postings around the Gardiner location. A Yellowstone Environmental Committee also meets monthly to discuss progress.

'We are always looking to do better,' Blackie says.

Xanterra tracks its environmental performance through its computerized Ecometrix system, which monitors consumption of electricity, natural gas, gasoline, diesel, propane, fuel oil, and water on a monthly basis. Tracking these measures, the company says, allows it to analyze trends, stay compliant, reduce liabilities, and move further toward sustainability.

For more information on Xanterra's Yellowstone laundry operations, contact Mia Blackie at [mblackie@xanterra.com](mailto:mblackie@xanterra.com).

This article first appeared on the Green Lodging News website. To sign up to receive the weekly Green Lodging News newsletter, go to [www.greenlodgingnews.com](http://www.greenlodgingnews.com). Glenn Hasek can be reached at [greenlodgingnews@aol.com](mailto:greenlodgingnews@aol.com).

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