



Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

PO Box 19673 Vancouver, BC V5T 4E7

fmcbbc@mountainclubs.org

www.mountainclubs.org

Tel: 604.873.6096

Tori Meeks / Terry Pratt
Land Licensed Officers
Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations
Resort Development Branch
510 175 2nd Avenue
Kamloops, BC, V2C 5W1
7 April 2011

RE: Garibaldi Park / Whistler Blackcomb Master Plan (Files: 2400087 and 0349523)

Dear Tori and Terry:

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) represents the interests of about twenty outdoor recreation clubs and some 3,500 members in British Columbia, most of them in the Lower Mainland region. The FMCBC's mission is to foster and promote the hiking, mountaineering, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing activities of the membership and the general public through leadership, advocacy and education.

FMCBC members frequently visit Garibaldi Park. We are very concerned about maintaining the integrity of the park, as opportunities for self-propelled wilderness recreation have rapidly diminished in other areas due to increased snowmobile and helicopter skiing use.

We see Lift O to Flute Peak as a direct threat to Garibaldi Park. This lift will transport many resort skiers right to the Garibaldi Park boundary. Unprepared resort skiers will no doubt be tempted into skiing off the east side of Flute, continuing down to Whistler Village via the Singing Pass trail. This is a serious safety problem that is not addressed by the plan. Once the lift is installed, the preferred solution to the safety problems will be for Whistler to conduct avalanche control and construct an egress road from Oboe basin to Whistler Village. This is exactly what happened in the Blackcomb glacier area 20 years ago.

Once the park has been deleted and the CRA expanded to include Oboe basin, more lifts will be planned and the cycle will repeat. Lift O is neither safe nor sustainable, and it should be removed from the plan. The current access to the Garibaldi Park boundary works well for both resort and backcountry skiers, because skiers have to hike uphill to enter the park. The avalanched controlled

hike to the Flute Bowl area works well as a transition area between the uncontrolled backcountry in Garibaldi Park and the heavily travelled resort area in Symphony Bowl.

The ski lifts proposed for Blackcomb Glacier are not appropriate for this provincial park, which is largely unaffected by development. Skiers currently enjoy a natural skiing experience in the park, which makes for a smooth transition between the main part of the resort and the uncontrolled backcountry area beyond. Lift 17 should be removed from the plan and Lift 20 should be realigned to be entirely outside the park.

Finally, the plan mentions the Singing Pass hiking trail numerous times. The Singing Pass trailhead has been cut off by a landslip on Whistler Mountain for many years. The Whistler-Blackcomb Master Plan should include reestablishing public access to the trailhead via the service road on the Blackcomb side of Fitzsimmons Creek.

FMCBC members frequently visit the Whistler-Blackcomb area for resort skiing, backcountry skiing and hiking. With the changes noted above, the master plan can be improved to make it safer and more sustainable.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Wood
President