

The Jumbo Creek Conservation Society's "Jumbo Wild": *fact or fiction?*



For 13 years the citizens of the Kootenays have fought to prevent resort development in the heart of our undeveloped back-country - in the Jumbo Valley. With over 9000 local, including 1330 privately owned single family chalet, townhome and condo suites, 3,500 hectares of land, and over 20 ski lifts and gondolas, the Jumbo Glacier Resort complex would be 6 times the area of Invermere with more than twice the population. Far from being sustainable, this proposal can only be achieved at the expense of Jumbo's existing economic, social and ecological assets.



Through the Internet, newspaper inserts, and pamphlets the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society (JCCS) continues to undertake a propaganda campaign aimed at misrepresenting the Jumbo Glacier Resort project.

In order to raise public fears and unfounded concerns about Jumbo Glacier Resort proposal, the JCCS continually misrepresents (1) the size, nature and location of the resort; (2) the true state of the Jumbo Creek valley; and (3) the expected impacts of the resort.

For example, in their latest pamphlet, or on their website, not a single picture shows the true location of where the resort is proposed. After thirteen years of public discussion about the project, and with volumes of information readily available, this cannot be a simple question of misunderstanding on the part of the JCCS. It can only be read as a not-so-transparent and continued effort to misinform the public.

Fiction

fact

1. The project is called “Jumbo Resort” because of its large size.

• The project is called **Jumbo Glacier Resort**, named after the prominent geographic feature in the area – Jumbo Glacier. At 5,500 tourist beds and 104 hectares in size, the project will be smaller than Panorama at build-out and most existing resorts of its type in British Columbia. To put things in perspective, Panorama is approved for 7,084 beds over 336 ha, Big White has 14,800 beds over 361 ha, Sun Peaks is approved for 23,342 beds over 288 ha, and Whistler has 52,500 beds over 12,950 ha.

2. The project is located on Jumbo Pass.



• The project is not located on Jumbo Pass -- it is located on an abandoned sawmill site in upper Jumbo Creek valley (a few km to the northeast of Jumbo Pass) and will not intrude physically or visually on Jumbo Pass.

The JCCS pamphlet’s main picture, taken from Jumbo Pass, shows the east side of upper Jumbo Creek valley, including Mount Karnak and Jumbo Mountain. It does not show the Jumbo Creek valley, where the resort will actually be located, or the extensive logging normally visible in the valley.

Actual pictures of the Jumbo Creek valley show extensive logging and prior use. The JCCS’s photo illustrates the fact that the resort will not be visible from Jumbo Pass.



3. The Jumbo Creek valley is pristine wilderness.

• The Jumbo Creek valley has seen almost a century of industrial use. 85% of the valley has been harvested and a major mine operated at its entrance until 1991.



The abandoned sawmill site, and the proposed resort location in the upper Jumbo Creek valley as seen in mid-autumn. This location is never shown in the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society’s literature.



The Mineral King Mine tailings at the entrance to the Jumbo Creek Valley.

Fiction

fact

4. Democracy?

Despite the promise of jobs and economic growth, over 6000 people have registered their opposition to this Resort. In Golden, residents fully supported the expansion of Kicking Horse Resort. In contrast a recent Invermere newspaper poll showed 97% opposition to the Jumbo resort proposal. Should the government of BC ignore the voice of its citizens to reward foreign investors with gifts of cheap land and tax subsidies?

DEMOCRACY

5. Monopoly?

With over 6000 beds, including 1300 privately owned suites, Jumbo Glacier Resort will turn wilderness into yet another exclusive holiday playground built on land owned by the people of British Columbia.

MONOPOLY

6. 45 grizzly bears?

BEARS

The Jumbo region is prime breeding and denning habitat for at least 45 grizzlies. Grizzlies, roads and resorts simply cannot coexist.

7. Business Diversity?

DIVERSITY

Today's Jumbo Valley provides a sustainable base of operations for established businesses. Guide outfitters, and wilderness tourism and heliski operators depend on Jumbo's open spaces and lack of human settlement to deliver wilderness tourism services unique to our region. In today's Jumbo Valley, successful businesses thrive without destroying the environment that sustains them.

BUSINESS

8. Olympic Champions?

CHAMPIONS

Today's Jumbo Valley is integral to the success of Canada's Olympic alpine athletes, who already have access to the glaciers that will ensure success in 2010 - no resort needed. Without permanent development that would destroy Jumbo's integrity, today's athletes are training to be tomorrow's champions.

OLYMPIC

• The Invermere Valley Echo did not run a poll utilizing professional polling firms and/or methodologies. The "poll" was self-administered by the editor and included a cut-out mail-in ballot in the newspaper as well as an Internet address. Jumbo supporters boycotted these tactics as there was no scientific basis or even remote credibility to such a poll. The editor seemed to be puzzled as to why very few people outside of the opponents' network cared to respond. As for 6,000 letters, after a decade of aggressive negative campaigning and support from international advocacy organizations, only 6,000? There are almost 4 million people in B.C. Furthermore, a quick perusal of the letters reveals signatures garnered from mailing lists from around the world. Do signatures from Virginia, Missouri, Hawaii, Florida, Wisconsin, etc. now represent the "voice" of BC citizens?

• Doesn't the fact that anyone who wishes to do so can buy a vacation home or operate a business at the resort mean that it is not a monopoly? What exactly is "yet another exclusive holiday playground?" There are no "exclusive" ski resorts in B.C. Rather, ski resorts welcome everyone and anyone, and allow them to enjoy the mountains. This resort will utilize an abandoned sawmill site to give access to the average Canadian to 3,000 metre high glaciers. Nowhere else in Canada is this possible.

• A grizzly bear inventory utilizing aerial surveys and capture sites found samples of 33 grizzly bears in the region; only 2 were located in the Jumbo Creek valley. The Jumbo Creek valley is not "prime" grizzly bear breeding and denning habitat. Like almost the entire Purcells, it offers good habitat, except for the fact that it is the most utilized valley (by human beings) in the region due to its excellent existing road access and industrial history. In fact, the access road is kept open even in winter all the way to the Mineral King Mine at the entrance of the Jumbo Valley.

• There is nothing "unique" about the existing heli-skiing, guide outfitting and hiking activities that currently occur in the Jumbo valley. These occur all over B.C. and this resort has been designed to have as minimal an impact as possible on these activities. On the other hand, it is not possible anywhere in Canada to access 3,000-meter-high glaciers without a helicopter. The JCCS conveniently neglects to mention that for almost a century the prime economic activity in the Jumbo valley was mining, followed by forestry. Harvesting will resume as soon as the forest cover is replenished. Highest and best sustainable use of crown land is an important policy.

• In the summer of 2003, Canada's national ski teams spent a couple of weeks training on Farnham Glacier. It cost about \$1 million to do it and to ferry athletes, equipment, a snowcat and a warming hut to the glacier. Is this an effective way to spend our athletes' money? Compare this to the cost of a discounted lift ticket, where all the lift and access infrastructure is paid for by the developer. Also, consider the fact that tomorrow's champions - our younger athletes and members of B.C.'s numerous race clubs - have no hope to find a million dollars for summer training, but could readily afford a lift ticket.

9. No skiers?

Within the next 15 years participation rates in skiing and snowboarding may be 22% lower than they are today. Why isn't the Province investing in improving existing ski areas, as opposed to building new resorts in a shrinking market?

Canadian Ski Council Calgary Herald
November 2003

• In fact, despite terrorism, SARS, 2 wars, and a weak American economy, over the past three years both Canada and the United States have recorded their busiest ski seasons ever. The B.C. ski industry has seen 2 decades of continuous growth. Demographically speaking, echo-boomers (aged 21 and younger) are entering centre stage, while baby boomers, who are healthier, more vigorous and have increasingly more leisure time over previous generations, continue to hit the slopes. Besides, if the market were truly in decline, why would the JCCS want the government to spend tax dollars on existing resorts, while opposing Jumbo Glacier Resort, which does not need tax dollars?

10. Tenures and heli-skiing to be revoked?

BUSINESS EXCLUSIVITY
In order to approve Jumbo Glacier Resort, the Provincial Government must first revoke the tenure currently held by RK Heli Ski, resulting in the loss of 60 jobs and the loss of a long standing contributor to the local economy. An independent study confirms that RK Heli Ski and Jumbo Glacier resort simply cannot coexist.

• No existing tenure on crown land will be revoked. To state otherwise is simply not true. In fact, overlapping tenures already exist in the Jumbo Valley and they form part of provincial policy. Where a new tenure impacts an existing tenure, the existing tenure holder is amply compensated. In the case of R.K. Heli-ski, Jumbo Glacier Resort and the expansion of Panorama into Taynton Bowl infringe on R.K.'s tenure by roughly 6,500 ha. R.K.'s heli-ski tenure was 127,392 ha, and permits were granted for an expansion totalling 26,629 ha, for a grand total of 154,021 ha — one of the largest heli-ski tenures in B.C. Ski resorts and heli-ski operators commonly coexist throughout North America, with heli-ski operators typically gaining a significant number of clients through ski resorts. There is no reason why this should be different at Jumbo Glacier Resort.

11. Subsidies?

SUBSIDY UNCERTAINTY
The developer has stated that "the resort will be self-contained and will not rely on local services". This is definitely true for commercial and retail services, which will all be provided at the resort. But the costs of fire, emergency, waste management and other social services must be paid for by the RDEK and District of Invermere. Jumbo Glacier Resort will create high costs and deliver little direct economic return to the communities of the Kootenay.

• This is a deliberate misquote. The resort will not rely on local *government* services. It will build and operate its own water and sewer systems, fire services, medical centre and first responders; it will pay for its own waste disposal. The resort will not require tax dollars to be built, yet can generate over \$12 million in tax revenue/year, after fifteen years of operation. These tax dollars will pay for schools, hospitals, roads, etc. which are primarily used by local residents, and not by vacationers from Toronto, etc. — let alone the fact that the resort will generate over 800 local full-time jobs at build-out.

12. Isolation?

Resorts like Fernie, Kimberly and Kicking Horse are integral to the towns and economies they call home. Jumbo Glacier Resort will be over 50kms removed from the nearest community. As a stand-alone resort, it will add little to the local economy, but will require massive public investments in infrastructure, road building, and maintenance.

ISOLATION

• Resorts like Big White, Sun Peaks and Lake Louise are all more than 50 kms from their nearest communities, and they all contribute positively to those communities. Besides bringing tourist dollars to the local communities, the resort will provide over 800 full-time jobs in an area that has one of the highest unemployment rates in B.C. An employment equity program is proposed to ensure that jobs go to locals and First Nations first. The resort will require NO public investments in infrastructure or road building. The access road, the upgrade of which will be paid for by the proponent according to a design approved by the Province, will be maintained by the Province. The road will generate far more provincial revenue than it will cost to maintain. It is worthwhile to note that the current road is maintained and kept open even in winter by the Province all the way to the Mineral King Mine (halfway to the resort from Panorama) and generates very little revenue for the Province.

13. Glaciers gone?

Climate change is melting the world's glaciers. Renowned glaciologist Dr. Mindy Brugman states that the glaciers of the Purcells will likely be gone in 50 years. Can BC afford a multi-million dollar glacier resort that will literally melt away?

Valley Echo
November 2000

• Dr. M. Maxwell is the scientist who has reviewed the project's glaciers. Dr. M. Brugman is a research scientist for the Columbia Mountains Institute. She has studied the Athabasca Glacier in Jasper National Park, but not Jumbo, Commander and Farnham Glaciers. Athabasca Glacier is 700 meters lower in elevation than Jumbo Glacier. The complete meltdown of Jumbo Glacier would require a catastrophic increase in average global temperatures — far higher than the 1.8 - 3.0°C increase predicted over the next 100 years by most of the world's scientists. Even if such a catastrophe were to occur, this project would be the only ski resort in B.C. to receive natural snow to allow skiing in winter. So if the JCCS truly believes Dr. Brugman, why do they suggest that the B.C. government should invest taxpayer dollars in low elevation ski resorts?

14. Insurance costs; a sinking ship?

Skyrocketing energy and insurance costs, and an unstable global economy are creating an uncertain future for the ski industry. With fewer skiers than ever, why should BC taxpayers invest their money in a sinking ship?

- It has been well-documented that high energy and especially high insurance costs have been impacting backcountry adventure operators more harshly than ski resorts. These are the very businesses which the JCCS favours over Jumbo Glacier Resort. Modern ski area operators are not as dependant on energy prices (i.e. fuel) as other back-country operators. Ski areas can defray insurance costs over hundreds of thousands of skiers, as opposed to a few thousand for heli-ski or other backcountry operators. The ski industry has seen more skiers than ever hitting the slopes and the future is as promising as ever. This is why the proponents of Jumbo Glacier Resort have continued to pursue and fund the project. Taxpayer dollars have not been asked for nor offered.

15. Effluent in the water system?

WASTE EFFLUENT
The Jumbo Valley is a rare source of crystal-clear water that nourishes communities and ecosystems alike. Jumbo Glacier Resort will add hundreds of thousands of litres of effluent to Jumbo and Toby creeks, and to the Columbia River Wetlands daily. We must decide between yet another resort and the quality of our most precious resource - water.

- The Jumbo Valley is not a rare source of water; it is like every other valley in the Purcells. The resort will not transfer water into or out of the Jumbo Valley. The resort will add ZERO litres of water to Jumbo and Toby Creeks and will have no impact on the Columbia Wetlands. The resort will make use of a state-of-the-art tertiary treatment plant which will return treated effluent (near the quality of potable water) to the ground. Unlike other resorts, NO effluent will be discharged into Jumbo, Toby, or any other creeks. The resort's Liquid Waste Management Plan provides a clear description, including preliminary schematics, of these facts. It is readily available for public download at the project website and has been for some time.

16. Really?

REALITY
Grossly understating costs, the resort developer budgets only \$200,000/km for road improvements while the government's 1999 estimate is \$2million/km - a difference of \$32million! The developer budgets only \$25,000/year for avalanche control, while government estimates are \$300,000/year - an annual difference of \$275,000! Should BC taxpayers absorb these costs for private, foreign benefit?

- Following years of discussion, the JCCS continues to equivocate on the Jumbo Pass Highway proposal — a 90 km/h, multi-lane, heavy traffic alternative to Roger's Pass. This proposal is dead, and has nothing to do with Jumbo Glacier Resort. The unattributed "government" estimates have nothing to do with this project. Cost estimates for a 50 km/h access road to Jumbo Glacier Resort range from \$200-395,000/km depending on final design. This is similar to almost every other access road to B.C. ski resorts. The estimates were prepared by McElhanney Engineering, one of the largest, most experienced and most respected road engineering firms in B.C. Similarly, avalanche control costs were estimated by Peter Schaefer, an Order of Canada recipient for his work on avalanche control. He is the former head of the National Research Council's Snow Avalanche Section and a past President of the Canadian Avalanche Association. He is one of Canada's leading avalanche control authorities and his work has been recognized throughout the world. Finally, who are the "private, foreign" persons that the JCCS alludes to?

17. Generic, Europe?

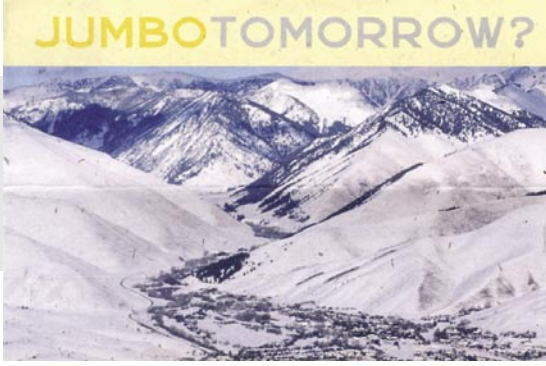
GENERIC PERMANENT
Unlike Europe, it is not human development that draws visitors to Super Natural BC - it is vast open space, abundant wildlife, and the beauty of wild mountains. Hikers, hunters, birders, and skiers are drawn to the irreplaceable wilderness that surrounds us. Jumbo Glacier Resort will swap irreplaceable wilderness with a European resort replica. We can't have both.

- What does this resort have to do with European human development? Nobody is proposing to build a new Paris or London. In the Alps, people don't visit the Matterhorn because of "human development", but because of its natural beauty. The fact of the matter is that B.C. has more mountains over 3,000 meters than most other jurisdictions in the world, yet not a single one of them is accessible to the average Canadian. Thousands upon thousands of B.C. schoolchildren have visited Disneyland or the West Edmonton Mall, yet almost none has stood on top of one of the 3,000 meter high glaciers in our own backyard. How sad is that? Jumbo Glacier Resort isn't "swapping" wilderness, it is offering access to high alpine glaciers and mountains. There is nothing "generic" about it. Yes, B.C. is a land of vast spaces, many of which are protected and are the size of small European countries. Is it not reasonable to offer access to our high alpine from an abandoned sawmill site in just one location in B.C.? Or should all of B.C.'s vast high alpine continue to remain the exclusive domain of a privileged few?

Fiction

fact

18.

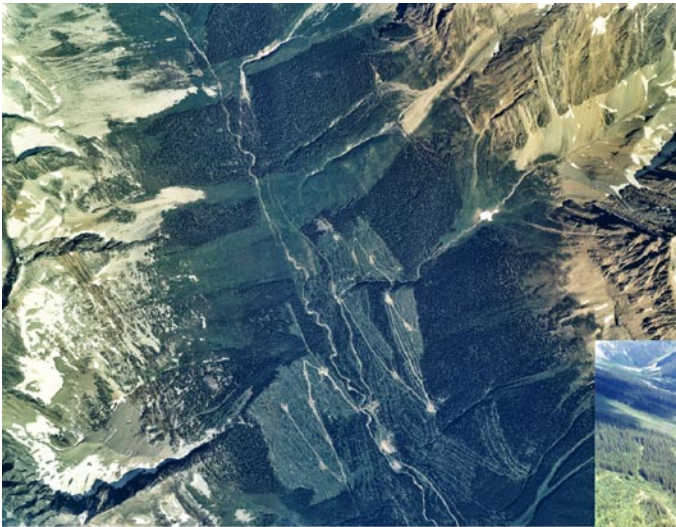


• Jumbo Glacier Resort cannot be like this photo tomorrow because, once approved, it can only cover the permitted 104 hectares under the approved Master Plan. Without development and building permits it will not be possible to expand the area and the Certificate under the Environmental Assessment Act will not allow expansion.

19.



• This is a picture of the main train station parking lot in Täsch, Switzerland — which is not a ski resort. It is like showing a picture of the industrial area of Invermere and implying that it is part of Panorama. What has it got to do with Jumbo Glacier Resort? Certainly that is not the parking view that is proposed for the project. On the contrary, the project design has always been that of minimizing the exposure to automobile traffic in the valley and in the resort, where most of the parking is proposed to be under cover or underground.



The actual resort location is in an abandoned sawmill site in the upper Jumbo Creek valley. This location is not shown in the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society's literature.



The Jumbo Creek valley is not pristine. It has seen a century of industrial use.

For further project information please visit www.jumboglacierresort.com
Your questions and comments are welcome. Please e-mail us at info@jumboglacierresort.com