
THE “GREENEST” MOUNTAIN RESORT IN NORTH AMERICA

Jumbo Glacier Resort, the “greenest” mountain resort in North America.

Jumbo Glacier Resort (JGR) is the first mountain resort project to be designed and proposed according to modern environmental principles and to be constructed on the basis of an approved Environmental Certificate, obtained following studies, assessments and scrutiny for nine years. In terms of environmental impact and sustainability JGR was from the conceptual stage the most advanced mountain resort concept because of location and environmental footprint.

Not only does it re-use a **previously industrially exploited area and existing road alignments for access**, but, most importantly, it **uses natural snow** to provide for all the recreation activity, and it is located at **elevations that are beyond reach of global warming temperature rise**. The growing necessity and cost of snowmaking at all other ski areas should make the difference striking on this point alone, truly the major issues of sustainability for any ski area and resort.

But of similar importance is the relationship of resort footprint to ski area. At JGR the resort will occupy approximately 115 hectares (285 acres) in proportion to a skiable area (the CRA) that will exceed 5,900 hectares (14,500 acres) in natural snow, with a 2% ratio of development area versus ski area size.

At the other extreme Whistler, which has received important environmental praises, has a **municipal boundary area of Whistler Mountain Resort Municipality of approximately 16,530 hectares (40,800 acres).**

The currently zoned development area of Whistler, at a stage of its development when it is nearing 10,000 full time residents and it has surpassed 62,500 tourism pillows (the “bed units” of the provincial Commercial Alpine Ski Policy), is 1,072 hectares (2,648 acres). This zoned area is giving access to a mountain area (the CRA) of approximately 6,000 hectares (14,800 acres), of which 3,307 hectares (8171 acres) is the skiable terrain (almost a third of which is already covered with snow making).

Compared to the JGR Master Plan, the current ratio of development area versus mountain size **at Whistler is in the order of 18% (1,072 hectares divided by 6,000 hectares), but it has the potential of growing to over 100%** (when the zoned development area at Whistler will start nearing half of the area in the municipal boundary, covering perhaps 8,000 hectares, still keeping the other 8,000 hectares for green space and land reserve). In fact **the total potential future ratio of mountain size to development at Whistler in view of the municipal boundary could be counted in the range of 275%, unless the mountain area is expanded.**

Of equal importance is the resort **location**, because most ski resorts not only have a growing dependence on snow making, but occupy sizeable areas of the main valleys (the “frontcountry”) accessed by major divided highways, creating a major obstruction, and sometimes an almost complete separation of valley areas, not only with significant alteration of biodiversity and ecosystems, but closing wildlife corridors.

At JGR, tucked on upper Jumbo Valley north of the Jumbo Pass wildlife corridor, occupying a miniscule portion of the valley, the alteration of the ecosystems is similar to that of an isolated ship in an ocean. It is like a mini walled village among the higher mountains, making an insignificant intrusion, and yet being within a relatively short distance from permanently resident populations.

Oberti Resort Design, March 2010