



Comox Valley Economic Development
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Olympics coming early to the Comox Valley

Twenty-two teams have selected the region as their training grounds for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and officials announce new Mountain Sport Centre funding today

Comox Valley, Vancouver Island - With Vancouver Island's largest ski resort in its backyard, and a comparable climate to Whistler and the Callaghan valley, hundreds of world class athletes will be converging on the Comox Valley in the lead up to the 2010 Winter Games.

With the six month countdown to the games approaching, twenty-two different teams, from nine nations, have already chosen the Comox Valley as their Olympic training site. Teams from Canada, the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, France, Finland, Australia and Russia from sports including Snowboarding, Ski Cross, Snowboard Cross, Biathlon, Cross Country and Freestyle Skiing, have all committed to training in the area prior to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

The Comox Valley, located on Vancouver Island's east coast, rests across the scenic Georgia Strait from the Olympic venues of Whistler and the Callaghan Valley. "Our snow conditions and infrastructure are very similar to the 2010 sites, but I think what has really attracted teams here has been the facilities we have been able to develop and the community's enthusiasm to host them and meet their needs," said Susan Kelsey, a former summer Olympian and Chair of the Comox Valley's Spirit of BC Community Committee. "We've hosted visits from several Olympic and Paralympic Committees and are very excited to announce that the majority of teams who have seen what we have to offer have selected the region as their 2010 training site."

Since Vancouver's successful bid for the 2010 Winter Games, the Comox Valley has attracted two World Cup Paralympic events and several teams have already been in the area to begin their training. Mount Washington and local community organizations have worked together to develop the mountain's trail network, biathlon and training facilities to international FIS standards.

The largest infrastructure investment in the mountain was announced today. Vancouver Island North MP John Duncan joined officials from Mt. Washington and the Vancouver Island Mountain Sport Society to announce \$795,000 in federal

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funding is being provided to support construction of the Vancouver Island Mountain Sport Centre. The 8,000 square foot Mountain Sports Centre, which will feature a hostel, a weight room, coaching offices and multi-purpose rooms, will be built on land donated by Mount Washington Alpine Resort adjacent to Raven Lodge. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$1.8 million, and the Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Society hopes to complete the new facility by winter of 2010.

“This facility never would have been built if it wasn’t for the attention that the 2010 Winter Games have brought to the Mountain, “ said Don Sharpe, Director of Business Development for Mt. Washington Resort. “The Games have opened our community to the world. It has been the catalyst that has helped us develop the infrastructure that will be a legacy for the Comox Valley. It’s helping us attract world class athletes and sporting events and bringing visitors to come see everything that the area has to offer.”

About Comox Valley Economic Development:

The Comox Valley Economic Development office was formed in 1988 and is a non-profit society with annual funding from the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and the Comox Valley Regional District areas A, B and C.

The Comox Valley was one of a handful of B.C. communities to take targeted delegations to the 2006 Torino Winter Olympics and 2008 Beijing Summer Games to capitalize on Olympic opportunities for the region.

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Reference Websites:

<http://www.sportcomoxvalley.com>

<http://mountwashington.ca>

<http://www.discovercomoxvalley.com>

<http://www.vimss.com/>

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Backgrounder: The Olympics and Comox Valley

The Comox Valley is the regional mid-island hub for Vancouver Island and is a growing region with a strong tourism sector. With direct access to key amenities including an international airport, mainland ferry terminal, an excellent sea harbour, a large ski resort, and countless other tourism attractions, the Valley is a leading choice as a Vancouver Island travel destination.

Mount Washington and the Comox Valley enjoy closer conditions to Whistler's Callaghan Valley than anywhere else in British Columbia. With similar elevation, snow conditions and temperatures, international Olympic teams are finding the perfect training conditions in preparation for 2010.

TEAMS THAT HAVE CONFIRMED PRE-OLYMPIC TRAINING CAMPS IN THE COMOX VALLEY AS OF AUGUST 6 TH , 2009		
AUSTRALIA – SKI CROSS	FRANCE – SKI CROSS	SWEDEN – BIATHLON
CANADA – BIATHLON	FRANCE – MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	SWEDEN – FREESTYLE SKI
CANADA – CROSS COUNTRY	FRANCE – SNOWBOARD (PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM)	SWEDEN – SKI CROSS
		SWEDEN – CROSS COUNTRY
CANADA – SNOWBOARD (PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM)	FRANCE – SNOWBOARD CROSS	SWEDEN – SNOWBOARD (PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM)
FINLAND – SKI CROSS	GERMANY – BIATHLON	SWITZERLAND – SNOWBOARD (PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM)
FRANCE – BIATHLON	GERMANY – SNOWBOARD (PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM)	USA – BIATHLON
FRANCE – FREESTYLE SKI	RUSSIA – NORDIC COMBINED	USA – SNOWBOARD (PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM)