

# **Pivotal Moments to the Comox Valley's Explosive Olympic Legacy**

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## Comox Valley Olympic Legacy Development Background

As the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games are now finished, all those involved are taking stock of their involvement with the Games. As a non-venue community, the Comox Valley maximized all Olympic related activities – surpassing by far, other communities in British Columbia. From the outstanding efforts of all local governments, the sports associations, the private sector, economic development and led by the *Comox Valley Spirit Committee*, outstanding teamwork resulted in exceptional legacies throughout the Valley. By leveraging the Olympic Games, the Comox Valley took its status as an unknown winter sport training destination and drove itself to become internationally recognized for its exceptional sport hosting capabilities, as a Nordic training destination, and as a truly remarkable community.

The Comox Valley is located on Vancouver Island, seamlessly connected to Vancouver by a short, scenic, 2 hour ferry trip, or a 30 minute flight. The Valley is home to Mount Washington Alpine Resort, a virtually unknown mecca for both the nordic and alpine enthusiast. The mountain's west coast snow conditions, elevation and infrastructure are equivalent, or in some instances better than Whistler's Callaghan Valley (site of the Nordic Olympic events) and it boasts almost twice the snow accumulation of Whistler Mountain. Beginning in 2003 with the significant assets of Mount Washington, the Valley focused on upgrading its Nordic venue facilities, hosting two IPC (International Paralympic) World Cups, and on a targeted *National Olympic Team Attraction Pre-Training program*. This program combined with the highly successfully international media-hosting campaign culminating in 2010, brought worldwide recognition to Mount Washington and the Comox Valley.

As a result, fourteen National Olympic Committees, 288 Olympic athletes and coaches, plus 6 national Paralympic Committee teams and 67 Paralympic athletes and coaches have now experienced the sport training infrastructure and superb hosting abilities of both Mount Washington and the Comox Valley.

### **Comox Valley Economic Development Strategy**

Included in the '*Comox Valley Economic Development Strategy*,' from 2005 was the five-year Olympic Program with the following objectives:

- Engage locally and profile internationally all sectors of the Comox Valley
- Secure funding for the Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Centre
- Develop a Pre-Games training plan for Mount Washington and secure committed, national Olympic and Paralympic teams
- Target high level winter sport hosting opportunities for Mount Washington and the Comox Valley

- Leverage all Olympic/Paralympic opportunities to show case the Valley's involvement as a non-venue/non-host community

Five years later, it is commendable that all stated economic development objectives were achieved well beyond expectations.

The international exposure from the Games is already beginning with calls from the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy Team wanting to understand fully how the Valley achieved its legacies. As well, the Valley is now focusing on the enhancement of their sport hosting strategy and athlete development. This includes international networking and visitations with Nordic sports federations and potentially leveraging the Dec 2012 FIS World Cup circuit.

It is also rumoured that the rights to 'Mukmuk,' the 2010 Winter Games sidekick mascot may be making his 'final' home in the Comox Valley. Mukmuk is a small, friendly Vancouver Island endangered marmot and the Comox Valley would be a very suitable place to keep the spirit of the Games alive for generations, while assisting with the sustainability of this species.

This document will outline the pivotal moments and sequential, strategic building blocks the community undertook over the past 7 years towards the creation of lasting Olympic legacies. An extensive appendix is also provided outlining in detail program descriptions and tangible results.

## Building Blocks for Community Legacy

The community was unwavering in its vision to maximize its involvement with the Olympics. Exceptionally strong, committed leaders from all sectors were involved very early and didn't stop until the Paralympic closing ceremonies – a total of seven years of exceptionally hard work.

Below is a high level, chronological synopsis of the accomplishments from 2003 to 2010 that achieved maximum community involvement, strong community legacies and a highly successful *National Olympic Team Pre-Games Attraction Program*.

| YEAR | ACCOMPLISHMENTS   | COMMUNITY IMPACT/LEGACY   |
|------|---|---|
| 1998 | <b>Canadian National Cross-County Ski Team Spring Training</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strathcona Nordic Ski Club invites national team to Mount Washington to discover its potential, and as a cost saving to traditional camps in Bend, Oregon</li> <li>• Mount Washington initiates construction of \$2M Raven Nordic day lodge – a key turning point in its international strategy</li> <li>• Olympic level athletes experience Mt Washington for the first time – the word is out!</li> <li>• Led to several years of return visits by elite cross country teams, as well as biathlon teams</li> </ul> |
| 2001 | <b>Strategic Plan for Nordic Facility Development at Mount Washington</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition level trail system developed</li> <li>• Sport Center identified as needed for future sport and athlete development</li> </ul>  |
| 2003 | <b>Stan Hagen (Member of Provincial Legislative Assembly) Delegation to GM Place (Vancouver) for Prague announcement of Vancouver/Whistler 2010</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team enthusiasm, leadership and aggressive commitment to the Olympics and its potential impact on the Comox Valley solidified</li> <li>• 'Seed' of Spirit Committee began forming</li> </ul>   |
| 2003 | <b>Vancouver Island Mountain Sport Society (VIMSS) formed</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership group formed and funding raised for local athlete development</li> <li>• Initially formed as a way to put local athletes on the 2010 podium</li> <li>• Monies provided for off-island competitions</li> <li>• Mountain/Valley/clubs began working collectively</li> </ul>   |
| 2004 | <b>Comox Valley Spirit Committee announced</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High profile committee chaired by Susan Kelsey, a former Olympian, supported strongly by Stan</li> </ul>   |

|      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
|      |   | <p>Hagen, comprised of a strong cross section of government, business and community sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team attraction and torch sub-committees formed</li> <li>• Continuous and extensive community involvement focused on sport from 2003 to 2010</li> </ul>  |
| 2006 | <b>Torino Winter Olympic Delegation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast tracked Olympic 'education' for participants including acquiring non-venue city strategies and ideas</li> <li>• Olympic family relationships fostered</li> </ul>  |
| 2006 | <b>Swedish National Cross Country Ski coaches visit Mount Washington</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swedish Pre-Games training camp confirmed</li> <li>• Sets up sales platform for other pre-games training camps</li> </ul>  |
| 2006 | <b>Technical upgrade of Mount Washington cross country ski trails, stadium and biathlon range</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1M funded that escalated ability to attract World Cup level events and Pre-Olympic team training</li> <li>• Olympic level stadium built for local recreation and as a future competition venue</li> </ul>  |
| 2007 | <b>IPC Biathlon and Cross Country Skiing World Cup Final</b> (March 10-14)                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly successful event initiated further discussions with VANOC and IPC to host back to back test events in the Callaghan Valley and at Mount Washington in conjunction with IPC World Cup in 2009</li> <li>• Valley hosting 'Team Attache' program developed</li> <li>• Team hosting, volunteer skills, mountain grooming etc evolved to global competition standards</li> <li>• Second visit by Swedish cross country and biathlon coaches as well as Norwegian National Olympic Committee – alpine pre-Games and biathlon training camps explored</li> <li>• Hosted National Coaching seminar on international classification for Nordic athletes with disabilities</li> <li>• Created awareness and appreciation of elite athletes with disabilities and provided local experiences with the sport</li> </ul> |
| 2007 | <b>Comox Valley Business Preparedness for 2008 Beijing Olympic Visit</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting of workshops for local businesses – "Think Asia (BC Gov't), Sportsworld (UK inbound tour operator), Chinese Consulate in Vancouver</li> </ul>  |
| 2008 | <b>Beijing Summer Olympic Delegation</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing Olympic 'education'</li> <li>• Relationship building with China NOC inviting them to pre-train at Mount Washington</li> </ul>  |
| 2009 | <b>2010 Chef de Mission IPC Conference</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to build pre-Games training sales opportunities</li> <li>• Interest from NOC's expanded to alpine and biathlon. Pre-games training capacity sells out</li> </ul>   |

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 2009 | <b>IPC Biathlon and Cross Country Skiing World Cup</b> (March 8-15) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Washington stadium internationally recognized as FIS sanctioned and event receives accolades as 'best ever' World Cup</li> <li>• Cumberland 'Parade of Nations' set the community Olympic spirit and visiting teams on high</li> </ul>  |
| 2009 | <b>Olympic Torch Relay</b> (November 2/09)                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire community including all municipalities/regional district/First Nations/19 Wing Comox fully involved</li> <li>• Community inspired and changed forever</li> </ul>   |
| 2009 | <b>Mt Washington volunteers appointed to VANOC positions</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitive credibility of Mount Washington when Len Apedaile appointed Manger, Cross-Country Skiing for VANOC</li> <li>• Joe Bajan appointed VANOC Chief of Range - Paralympic Biathlon</li> <li>• Strathcona Nordics provide 35 volunteer technical officials to VANOC thus ensuring a local legacy of race officials with the highest level of experience</li> </ul>            |
| 2009 | <b>Sport Hosting Strategy integrated into Tourism strategy</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosted by Tourism British Columbia and Tourism Vancouver Island, a detailed situation analysis and key strategy was developed around Valley sport hosting opportunities</li> </ul>  |
| 2010 | <b>China/Sweden Olympic Women's Exhibition Hockey Game</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspiration of Olympic athletes shared with the Valley youth</li> <li>• Extensive international media/TV exposure</li> <li>• Tied minor hockey into the community Olympic focus</li> </ul>  |
| 2010 | <b>Pre-Games Training Camps</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 counties, 33 teams, 350 Olympic and Paralympic athletes, solidly put Mount Washington's Olympic level facilities and the Valley's hospitality and lifestyle on the world stage</li> <li>• International recognition at the Olympic level of Mount Washington for both nordic and alpine skiing and event hosting</li> <li>• Continuous international media exposure</li> </ul> |
| 2010 | <b>'Mount Washington' Medal Results</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total of 27 Olympic/Paralympic medals won by athletes who pre-trained at Mount Washington</li> <li>• Increased awareness of the competition class training facilities available at Mount Washington</li> </ul>  |

## National Olympic Team Attraction Program and Olympic/Paralympic Results

Long before the 2010 Games were awarded to Vancouver, the Strathcona Nordic Ski Club, Vancouver Island Biathlon Club and Mount Washington management were working together to continually improving the Nordic facilities of the mountain.

### ***National Olympic Team Attraction Program***

The *National Olympic Committee Team Attraction and Hosting* program spearheaded by the *Comox Valley Spirit Committee* had a focused, evolving strategy beginning in 2004 to secure the Pre-Games training camps. Using Mount Washington and its proximity to Vancouver, this initiative included sending two delegations to the Torino and Beijing Olympics, trade show participation and a number of IPC World Cup attendances to secure relationships with National Olympic Committee's (NOC's) to train in the Comox Valley. Additionally, using the Provincial International Trade Reps and the Canadian Foreign Trade and Investment Departments, the Comox Valley developed contacts, made presentations and hosted familiarization tours in order to secure NOC's to train in the region. The strong personal connections developed were leveraged further for introductions to their respective national media, investment and tourism contacts which allowed for new relationships to be developed and site visits to the Valley.

The collective result was 33 different NOC teams from 14 different nations, a total of over 350 Olympic/Paralympic coaches and athletes experienced the sport hosting and training facilities at Mount Washington, as well as many of the Comox Valley attractions. It was this program that truly propelled Mount Washington and the Comox Valley from a community that had minimal exposure internationally, to one that would have significant recognition.

### ***Team Attache Program***

In order to show the visiting NOC training teams the utmost of Comox Valley hospitality, the attaché program was implemented to provide a personal contact to help ease the team into the Comox Valley environment, minimize frustrations, and provide help to resolve any issues. The volunteer attaches were recruited primarily on their ability to speak the language of the country they were supporting. No task was too small for the attaches to provide, thereby maximizing the teams' positive experience of the Valley.

| <b>NATION &amp; SPORT</b> | <b>#</b> | <b>ARRIVAL</b> | <b>DEPART</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| Australian Ski Cross      | 4        | Feb-13         | Feb-17        |
| Canada Biathlon           | 21       | Feb-01         | Feb-08        |
| China Women's Hockey      | 28       | Feb-06         | Feb-08        |
| Chinese Biathlon          | 17       | Jan-20         | Feb-04        |
| Czech Republic Biathlon   | 4        | Jan-28         | Feb-02        |
| Finland Ski Cross         | 4        | Feb-10         | Feb-16        |
| France Biathlon           | 11       | Feb-01         | Feb-09        |
| France Biathlon           | 8        | Feb-02         | Feb-09        |

|   |    |            |        |
|---|----|------------|--------|
| France Freestyle Ski                      | 9  | Feb-03     | Feb-07 |
| France MEN Cross Country                  | 10 | Feb-04     | Feb-10 |
| German Parallel Giant Slalom              | 6  | Feb-13     | Feb-21 |
| German Parallel Giant Slalom              | 5  | Feb-11     | Feb-22 |
| Germany Biathlon                          | 22 | Feb-01     | Feb-10 |
| Ghana GS Ski                              | 6  | Jan 31     | Feb 8  |
| Great Britain Snowboard PGS               | 2  | Feb 13     | Feb 24 |
| Netherlands Parallel Giant Slalom         | 4  | Feb 14     | Feb 19 |
| Norway Nordic Combined                    | 9  | Feb-15     | Feb-18 |
| Sweden Biathlon                           | 18 | Jan-29     | Feb-06 |
| Sweden Cross Country                      | 13 | Feb-06     | Feb-11 |
| Sweden Cross Country                      | 14 | Feb-07     | Feb-13 |
| Sweden Freestyle Ski                      | 6  | Jan-31     | Feb-06 |
| Sweden Parallel Giant Slalom              | 3  | Feb-18     | Feb-23 |
| Sweden Ski Cross                          | 8  | Feb-13     | Feb-18 |
| Sweden Women's Hockey                     | 29 | Feb-06     | Feb-09 |
| Swiss Parallel Giant Slalom               | 12 | Feb-18     | Feb-23 |
| USA Biathlon                              | 13 | Jan-27     | Feb-06 |
| USA Parallel Giant Slalom                 | 8  | Feb-14     | Feb-20 |
| <b>PARALYMPICS</b>                        |    |            |        |
| Finland Paralympic – X Country / Biathlon | 10 | Mar-03     | Mar-10 |
| Sweden Paralympic Sledge                  | 23 | Mar-01     | Mar-08 |
| Sweden Paralympic Alpine                  | 11 | Mar-01     | Mar-07 |
| Sweden Paralympic Nordic                  | 8  | Mar-01     | Mar-07 |
| Norway Paralympic Biathlon                | 4  | Feb-25     | Mar-02 |
| China Paralympic – X Country / Biathlon   | 11 | Mar 1      | Mar 7  |
| <b>Total</b>                              |    | <b>355</b> |        |

## International Media Hosting, Marketing Campaigns, Games-Time Strategies and Events

The Valley developed and implemented an extensive, multifaceted *Olympic Legacy Development Campaign* that included National Olympic Committee team attraction, national and international Olympic media attention, international tradeshow attendance, and many events and promotions that focused on leveraging the success and recognition of the Comox Valley. The programming was supported by countries such as China, France, Sweden, Norway, Germany and Switzerland who were spokespeople for the Comox Valley as a centre for Olympic level training.

### ***Pre-Olympic International Media Hosting Program***

In addition to the media connections made via the NOC's, a media relations firm was contracted to work directly with over 15 International Canadian Tourism Commission and Tourism BC offices, as well as 150 media outlets from the NOC

team nations. Invitations were sent for media familiarization tours for *Taste Comox Valley*, highlighting the agritourism and agricultural investment opportunities and product, under the umbrella of the Comox Valley Olympic team training story. An unprecedented 30+ media visits were hosted in the days prior to the Olympics. Over \$1M in earned media drove attention to the Valley's NOC training and winter tourism product, as well as the agriculture and shellfish product.

### ***Interactive Multimedia Marketing Development***

Outlined below are the projects completed to support the media program:

- *Official Comox Valley 2010 Visitors' Guide* - increased culinary, agri-tourism editorial content and images
- *HD Video Shoot* – High Definition tourism and economic development footage and video production featuring Culinary, Agriculture, and Agri-Tourism, as well as Olympic team hosting and tourism product promotion.
- *Media Kit Development* - story hooks, pre written stories, destination backgrounder that showcased the regions agri-tourism, shellfish and agri-investment opportunities.
- *Image Bank* - Three photographers engaged to expand image bank inventory in culinary, agri-tourism, agriculture and sport tourism/sport hosting resulting in an additional 300+ images

### ***Games Time Media Release Program***

A media relations firm was contracted to produce and circulate daily Games releases regarding Comox Valley NOC teams the region hosted and their medal successes at the Olympics. As well, media events and releases supporting the local shellfish industry were staged during Games time. The Comox valley is very famous for its pristine oyster beds.

### ***Ski and Stay Consumer Campaign Overview and Components***

Vancouver 2010 drove massive media and consumer attention to the province, in particular the lower mainland and its winter attractions. This attention increased demand for accommodation and room rates, traffic congestion and security issues tightened accessibility, and in some cases, mountains were closed for weeks to the general public. With these obstacles, there was a growing belief amongst the lower mainland winter enthusiasts that their regular ski destinations would be too busy, too expensive, or inaccessible for the 2010 ski season.

Given the perceived and real challenges created by Vancouver 2010 for the winter consumer, coupled with the growing international team hosting destination reputation, the Comox Valley took advantage of the Games by partnering with BC Ferries, the local hotels and Mount Washington to target the lower mainland to build a new client base for future ski seasons including the following activities:

Summary of Campaign Results:

- Global TV Promotional Spots: 6 weeks, 48 x 15 second spots, \$28,400 value
- Global TV On-air Editorial: 8 morning news shows, total 10 minutes, \$17,280 value - Total Viewers: 2,177,900
- Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province Ads: ¼ page ads, full colour
- Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province Editorial: Readers 882,000. Ad Equivalency \$3,900
- Victoria Times Colonist: 5 full page ads
- BC Ferries Video Terminal Exposure: Approx. 275,000 views
- Total Contest Entries Received: 6000

## Games Time Strategies and Events

### ***‘World’s Newest Nordic Venue’***

Once the Games started, the region began to reposition itself from a Pre-Games training venue, to the *‘World’s Newest Nordic Venue’* – a positioning proudly earned by the highly successful Pre-Games training program at Mount Washington. This re-positioning was necessary for the actual Games-time communications strategy, and can be used into the future as the Valley develops its future sport hosting strategy.

### ***Sweden vs China Olympic Women’s Exhibition Hockey Game***

Leveraging the close relationship developed with the Swedish and Chinese Olympic committees, the women’s hockey teams were invited to play an exhibition hockey game at the Comox Valley Sports Centre. The Olympic enthusiasm created by this event to the sell-out crowd was truly memorable. Comox Valley Minor Hockey, economic development, business sponsors and the Spirit Committee played an important part in the organization of the game. Both Chinese and Swedish television crews were on site, along with other national Olympic broadcasters and media thereby increasing the worldwide exposure for the Valley.

### ***2010 Commerce Centre - Vancouver***

In 2004 the Commerce Centre was established by the BC Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Secretariat. Its mandate was to ensure sustainable economic opportunities were identified early and realized before, during, and after the 2010 Games. The physical hosting pavilion was located in Robson Square, Vancouver, the ‘city square’ of all the Olympic festivities.

The Comox Valley participated in four targeted events with a significant number of both accredited and unaccredited international media in attendance. These events were:

- Comox Valley Olympic Update Sept 2009
- 2010 Business Opportunities – Food Service Procurement Exhibition – Oct 2009
- Taste Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast Feb 2010
- BC Shellfish Growers Tasting Feb 2010

### ***BC Street @ City of Richmond 'O Zone' Live Site***

BC Street was a joint 'BC House' Games-time initiative within the gates of the Richmond O Zone, where various British Columbia regions partnered to profile their destination to over 500,000 regional and international visitors. Comox Valley Economic Development organized the participation in partnership with Mount Washington, the major resorts within the Valley, Pacific Coastal Airlines and the shellfish industry presenting the destination as 'Comox Valley House' featuring the Valley's strength in culinary and sport tourism. Participating NOC pre-training teams were represented by their country flags and was a great conversation starter.

Four mini-events were hosted within BC Street to further promote the Valley:

- BC Shellfish Growers Oyster Tasting - 450 oysters in 1.5 hours
- Bent Harder – Comox Valley Torch Bearer - 3,900 people attended
- BC Fiddler Champions
- La La Dancers - K'omoks dance group

## **Infrastructure Improvements**

Three legacy infrastructure projects would probably not have been fast-tracked had the Olympics not been happening.

### ***Mount Washington Nordic Trails and Biathlon Range Upgrade***

A very committed group from the Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Society, Mount Washington cross-country and biathlon clubs, systematically and strategically began to create their Olympic legacies in 2004. Their work, in partnership with Mount Washington, economic development, and BC Parks laid the way for hosting of the IPC World Cups and the National Olympic/Paralympic team Pre-training opportunities.

Through extensive trail improvement, design and construction of new competition trails, upgraded biathlon range, 2km of lighting loops, substantial Olympic funding grants, and the installation of an automated biathlon target range, Mount Washington acquired the necessary venue components to attract FIS (International Ski Federation) and IPC level events. With the FIS sanction, the nordic community successfully hosted the 2007 and 2009 IPC World Cups, and fourteen 2010 Olympic Pre-Training Camps.

With a small amount of work going forward, the cross country courses will seek 'homologation,' (certified by FIS) thus opening up the opportunity for many international nordic events to be hosted by the ski clubs and the Mount Washington community.

### **Vancouver Island Mountain Sport Centre**

From humble beginnings in 2003 as the *Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Society* established to provide bi-annual training grants to emerging island athletes, to a fully functional sport training centre on the hills of Mt Washington in 2010 – this Olympic legacy will continue to evolve and serve the community for decades to come.

Years of commitment by countless individuals and generous funding support from many sources have allowed this centre to be built with these guiding principles:

- An opportunity for youth, seniors, disabled and emerging athletes to pursue athletic and personal development in a natural mountain environment that will challenge and enhance self-esteem, leadership skills and life skills
- Provide overnight ‘group’ style accommodation, year round coaching, training, recreational and educational programming and competitive events
- Serve local schools and university groups
- Support BC Parks environmental initiatives in co-operation with the Strathcona Park Visitor’s Centre

### **Community Development Legacy Initiatives**

Many of the Olympic legacies will be intangible as it is not possible to measure inspiration, attitude, higher ideals, spirit, wonder, respect, pride, happiness – to mention a few pivotal ‘feelings’ that happen during the Olympics.

Other less recognized legacies such as the evolution of ideas and cultural values, intercultural and non-exclusionary experiences (based on gender, ethnicity or physical abilities) collective effort, partnerships, notoriety on a global scale and volunteerism are equally important – in many ways these are the long term legacies that truly change the human being – thus changing the community in which they live.

### **Spirit of British Columbia Community Committee**

Over 95 provincial *Spirit of BC* committees were established to promote community innovation, pride and excellence in the years leading up to the 2010 Winter Games. From 2003-2010, people from all corners of the province felt the excitement of the Games through community events and programs run by their local *Spirit of BC* groups.

The mandate of the Comox Valley *Spirit of BC* Committee was to ensure that the whole of the Comox Valley worked together to leverage Olympic and non-Olympic community opportunities in the areas of sport & recreation, arts & culture, tourism, trade and investment, procurement, literacy and volunteerism.

Comox Valley was the only Vancouver Island committee to send representatives to the 2006 Torino Winter and 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. Yearly *Spirit of BC Week* events were organized in the run-up to the games that included celebrating local Olympians, parades, contests and joint awards ceremony with the athletes from the 2007 and 2009 IPC World Cups. The committee was a part of the development of the initial support and plans around the *Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Centre*, the securing of the Comox Valley on the Olympic Torch Relay Route, and the National Olympic Committee Team attraction program.

As a team of exceptional volunteers, led by former Olympian, Susan Kelsey, the *Comox Valley Spirit Committee* was truly remarkable with the years of leadership, tireless dedication and organization of Olympic focused events, hosting teams and travelling worldwide to promote the Valley. The members of the committee were comprised from a cross section of community sectors including business, tourism, arts and culture, transportation, recreation, education and the Canadian forces.

***Spirit of BC Committee Members***

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Susan Kelsey      | Chair   |
| Len Apedaile      | Strathcona Nordic Ski Club/Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Society |
| Marty Douglas     | Coast Realty  |
| Rob Grantham      | School District #71   |
| Andrew MacMillan  | Volunteer   |
| Darryl Pippin     | Volunteer   |
| Don Sharpe        | Mount Washington Alpine Resort                                      |
| Marilyn Tevington | Volunteer   |
| Liz Tribe         | Volunteer   |
| Randy Wiwchar     | City of Courtenay   |
| Dianne Hawkins    | Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce                                    |
| Curt McFarlene    | 19 Wing Comox – Canadian Forces Base                                |
| Martin Lavoie     | Volunteer   |
| Ron Webber        | Volunteer   |

From the Spirit Committee and its community involvement, the legacy of community pride, hosting capabilities and elite volunteer skills will remain within the Valley for any future opportunity the Valley chooses to focus on.

***The Olympic Torch***

Particularly for the Valley youth, the impact of the torch will be remembered forever. Each person has an Olympic defining moment, or a number of things remembered that are personal legacies from the Olympics. Many would say seeing and feeling the emotion of the torch is the single moment they will always remember about the Olympics. The Olympic torch had an extended route throughout the Valley that included a First Nations ceremony, a visit to 19 Wing Comox Canadian Forces base and a touch-down in all 3 Valley communities before the evening celebration. The final community torch bearer

leg of the Comox Valley torch route was run by Ben Harder, an 82 year old Valley legend contributing even more to the emotion and magic surrounding the torch.

**Valley Partnerships**

One of the most significant intangible legacies of the Olympic experience was the forging of deeper business partnerships and a ‘can-do’ attitude. Numerous business leaders interviewed for this report immediately said they really focused on their business and how it could benefit from the Olympics, and that the ‘new’ relationships will definitely assist their business in the future.

**2010 Legacies Now Programs – Government of British Columbia**

During the run-up to the Games, and now under ‘2010 and Beyond,’ *Legacies Now* was the provincial government umbrella organization that administered over 61 legacy programs at the community level. The Valley extensively supported the programming available from *Legacies Now* through the *Spirit Committee*, as well as numerous local groups interacted directly for program support.

All programs fell into the following categories and will be discussed relative to the Comox Valley:

- Aboriginal
- Arts
- Disability
- Literacy and Learning
- Sport and Healthy Living

**Aboriginal – K’omoks First Nations Legacies**

A First Nations legacy of particular note by private artist Andy Emerson was the ‘*Spirit of Snow and Ice Collection*,’ a series of 10 limited edition prints focused on winter sport. Each print features silhouettes of winter athletes in front of a traditional First Nations design. Prints were used extensively during the Games as part of corporate and government gift giving programs.

Examples of Aboriginal programming funded by *Legacies Now* includes:

| YEAR                 | ABORIGINAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION                   | LEGACY COMMUNITY IMPACT   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| 2006<br>2007<br>2009 | <b>Star Spirit Series – Sid Williams Theatre</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different art forms were showcased to develop cross-cultural awareness, and strong collaborative/creative networks</li> <li>• ‘<i>Carving in Residence</i>’ program resulting in a Comox Valley friendship mask</li> </ul> |

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|------|--|--|
| 2006 | <b>Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry</b><br><i>Building the Circle</i><br><i>Dancing With Spirit</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revitalization of artistic and cultural skills including beading, regalia making, drum making and drumming, and pow-wows</li> </ul>   |
| 2009 | <b>Aboriginal Host Community</b><br><i>Olympic Torch</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very spiritual, traditional blessing of the torch and representation of the K'omoks people in the Big House</li> <li>• Raised the bar for hosting for the K'omoks Band</li> <li>• Changed the 'feeling' of the Big House</li> <li>• Deeper integration of the Band within the Valley</li> </ul> |
| 2008 | <b>Aboriginal Youth Sport Legacy Fund</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the slow-pitch league and snow board team by the Wachaiy Friendship Centre</li> </ul>  |

### **Art Legacies**

Numerous cultural groups focused on the arts took advantage of the Olympics to fast track their programming.

Examples of Arts programming funded by *Legacies Now* includes:

| <b>YEAR</b> | <b>ARTS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>  | <b>LEGACY COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>   |
|-------------|--|--|
| 2005        | <b>Comox Valley Community Arts Council/ North Central Island Arts and Cultural Association</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of agreed-upon standards for cultural products, and to combine resources for marketing and advocacy within the arts community</li> </ul>                                    |
| 2006        | <b>Comox Valley Community Arts Council</b><br><b>Fiber Arts Symposium</b><br><i>'Weaving the Island'</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting place for island fiber artists to celebrate economic, cultural and artistic roles</li> <li>• Produced collaborative, multi-disciplinary work showcasing regional artists</li> </ul> |
| 2006        | <b>Courtenay Business Improvement Association/ Comox Valley Gallery and Community Arts Council</b><br><i>'Local Colour Arts and Cultural Festival'</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative groups focused on the arts leveraged available funding to enhance the community</li> </ul>  |

***Disability/Accessibility Legacies***

Perhaps no other geography in the province experienced as significant a societal change regarding the perceptions of people with disabilities than the Comox Valley. The legacy of inclusion, respect, and 'wow,' were made possible for many Valley residents to see elite, disabled athletes compete at the Olympic level. This is an enriching experience many people will never have the privilege of seeing – ever.

Examples of Disability/Accessibility programs funded by *Legacies Now* includes:

| YEAR | DISABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION   | LEGACY COMMUNITY IMPACT   |
|------|--|---|
| 2007 | <b>City of Courtenay<br/><i>Measuring-up Program</i></b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a regional accessibility and inclusion strategic plan within the Valley</li> <li>• Comox Valley Accessibility Committee formed</li> </ul>   |
| 2008 | <b>Comox Valley Regional District/Cumberland<br/><i>Measuring-up Program</i><br/><i>Accessible Tourism</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created a 'built environment' brochure for developers</li> <li>• Developed a Valley accessibility guide profiling accessible businesses and tourist attractions</li> <li>• Over 145 tourism businesses received accessibility ratings</li> </ul> |
| 2008 | <b>Comox<br/><i>Measuring –up Program</i></b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a regional emergency preparedness training program including resource and educational material</li> </ul>  |
| 2008 | <b>Mount Washington<br/><i>Accessibility improved</i></b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-regarded venue for hosting disabled Nordic events</li> <li>• BC Parks wheelchair accessible boardwalk established</li> </ul>  |

### ***Literacy and Learning Legacies***

The Comox Valley has a significant on-going focus on both literacy and learning and is in its second year of implementation of many *Literacy and Learning Now* programs. Current priorities are to provide enhanced literacy and learning opportunities for youth in transition, unemployed or underemployed people and isolated and vulnerable families and parents.

Examples of activities:

- Seniors Writing Circles
- Mother Goose and More – ESL (English as a second language) families and ESL tutoring
- Early Learners Program – isolated families participate in story-times at the library
- Health Literacy – particularly for marginalized families
- Cultural Literacy – arts and crafts, music particular to certain cultures
- Writing workshops
- Off-campus college assessment for post-secondary students

- Learning Workshops for Women – harvesting edibles, auto mechanics etc
- “Adopt a Nation” – 15 schools/15 nations/15 businesses partnered on Spirit committee events – eg – Royal Lepage Real Estate, Ukraine community, one elementary school worked with the local Ukrainian people, decorated a bobsled for a spirit week event and passed out pyrogies

The legacy created by a community focused on life-long and life-wide learning is difficult to measure, but many would say education is the key to advancing our society – and it starts at the community level.

***Sport and Healthy Living***

The Olympics presented a perfect ‘storm’ to refocus attention on sport and its relationship to healthy living. Throughout the Valley funding was used for healthy living programming and sport infrastructure development.

Examples of Sport and Healthy Living programs funded by Legacies Now include:

| <b>YEAR</b> | <b>SPORT and HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>    | <b>LEGACY COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>  |
|-------------|--|---|
| 2007        | <b>Action Schools! BC</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six schools registered to improve physical activity and healthy eating</li> </ul>  |
| 2008        | <b>SportFit BC</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven schools registered to get active and discover new sports</li> </ul>  |
| 2008        | <b>ActNow BC for Students</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily 30 minutes of physical activity implemented in schools to help students develop healthy, daily physical activity habits</li> </ul>   |
| 2009        | <b>BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous schools are teaching good nutrition by example</li> <li>• Long-term athlete development – how to eat properly</li> <li>• Reduction in the number of hot-dog and pizza days at school</li> </ul> |
| 2009        | <b>Act Now Athletes in the Schools</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level athletes spoke to school children about elite sport and their personal inspiring journeys e.g. Silken Laumann (Canadian Olympic rower)</li> </ul>   |
| 2008        | <b>Active Comox Valley</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established to focus on the healthy well-being of Valley residents</li> </ul>  |

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 2009 | <b>Seniors Outdoor Fitness facility built</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness park adjacent to Filberg Park programmed for age 55+</li> </ul> |
| 2009 | <b>Youth Centre established</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7,000 sq ft facility including an indoor skateboard park</li> </ul>     |

The story of the Comox Valley’s journey to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and Beyond is truly remarkable...they exemplify one of the true Olympic spirits – ‘Anything can Happen with Dedication and Focus’ – they are the little community that did. The following people were contributors to this report:

|    |                   | Name | Olympic Focus Area  |
|----|-------------------|------|---|
| 1  | John Watson       |      | Olympic Legacy - Economic Development                           |
| 2  | Lara Greasley     |      | Olympic Legacy - Economic Development                           |
| 3  | Randy Wiwchar     |      | City of Courtenay - Recreation                                  |
| 4  | Susan Kelsey      |      | Chair, Spirit Committee   |
| 5  | Len Apedaile      |      | Manager, VANOC Cross Country Skiing, Strathcona Nordic Ski Club |
| 6  | Andrew MacMillan  |      | Spirit Committee  |
| 7  | Danielle Hoogland |      | Literacy  |
| 8  | Rick Morson       |      | Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Centre                         |
| 9  | Joe Bajan         |      | Mount Washington Biathlon                                       |
| 10 | Darryl Pippin     |      | Spirit Committee – Team Attraction                              |
| 11 | Sarah Nicholson   |      | Tourism, Mount Washington                                       |
| 12 | Don Sharpe        |      | Mount Washington Alpine Resort                                  |
| 13 | Rob Gratham       |      | School District #71   |
| 14 | Kathleen Frank    |      | K’omoks First Nations   |
| 15 | Don McRae         |      | MLA – Government of British Columbia                            |
| 16 | Dan Salomons      |      | Team Attache Leader   |
| 17 | Jin Lin           |      | Team Attache - China  |
| 18 | Brad Knight       |      | Crown Isle Resort and Golf Community                            |
| 19 | Tom Broadley      |      | BC Shellfish Growers Association                                |
| 20 | Fred Bates        |      | Mayor of Cumberland   |
| 21 | Roger McKinnon    |      | Old House Village Hotel and Spa                                 |
| 22 | Jim Anderson      |      | Pacific Coastal Airlines  |
| 23 | Pat English       |      | Vice President – Sage Hills Developments                        |

|    |                 |                               |
|----|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 24 | Tracey McGinnis | Blinds, Billiards and Bobbles |
| 25 | Liz Tribe       | Spirit Committee              |