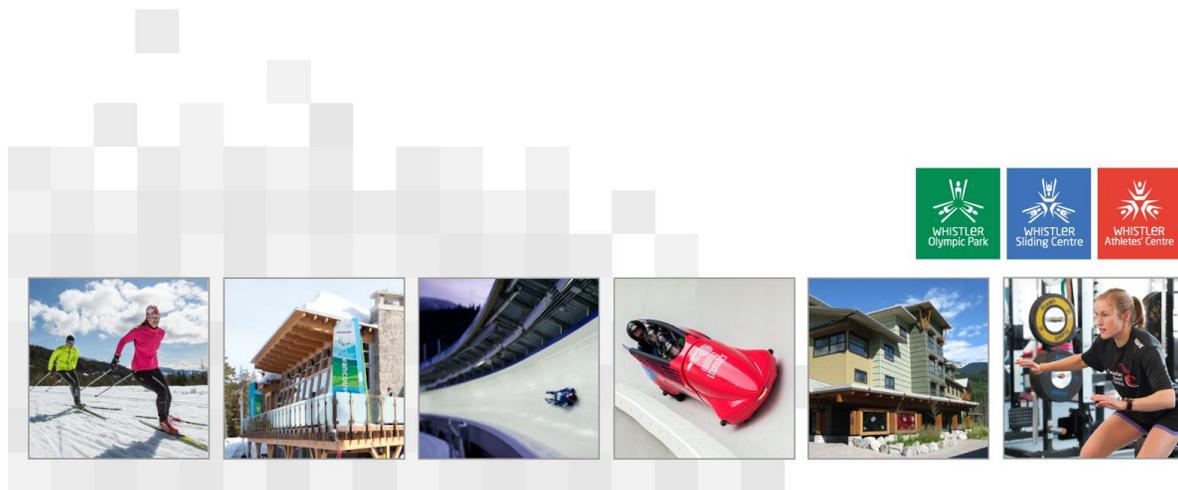


# Whistler Sport Legacies Annual Report

April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015



*This report includes the Audited Financial Statements for the full fiscal year of April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. During this period, WSL continued to build upon the foundation laid during the past four years of operation by delivering on our sport mandate while pursuing revenue-generating programs to further support sport.*

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## Year in Review

This report covers the fifth year of operation for the Whistler 2010 Sport Legacies Society (WSL), from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. WSL is now moving beyond simply operating venues, into sport delivery and truly becoming a community asset leading the growth of winter sport in the Sea to Sky Corridor. WSL is dedicated to delivering on our mission to “grow sport”, as we work towards our vision to become “a centre for sports excellence”.

### *Whistler Olympic Park*

At Whistler Olympic Park, recreational users have access to groomed cross-country trails, recreational biathlon programs, an extensive snowshoe trail system, a ski play area, a tobogganing area, dog friendly trails; and a full service Day Lodge with a rental shop, retail shop, and food/beverage services. Whistler Olympic Park’s joint venture with Callaghan Country Wilderness Adventures to offer 90 kms of groomed trails and 40 kms of snowshoeing trails, continued to be successful as the additional terrain greatly improves the training experience for athletes of all levels.

The winter season 2014/2015 was the most challenging in the history of Whistler Olympic Park, with much less snowfall than average and continuously warm weather with long periods of heavy rain instead of snow (snowpack in cross-country stadium in February 2013: 300cm, February 2014: 185cm, February 2015: 30cm with large bodies of water). The venue even had to close almost one month early, on March 15, 2015 (skiing was still possible until April 6 on the trails of the partner venue Callaghan Country).

Despite challenging weather conditions, WOP had a successful season from a business perspective. For the 2014 Christmas holiday period, there was an 8% revenue increase over the previous year. From the start of the season until early February 2015, when the Park had to close for four days due to heavy rainfall and warm temperatures, the rental revenue was up by 7%, retail revenue was up by 13%, and snow school revenue was up by 29% compared to the previous year. Considering the poor weather, the Park only registered a 13% decrease in season pass sales, and some season pass holders even achieved as many as 60 or more ski days. A discounted youth sport pass also increased the number of youth pass holders by 58%.

In fall 2014, Whistler Olympic Park successfully completed a pilot project for snow storage in order to offer early snow access to high performance athletes. In a storage facility that was built in 2013, snow from the winter 2013/2014 was stored under sawdust throughout the summer and brought on the trails in October/November, creating a 900 meter loop for early season training. While there are only three facilities in Canada that offer early snow access, Whistler Olympic Park is the only venue that uses natural snow (Canmore and Quebec use manmade

snow). The immense training value for athletes was proven by the number of athletes that used the 'Callaghan Gold' loop between November 8 and November 26, 2014: 6,029 skier visits were registered from high performance athletes from across the Province, including the BC XC Ski Team, BC Biathlon Team, local ski clubs and several coaching course groups.

The 'Callaghan Gold' loop also served as main ski trail after Whistler Olympic Park's official opening (November 27) for athletes, recreational skiers, and school groups until natural snow fell in December. A race with 150 participants was even carried out on 'Callaghan Gold' on November 30. Immediate results on the National stage for athletes profiting from the stored snow are the performances of Hollyburn Cross-Country Ski Club athletes who won eleven medals at the Canada Games 2015. As well, Para-Nordic athletes from local clubs such as the Spud Valley Nordics and Nordic Racers were successful at the Games.

A total of 10 sport competitions in all Nordic disciplines (cross-country, biathlon, ski jumping and Nordic combined) were hosted at Whistler Olympic Park during the winter 2014-2015 season. Around 1,000 Nordic athletes from recreational/grassroots to national level, competed at the venue in various competitions both in winter and summer. The most significant events were the BC Cup Biathlon and BC Championship competitions in January 2015 for 94 athletes and the Teck Coast Cup series (3 events) for a total of 543 athletes. Due to the lack of snow in December 2014, the Haywood NorAms (with WJr/U23 Trials-1), which would have brought Canada's best cross-country skiers to Whistler Olympic Park, had to be cancelled.

Whistler Olympic Park has invested in establishing a base for producing local ski jumpers with the construction of two junior training jumps (20/40m) that were completed in summer 2014 and opened in January 2015. The junior jumps are an ideal teaching facility for introducing beginners to the sport and for fundamental training and progression.

For the 2014/2015 season, the ski play area was relocated to an area with more space, right next to the new junior ski jumps. The enhanced ski play area will contribute to teaching quality as it is an ideal area for athletes and recreational skiers to develop fundamental ski skills and to improve balance, coordination and confidence while climbing and descending the ski play features (rollers, bumps, small jumps and slalom courses) in the new Nordic terrain park.

Following the signing of an MOU with the resident biathlon club Sea to Sky Nordics in 2013 in order to develop a regional biathlon training centre, a highly certified full-time biathlon coach was hired jointly by Whistler Olympic Park and the club in January 2014. As a result, more training and competition opportunities could be offered for higher level athletes (Learn to Train and Learn to Compete). Regular weekend biathlon training at Whistler Olympic Park was extended from just the winter months (December until March) to summer/fall/winter (June 2014 to March 2015), three summer camps were held in July and August 2014 that were attended by athletes from all over the Province and six regional biathlon competitions were

carried out throughout the year to supplement the annual BC Cup provincial level competitions. Overall, the youth biathlon participation increased by 59% from the season 2013/2014 to 2014/2015.

In order to increase training quality and participation in seasonal Nordic Club Youth Development Programs, a new concept was introduced for the winter 2014/2015 in co-operation with the three local Nordic clubs Sea to Sky Nordics, Whistler Nordics and Spud Valley Nordics. Bunny Rabbits, Jackrabbits, Track Attack and Development Team groups of all three clubs would ski together in joint training groups, coached by club instructors and volunteers as well as Whistler Olympic Park sport coaches. This reduced the labor cost for the clubs, increased training quality and the new training atmosphere with bigger groups and new ski partners boosted the athletes' motivation and enjoyment. Programs at Whistler Olympic Park were run Wednesday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays throughout the 2014/2015 season with cross-country, biathlon, ski jumping and multi-sport options. As part of this partnership, Whistler Olympic Park also offered discounted \$25 youth season passes as an incentive to participants of these club programs. A significant growth in participation (23% in total participation compared to 2013/2014 season), especially in the Track Attack class (learn to train level) was the immediate result of this joint training concept. A survey among the participants/parents after completion of the season proved that the new concept was well received and training quality had been considerably enhanced.

WOP continued a program with School District 48 Howe Sound to provide affordable access to grade 5 and 6 students to experience the fundamental basics of cross country skiing in group environment, taught by WOP Sport Coaches/Instructors and volunteers. In the winter of 2014-2015 WOP hosted 1500 kids with hope that some of these kids continue with the sport.

The Whistler Olympic Park Volunteer Program, in its fifth season in 2014/2015, proves the venue has strong ties to the community as 37 volunteers contributed 1,309 hours to support sport, event and recreational operations in the winter 2014/2015, and 70% of those volunteers had returned from previous years.

In the summer, WOP was open for self-guided Olympic interpretive tours, Biathlon, mountain biking, and a snack shack for thirsty cyclists. Winter sport teams from BC and Alberta based themselves in Whistler for summer dryland training on paved trails and roads. The Tough Mudder race in June 2014 brought approximately 20,000 participants and spectators to the venue over two days and gave the Sea to Sky corridor communities a tremendous economic boost. Non-traditional use of the venue for corporate group events, recreational sport events (such as RedBull 400 and Ironman Canada), TV and movie filming, and summer weddings continues to grow and be a good source of revenue for this venue and accounts for 10% of WOP revenue.

In an effort to explore options for summer camps to expose children and youth to Nordic sports and potentially recruit participants for winter programs, Whistler Olympic Park worked together with the local camp organizer Whistler Sport Academy to offer multi-sport summer camp programs to the local community and also to tourists. Three five-day camps were held in July and August 2014, with 57 children between 8 and 13 being introduced to Olympic sports like biathlon, ski jumping, luge and archery.

### *Whistler Sliding Centre*

In the fifth year of post-games operation, the Whistler Sliding Centre continues to build on the sport and recreation components of its business. The WSC's reputation for cutting edge development programs, combined with excellent ice conditions and a technically challenging design, is attracting athletes from across Canada (Ontario, Alberta and BC) and around the world to train and compete here. By accommodating international sport group requests, the WSC has increased its sport business capacity and is helping to build critical relationships with the national sport organizations through greater cooperation.

The WSC is an artificially refrigerated track and can operate in a variety of weather conditions. This has been a great advantage for the past two winter seasons as less snow fall and warmer ambient temperatures have encouraged winter travellers to seek alternative activities in Whistler Resort. The Whistler Sliding Centre continued to provide a public Sport Experience Program (SEP) for Skeleton and Bobsleigh in the 2014-2015 season. While these programs are scheduled around sport use, they were very successful with sold-out sessions. Trip Advisor rated the Whistler Sliding Centre's public bobsleigh and skeleton programs as the #2 activity in Whistler (after downhill skiing). The WSC public programs achieved a 34% increase in revenue over the previous fiscal, with the addition of the summer bobsleigh program.

National teams trained at WSC from Oct. 21–Nov. 16, 2014 before departing on their World Cup circuit. Through cooperation with the National Sport Organization (NSO), the WSC was able to host a multitude of international training groups. Most notable was an FIBT small-Nations development group comprised of athletes from Australia, Jamaica, and Brazil, as well as a Russian training group. These endeavors were very successful creating over \$35k in additional sport revenue during a five-week period. Russian development and high performance teams were at the WSC from Nov. 8–Dec. 4, 2014. WSC saw a significant increase of 86% in Sport Fee revenues in the 2014-2015 season over the prior year, predominantly due to international bobsleigh teams training on the track. The WSC has identified international team training to be a future sport revenue source as well as generating room night revenue at the Athletes' Lodge and High Performance Centre. This combination positions Whistler as the perfect place for teams to come for advanced pre-season training, especially since the Whistler track is recognized as one of the world's most technically-challenging.

In March 2014, WSL partnered with the BC Bobsleigh Skeleton Association for their purchase of four training Bobsleighs (plank sleds) that are non-articulating and very stable allowing for a greater success rate among new pilots in the sport of Bobsleigh. In the 2014/15 season, the sleds were used as a recruitment and development tool attracting the likes of Rick Mercer and Jason Priestley to showcase the formerly “exclusive” sport of Bobsleigh as an accessible sport for the athlete in all of us. The sleds have been used to successfully introduce 88 new pilots to the sport in Whistler including two Provincially-targetted athletes. The program is anticipated to expand in the coming year by increasing programming in the discovery level of the sport. It is anticipated that the program will generate a considerable local following that will increase the visibility of the sliding sports in Whistler while growing the conversion rate of recruited high performance athletes into the sliding sports.

While the Whistler Sliding Centre did not host a World Cup or Championship level competition in the winter of 2014-2015, the venue has been awarded the IBSF Bobsleigh Skelton World Cup in January 2016, and the IBSF Bobsleigh Skelton World Championships & Para sliding event in February 2019.

### *Whistler Athletes' Centre*

Accommodation at the Athletes' Centre is zoned for athletes and coaches, arts & culture groups, and educational groups. Raising awareness of the Lodge with these non-Profit sectors has resulted in a 28% increase in nightly Lodge and Townhome occupancy for 2014-2015 over the previous year. This success is due to targeted sales efforts, continued marketing and media relations initiatives, and word of mouth. It is also the result of a dedicated Sport Services position to provide a one-stop-shop for athletes and teams who visit Whistler to train or compete.

Within the Audited Financial Statements for the WAC, revenue includes leased space and room rentals in the HPC, plus nightly and monthly occupancy of the Lodge and Townhomes. Total WAC revenue increased by 14% in the current fiscal year over the previous fiscal year. In the High Performance Centre, our partner Canadian Sport Institute continued to support athletes with podium potential, and the Whistler Adaptive Sports Program supports recreational opportunities for people of all ages with disabilities. The Oros Gymnastics Centre operates an incredible facility, which enables the Whistler community to enjoy a legacy venue. The Athletes' Centre team works closely with our partners and sport users to ensure we are delivering to their expectations as well as increasing awareness and reputation of the lodge and its facilities.

## *Partners in Sport*

WSL continues to strengthen its partnership with the Canadian Sport Institute-Pacific (CSI-P) with the renewal a five year lease agreement and strategic partnership designed specifically to enhance the delivery of performance services in Whistler and increase the pool of podium potential athletes. The following athletes can access the CSI-P strength and conditioning gym for no charge:

- Sport Canada Nationally carded athletes from across Canada;
- Canadian National Teams (targeted summer & winter) for training camps and/or competitions; and
- Provincially identified athletes (as per respective Provincial Sport Organizations eligibility criteria).

In addition to the strength and conditioning gym, CSI-P supports a world class Olympic and Paralympic training environment through performance services. CSI-P's team of sport scientists and medical experts provide services including physiological testing, recovery and regeneration, and the Podium Fuel athlete meal program. These services when combined with the Athletes' Lodge and Whistler's world class venues, provides athletes, coaches and teams with one of the premier places in Canada to train and compete, giving Canadian athletes every opportunity to win medals for Canada.

WSL continues to have a very strong relationship with the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), and in the past year WSL and the RMOW have collaborated on the following activities and initiatives:

- Feasibility of additional facilities at the Athletes' Centre site, such as an all-weather playing field, a running track, and other facilities that would enhance high performance training;
- Coaches appreciation Social (attracting 50 local sport coaches of all disciplines for an evening of celebrating the contributions coaches make to our community);
- National Coach Certification Program delivery; and
- National Health and Fitness Day (June 6, 2015).

This year WSL entered into a new multi-sport project called Olympic Mondays in partnership with the Whistler Mountain Ski Club, Whistler Blackcomb, the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association and the Canadian Luge Association to deliver an affordable sport opportunity to children 8-12 years old in the Sea to Sky. Held over six Mondays, the students were introduced to several Olympic disciplines unique to Whistler and the Legacy venues: Luge at WSC, Biathlon and Ski-play focused Cross Country skiing at WOP, and the Alpine disciplines (Snowboard, Freestyle and Ski Racing) on Whistler Blackcomb. Whistler Olympic Mondays Goals were to:

1. Provide first time participation opportunities in Olympic Legacy Sports for Sea to Sky youth;
2. Make high quality sport programming accessible for Sea to Sky youth;
3. Develop a relationship between current Olympic Legacy sports, and Alpine sports;
4. Introduce physical literacy benchmarking and development in a multi-sport environment; and
5. Build a basis for a fully engaged sport community including schools, RMOW, WSL, WB, targeted LSO's, CSI Pacific, that are led by Whistler Sport Legacies staff.

In 2014, WSL started negotiations with ViaSport to become a regional sport service delivery hub as part of the broader ViaSport/PacificSport Provincial network of centres. The purpose of the Whistler/Sea to Sky ViaSport hub will be to increase awareness, opportunity, and participation in sport and physical activity at every stage of life, in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Services will include facilitating coaching development through the delivery of the National Coach Certification Program (NCCP), multi-sport programming, and facilitation of “Canada Sport for Life” in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Canada Sport for Life integrates health, education, recreation, and sport activity for people of all ages and abilities.

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## Financial Review

Overall, our 2015 fiscal year performance was better than projected. This can be attributed to the successful performance of the Games Operating Trust Legacy Fund, providing WSL with an additional \$413,000 which offset the cost of Capital infrastructure maintenance projects. Despite a weather-related decreased revenues from WOP, reductions in expenses over budgeted projections at all venues, helped WSL achieve its operating budget.

Our fiscal year of April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015 Statement of Revenue and Expenses reports combined Partner Contributions for a total of \$3,428,555 that include:

- \$900,000 recognition of the multi-year BC Government Transition grant, final year amount
- \$2,445,000 VANOC wind-up distribution contribution
- \$83,555 VANOC 2012 contribution release of restricted funding

The 3.4 million that was recognized in FY 2015 was partially used to fund projects such as the sport development ski jumps at WOP, WSC Summer Bobsled program, and the new luge start building. The remaining funds will help support future revenue-generating projects and capital maintenance programs over the next few of years, as we look for a solution for funding capital replacement programs as the venues age.

WSL's guiding principles will continue to shape our focus to prioritize the growth of sport while operating within our funding and revenue generating capabilities. We will also continue to build strong partnerships with the Canadian Sport Institute, Own The Podium, and viaSPORT, as well as National and Provincial sport associations.

### *Provincial Support*

The Provincial government provided three years of funding totaling \$2.7 Million to cover the period up to March 2015. As of March 31, 2015 WSL has recognized the full balance (\$900,000) of the BC Provincial Government contribution. At this time, no additional contributions have been secured from the Provincial government.

grow  
sport



## Whistler Sport Legacies

**Mail:** 1080 Legacy Way, Whistler, BC, Canada V0N 1B1

**Street:** 4910 Glacier Lane, Whistler, BC, Canada V0N 1B4

**Phone:** 604-964-0040

**Email:** [info@whistlersportlegacies.com](mailto:info@whistlersportlegacies.com)

**Web:** [www.whistlersportlegacies.com](http://www.whistlersportlegacies.com)

