

## Mount Washington to host 2007 International Paralympic Nordic Games

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The 2010 Olympic opening ceremonies are just over 1,200 days away. In 2007 the athletes who will attend the 2010 Games will be found in the Comox Valley with the arrival of the 2007 International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Nordic Skiing World Cup finals this March on Mount Washington.

"This 2007 IPC event will bring the same athletes we saw in Torino, who are now racing towards their appearance at 2010," said Mike McLaughlin, Chair of the Comox Valley World Cup Organizing Committee,

"Canada hasn't hosted this particular World Cup in some time, making it a very strategic win for the Comox Valley to be able to show off our capabilities in hosting winter sporting events of this caliber as we get closer to Vancouver 2010."

The lead for this terrific opportunity was born through the Strathcona Nordics Ski Club and Vancouver Island Society for Adaptive Snowsports who have been working on attracting the event since the National Disabled Team held a spring training camp at Mount Washington in 2004.

Follow up by the Comox Valley delegation that attended at the Torino Winter Olympic Games and subsequent support from VANOC and Cross Country BC helped move the initiative forward and the rest is history.

"The event could bring up to 23 world nations to the Comox Valley, 158 athletes, in addition to coaches, friends and families," said Mike McLaughlin, "We are exploring an Adopt A Team Program as well as holding the Opening Ceremonies off the mountain so businesses, schools and residents can meet these elite athletes and capture the Olympic spirit."

In addition to offering the Valley residents a sneak peak at the best in biathlon and cross country events, the championships will bring an economic boost to the community, increased profile to the community through media attention, as well as a heightened awareness of the Valley's venues and community assets for team training for 2010.

"Mount Washington boasts the same or better conditions to those that are found at the 2010 nordic venues near Whistler. In addition, the teams that train here can take advantage of cross training out of the snow conditions through road biking, running and

rowing thanks to our incredible winter climate," said McLaughlin adding, "This event is an incredible opportunity and the Comox Valley is going to make it a fantastic event for the athletes and our community."