

Biathlon Range Target Automation Project

Final Report



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Introduction

A very committed group from the Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Society, Mount Washington cross-country and biathlon clubs, systematically and strategically began to build Olympic legacies in 2004. Their work, in partnership with Mount Washington Alpine Resort, Comox Valley Economic Development, and BC Parks laid the way for the regions ability to secure hosting the IPC World Cups and the National Olympic/Paralympic team Pre-training opportunities which were very much dependant on the successful completion of this project.



Through extensive trail and infrastructure improvement, design and construction of new competition trails, upgraded biathlon range, 2km of lighting loops, substantial funding grants, and the installation of an automated biathlon target range which was the focus of this project, the region acquired the necessary venue components to attract FIS (International Ski Federation) and IPC level events. The funding provided by the Island Coastal Economic Trust was instrumental in completing the construction of the automated biathlon target range.

This successful project allowed the Comox Valley to host pre-Olympic training for 14 countries, 33 teams, and over 350 Olympic and Paralympic Athletes. The Economic Impact resulting from the pre-games training is estimated at \$570,000.

Comox Valley Economic Development is pleased to provide this final report presenting the overview of the project and its accomplishments.

Project Overview

The project consisted of preparing the biathlon range site, fabricating the components and installing automated biathlon targets, which are now considered the standard for international competitions and training. The project also featured an innovative collaboration and sponsorship agreement with the target manufacturer to develop new wireless technology.

The new technology has raised Mount Washington to the standard of international biathlon training facilities and will enable the region to attract international competitors and teams as well as international level competitions. The pre-Olympic training and future competitions will attract national and international media attention to the area, thus heightening the area's profile internationally and establishing significant sport networks. Finally, the new technology and facilities leave a lasting legacy for our developing athletes.

Project History

Since the announcement of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Comox Valley Economic Development Society was proactively planning to use the Games as a catalyst for local economic development. By improving the local sport tourism infrastructure and attracting Olympic teams to train at Mount Washington the region would be able to capitalize on the significant presence of the international media these teams attract to drive an increase in sport tourism and visitation in general.

In the sport of biathlon, automated targets have become the norm for international competition and training. Most training centres and competition venues in Europe are equipped with automated targets. In North America, there are only a handful of training facilities with this technology. By equipping itself with this technology, Mount Washington would join Canmore and the Callaghan Valley Olympic site as the only facilities in Canada with automated targets.

The first visits to Mount Washington from the Norwegian team confirmed that this equipment was critical to contending teams in their Olympic preparation. This had been reiterated by Sweden, France, Germany and Canada. Consequently, in order to host these teams at Mount Washington, it became essential to acquire this equipment. Some nations even stated that should automated biathlon targets not be available, they would not only remove their biathlon teams but also the other Alpine and Nordic sport teams from training at Mount Washington.

Realizing that this infrastructure was a requirement for a successful team attraction strategy, the Vancouver Island Biathlon Club (VIBC) in collaboration with the proponents, began looking at ways to make this project a reality. While the cost of this system was a major impediment, an additional difficulty was the terrain and heavy snowfall at Mount Washington. In order to circumvent these difficulties the target manufacturer Kurvinen was approached to explore sponsorship options as well as the development of new wireless technology. Kurvinen agreed to provide the equipment at cost, as well as develop a new wireless system, on the basis that Mount Washington would become a demonstration site for this new technology during the high profile pre-Olympic team training phase.

In the spring of 2008, Phase I of the project, concept testing, was initiated. Conversions were made to the first 6 targets and 6 trainer units were temporarily installed for team Sweden. The trainers were used by team Sweden and then removed for the off-season. In spring of 2009, design and development work on the wireless controller was initiated by the manufacturer and in September of 2009, the first wireless controller arrived and was tested in Nanaimo.

The project funding plan called for a number of smaller donations from organizations and small businesses, user fees from the Olympic teams, in-kind donations of labour and materials as well as a major sponsorship of \$35,000 from Save-On Foods.

Unfortunately, just as Phase II was set to begin, the Save-On sponsorship fell through, forcing an urgent search for new sources of funding to replace it. A great deal of time and effort had been invested to make this project a reality and funding the subsequent funding obtained from the Island Coastal Economic Trust ensured that the project and commitments already made to the visiting Olympic teams and manufacturer were upheld. This resulted in significant economic impact to the local community, significant international media exposure, and international recognition at the Olympic level for both Nordic skiing and event hosting.

Project Objectives

While the catalyst for obtaining this equipment was the visiting Olympic teams, it is important to highlight that the objectives were not to serve the interests of these Olympic teams, but rather to use the 2010 Olympics and their visit as a tool to further our regional Sport Tourism attraction strategy and network, which we did.

Project objectives included;

- Improve and develop the Sport Tourism Infrastructure in the Comox Valley
- Develop Mount Washington into an international calibre training and competition facility as a complement to the Mountain Centre athlete training facility being built
- Attract Olympic biathlon teams to train at Mount Washington prior to the 2010 Games and reap the direct economic benefits of these visits
- Attract international athletes and teams to use these facilities on an ongoing basis and reap the long term direct and indirect economic benefits
- Attract national and international sporting events and the economic activity generated by these events
- Take advantage of the media attention generated by the international level athletes training and competing at Mount Washington
- Raise the region's profile nationally and internationally
- Attract winter sport tourists to the region
- Develop a lasting legacy for the region's developing athletes



Project Outcomes

- Pre-Olympics training economic impact estimated at \$570,000 and resulted in 8.1 person years of employment (Vann Struth, Economic Impact of CV Olympic Related Activities – May 2010)
- Over 30 media visits hosted in the days prior to the Olympics resulting in 1 million dollars in earned media attention to the Comox Valley's NOC training and winter tourism product
- Olympic level infrastructure featuring a state of the automated biathlon target system
- 14 countries, 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
- International recognition at the Olympic level of Mount Washington for both nordic and alpine skiing and event hosting
- Continuous international media exposure



Pre-Olympic Team Training List

NATION & SPORT	#	ARRIVAL	DEPART
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
PARALYMPICS			
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
Total		355	

'Mount Washington' Medal Results

- Total of 27 Olympic/Paralympic medals won by athletes who pre-trained at Mount Washington
- Increased awareness of the competition class training facilities available at Mount Washington

Lasting Legacies

The installation of automated biathlon targets has positioned the community above all but a few biathlon facilities in North America. This equipment provides a competitive edge over other facilities as well as a lucrative niche market, unknown to many and hugely underserved.

Despite all of the economic and tourism benefits which will be generated by this facility, one of the most exciting benefits is the legacy left behind for our developing athletes. With world class facilities available, these athletes will be well prepared to compete and will have the confidence of seeing the best in their backyard and measuring themselves to a higher standard.

The ability to train alongside national and international Alpine and Nordic stars will instill a can-do attitude and will increase the confidence of our region's athletes, which will no doubt lead to stronger athletic performances for BC and Canada.



PROJECT FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Biathlon Range Target Automation Project

Period: September 2009 to October 2010

Comox Valley Economic Development
102-2435 Mansfield Drive
Courtenay, Vancouver Island
British Columbia, Canada
V9N 2M2

Project Expenditures

Equipment and Travel	\$ 86,168
Labour	\$ 34,777
Total Expenditures	\$ 120,945

Project Income (Sources of Funding)

VI Biathlon Club	\$ 9,274
IPC	\$ 15,000
Peak Accommodations	\$ 2,000
ICET	\$ 25,083
In Kind Donations	\$ 69,588
Total Income (Sources of Funding)	\$ 120,945

Balance	\$0
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I hereby certify that this statement accurately represents all project expenditures and all sources of project funding

Geoff Crawford
Project Financial officer

Aug 7, 2012
Date



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