BEST PRACTICES GUIDE:

For Resort Development in British Columbia

September 2005

Volume 2
Best Practices Project

Based on materials prepared by:

Context

In June 2003, Premier Gordon Campbell established the BC Resort Task Force to help resorts and resort communities realize their full potential. By July 2004, the BC Resort Task Force presented its "Recommendations of the BC Resort Task Force Report" to the Minister of State for Resort Development. Key recommendations that Government could enact formed the "BC Resort Strategy and Action Plan", released November 2004.

Strategic directions within the "BC Resort Strategy and Action Plan" included the development of a set of best practices tools to build common understanding between resort developers, communities and First Nations.

The Best Practices Project, which commenced in the summer of 2004 and concludes in the fall of 2005, involves the development of three products:

1. *Transitions: Planning, Servicing, and Local Governance in BC's Resort Communities*
2. *Best Practices Guide for Resort Development, and*
3. *Best Practices in Business Partnerships Between First Nations and Resorts*

This report is the second volume of the three-part series and identifies best practices within current resort planning, development and on-going operations. It provides suggestions and sources of information to assist the resort industry, local communities, and the Province in maintaining a competitive advantage in the global tourism industry.

*On behalf of the Municipal Sub-Committee of the
BC Resort Task Force, this report is presented to
Honourable Olga Ilich, Minister of Tourism,
Sport and the Arts*

Foreword

Members of the Municipal Sub-Committee

Darcy Alexander, Vice President, Sun Peaks Resort Corporation

*Ken Arcuri, Director of Planning Services – Regional District of Central
Okanagan, Association of Regional District Planning Managers*

Jim Godfrey, Municipal Administrator, Resort Municipality of Whistler

Jim Greene, General Manager, Red Mountain Resort, Rossland

*Gerard LeBlanc, General Manager of Community Planning – Regional District of
Comox-Strathcona, Association of Regional District Planning Managers*

Geoff Pearce, Clerk-Administrator, City of Langford

Richard Taylor, Executive Director, Union of British Columbia Municipalities

Western Economic Diversification Canada Regional Representative

*Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners along with Cadence Strategies, Cascade
Environmental Resource Group Ltd., Urban Systems Inc., and Owen Bird Solicitors,
appreciate the time, insight and efforts provided by members of the Municipal
Sub-Committee of the BC Resort Task Force. The member's experiences and opinions
were invaluable in identifying and analyzing the complexities and opportunities,
associated with best practices for resort development in British Columbia.*

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Note:

The website URLs in this guide are current as of September 2005. The government of British Columbia has restructured its programs and website URLs will change to reflect the new organization. Once a website can no longer be accessed via the link provided, the reader is directed to pursue the inquiry through the appropriate Ministry website as follows:

Previous	*New*
LWBC - Resort	*Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts*
MCAWS	*Ministry of Community Services*
MSRM	
- *Biodiversity/terrestrial*	*Ministry of Environment*
- *Archaeology*	*Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts*
- *Land Use and Allocation of Crown land*	*Ministry of Agriculture and Lands*
- *Capacity for Recreation on Crown land*	*Ministry of Forests and Range*
WLAP	*Ministry of Environment*

INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

A key element of British Columbia's economic development and tourism strategies is to support resort-based tourism and enable operators to compete effectively in the international market. In 2003, the Province created the BC Resort Task Force with a mandate to enhance resort development and partnerships in British Columbia, and to identify and eliminate barriers to resort development and expansion. The Task Force established a Municipal Sub-Committee to examine issues related to the unique problems of resort developers and communities. The Municipal Sub-Committee identified the need to develop a resort best practices guide for emerging and established resort communities and resort developers which would assist them with the challenge of planning, developing and operating successful resort communities.

Across the world, best practices frameworks are being increasingly used to encourage corporate social responsibility, as well as to provide leading tools for informing public sector management. The American Resort Development Association[1] defines a best practice *". . . as a way or method of accomplishing a business function or process that is considered to be superior to all other known methods"* and *". . . are focused on capturing the most current knowledge and processes being used in the industry today."* Best practice initiatives provide a productive and useable tool kit for information sharing between related activities. Consistent with the Province's commitment to sustainability, best practices tools are an internationally accepted method for encouraging progressive policies and procedures needed to achieve economic success, while fostering vibrant communities and healthy environments. This Best Practices approach is consistent with the Province's commitment to, adopt a scientifically-based, principled approach to environmental management that ensures sustainability, accountability and responsibility, while at the same time encouraging shared stewardship and results-based governance.

Scope of this study

In the summer 2004, Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners and a team comprised of Cadence Strategies, Cascade Environmental Resource Group Ltd., Urban Systems Inc., and Owen Bird Solicitors were engaged to assist the Municipal Sub-Committee to create a Best Practices Guide for Resort Development that would:

1. help emerging and existing resort communities creatively define what they want to be by providing them with tools to assist them in reaching their goals effectively and efficiently;

2. assist established resort communities to fine tune their product to remain competitive; and

3. provide information and tools to enhance relationships between resort developers and the resort community.

The consultants' research and consultation program consisted of:

▪   significant consultation with members of the Municipal Committee of the BC Resort Task Force;

▪   a review of the information conducted through the stakeholder fact finding process of the BC Resort Task Force;

▪   additional research of relevant literature of publicly available reports and case studies addressing confirmed dimensions of best practices;

▪   interviews with a select list of recognized global resort and other best practices experts to selectively mine their depth of knowledge and draw out new ideas; and

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[1]   American Resort Development Association (ARDA) http://www.arda.org

- a Best Practices Workshop with select experts in the fields of resort planning, development, governance and destination marketing to exchange and compare best practices and to explore ideas.

About this guide

This practical guide is designed to help current and prospective resort developers, operators, communities, and the provincial government and other authorities who face challenges in the fields of resort planning, development and on-going operations. The guide will help all stakeholders in their understanding of the development and operation of the resort.

The objective is to provide a common sense, practical guide to help resort developers and resort communities to find creative solutions to problems when considering resort tourism and the potential of British Columbia's primary tourism asset – its natural environment. This guide does not provide a set of legislative or enforceable requirements – its application is voluntary. It is not intended to be prescriptive. This guide outlines environmental, social and economic criteria to consider when planning, constructing or operating a resort venture. These criteria are intended to be applicable to all types and sizes of resort developments, from small-scale, low infrastructure ecotourism ventures to large-scale resort communities.

In this guide you will find

➢ essential information for working with professionals involved in planning, design, construction and operation of resort facilities;

➢ examples of best practices;

➢ contact details and useful references for obtaining further or more detailed information; and

➢ best practices organized within four stages of resort development, which recognizes the need for flexibility from conception to design, seeking regulatory approvals, to building and successfully operating a resort.

The four stages include the following.

Stage I: Assessing the opportunity/Identifying the showstoppers – a preliminary review of key attributes is required to ensure there are no critical challenges that would make the resort development/expansion technically, environmentally, economically or socially unfeasible.

Stage II: Defining the resort vision – If there is an opportunity, envision and design a resort facility that addresses the experience to be offered to the marketplace, how it interacts and mitigates impacts to the natural and social environment, and provides appropriate infrastructure and services.

Stage III: Developing the resort master plan and seeking approvals –a detailed master plan guides the building and operation of the resort within the current regulatory requirements at various government and community levels. Once approvals are secured and requirements met, permits and licensing are sought to begin construction of the resort facility.

Stage IV: Implementation and ongoing operations of the resort – a resort's ongoing success depends on its expertise, planning, inclusion, and ability to adapt to maintain a competitive advantage, conserve its natural surroundings, and sustain community and stakeholder relationships.

Some information in this guide may be very familiar and of second nature to resort planning developers and operators; other information may not. This guide has attempted to address environmental, social and economic issues in a manner that demonstrates their interdependent nature in the belief that what is obvious to one person may not be obvious to another. Similarly, some of the best practices discussed

may not be applicable to all resort developments or communities. For example, aspects such as public transit and mountain design will be of more or less interest depending on the scale and location of the resort contemplated.

What this guide does not provide

This guide does not provide detailed information on the different approvals one needs to obtain for development or that government needs to consider in the regulatory/approval role. The resort approval process has been described in detail by others.[2]

This guide is not a substitute for obtaining professional advice, including qualified planners, market research analysts, financial planners, environmental consultants, engineers, architects, and landscape architects. While this guide will alert you to the many issues to consider in making a resort venture sustainable, it is not definitive and should be used in conjunction with the advice of professionals. It will help you determine many of the questions and areas you may wish to discuss with professionals.

You are also encouraged to consult Tourism and Resort Operations of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (MTSA), for thorough documentation regarding the Provincial approval processes related to Crown lands.

The information in this guide can help you:

➢ put together a proposal that could facilitate the development application process because it has considered relevant environmental, social and economic concerns;

➢ obtain the support of local communities;

➢ achieve lower operating and maintenance costs; and

➢ protect our main asset – British Columbia's natural environment.

This guide contains practical ideas for a resort venture. These best practice ideas have been implemented by other resort developers and governments and have proven successful. You are encouraged to consult the guide when planning and operating your resort for ideas contained in the examples.

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[2] Grant Thornton LLP prepared two reports: *Overview: Land-Based Destination Resort Development Process in British Columbia*, October 2003 and *Overview: Marine-Based Destination Resort in British Columbia,* October 2003, for the BC Resort Task Force Office on the approval process. These reports reveal the complex range of governmental approvals, regulations and review processes developers of a major land- or marine-based resort face before construction can commence.

STAGE I - ASSESSING THE OPPORTUNITY/IDENTIFYING THE SHOWSTOPPERS

Introduction

In defining the resort opportunity – be it a new large-scale resort, expanding an existing resort destination facility or creating a remote wilderness resort – the developer, investor(s) and owner need to look at and address key development issues such as locational attributes, community support, economic feasibility, environmental concerns, regulatory parameters, and legal constructs. Successfully developing a resort hinges on doing a preliminary review of these key issues to make sure there are no critical challenges that would make creating the resort technically, economically or socially unfeasible. If the site possesses favourable physical characteristics, has an absence of significant environmental showstoppers and if identified issues of concern can be mitigated to reduce impacts, then the project should proceed to the next level of study in Stage II - Defining the Resort Vision.

Stage I primarily involves assessing key attributes such as natural and built environment, development policies, governance, and community considerations to determine suitability for development. This preliminary assessment includes looking at current uses on the proposed land base, determining market demand and exploring the economic feasibility of the proposed resort.

Key considerations when assessing resort potential

❑ Tourism trends & projections

❑ Tourism travel growth
- Travel patterns to the area
- Transportation facilities

❑ Regional attractions & competitive factors
- Capacity & operating characteristics
- Demand & supply
- Future competition

❑ Guest profile
- Purpose of stay
- Socio-economic level
- Geographic origin
- Propensity to travel
- Needs & preferences
- Future trends

❑ Site characteristics
- Location in relation to community resources
- Ground characteristics
- Expansion in surrounding region
- Building restrictions
- Current land use
- Carrying capacity
- Recreational features

❑ Regional Economic Characteristics
- Area per capita income
- Local economic drivers
- Population trends
- Real estate tax rates & assessments
- Local purchasing ability
- Labour supply
- Wage trends & scales
- Zoning and building regulations
- Transient traffic statistics

ASSESSING MARKET POTENTIAL AND MARKET DEMAND

An objective, research-based assessment of market potential and the needs of target customers ensures that demand exists for the proposed resort and can generate the revenue streams sufficient for its financial success.

The goal is to gain an early understanding of the potential revenue streams, target markets and the products/services people are seeking in these market segments.

Key Challenges

- Objectively determining market potential and market demand.

- Avoiding overly optimistic estimates to generate investor interest in the resort products.

Examples:

Sun Peaks Market Research

Prior to development of the resort master plan, Sun Peaks engaged a market research firm to evaluate the market potential for a four-season destination mountain resort near Kamloops. Information obtained from focus groups was used to fine-tune the recreational and real estate product mix, during the resort master plan stage. Visitor and land sales forecasts were used to evaluate the economic feasibility of the resort and prepare capital expenditure plans.

Intrawest Golf

Intrawest Golf assesses market demand for any golf resort in its management portfolio to ensure revenue potential is sufficient to generate target return on investment and profitability.

Other Technical References:

Canadian Tourism Commission www.canadatourism.com/ctx

Tourism British Columbia www.tourism.bc.ca

Wilderness Tourism Association www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca

Council of Tourism Associations of BC www.cotabc.com

Regional economic development profiles and statistics: www.civicnet.bc.ca / www.edabc.com / www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Regional destination marketing organizations (RDMOs) www.islands.bc.ca / www.northernbctravel.com / www.landwithoutlimits.com / www.thompsonokanagan.com / www.vcmbc.com / www.bcrockies.com

Travel and Motivation Study for Canada http://www.tourismbc.com/PDF/TAMS_Canada_FullReport.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Typically the developer of the proposed resort takes the lead role in assessing market potential and market demand, as part of the overall due diligence and fundraising process. Local, regional and provincial governments support this effort through the provision of historical information, if available, and through the general promotion of British Columbia's tourism products through organizations like Tourism British Columbia.

- Employ suitable expertise to assist in determining market potential and estimating market demand for the proposed resort experience.

- Consider existing sources of information generated by organizations such as the Canadian Tourism Commission, Tourism British Columbia, World Travel Organization, Wilderness Tourism Association, Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia.

- Consider extent of competitive products that pursue the same target markets (both existing and potential competition) and collect any available data on historic visitation of competitive resort products.

- Determine existing and proposed ease of access to the proposed resort location – access is a critical success factor and includes availability of direct air access to international airport; distance to travel from airport; access road quality and reliability and proximity to a regional market.

- Prepare an analysis of the ability of the market to support the proposed resort in terms of market share.

- Take into account demographics and leisure market trends when preparing visitor forecasts.

DETERMINING RESORT COMPATIBILITY TO EXISTING LAND USE AND TENURE

Resort developments may compete with other existing uses, such as forestry, mining, energy, agriculture, existing recreational tenures and/or regional district and municipal land use bylaws. Conflicting tenures on Crown lands or neighbouring industry and communities may be a "show-stopper" for the resort development or expansion.

It is best to identify existing users' rights and concerns prior to investing a lot of cost and energy in the resort planning cycle. Successful negotiations and agreements with other existing land users and tenure holders are desirable during the resort development process, especially if these maximize cooperation and identify highest and best use of mutually exclusive use and access.

Key Challenges

- Cost and time to document existing tenures and competing land uses.

- The resort may place undue pressure on the limited resources of local service providers.

- Negotiation of interest-based solutions to conflict.

Examples:

Kicking Horse Mountain Resort

At Kicking Horse Resort, the interests of prior land users such as heli-ski operators, cross-country skiers and trappers were resolved prior to writing the Master Development Agreement (MDA) for the resort.

Other Technical References:

Tourism and Resort Operations, MTSA   http://www.lwbc.bc.ca/02land/resorts/background/index.html

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

Treaty Negotiation Office http://www.prov.gov.bc.ca/arr/

Council of Tourism Associations of BC www.cotabc.com

BC Helicopter and Snowcat Skiing Operators Association www.bchssoa.com

Canada West Ski Areas Association www.cwsaa.org

To determine if the proposed resort development is within a regional district or near a municipality, refer to the Union of BC Municipalities website which provides links to all regional districts and municipalities across the province www.civicnet.bc.ca

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Developer/operator must be proactive in early consultation with relevant provincial, local government, federal and aboriginal authorities both on Crown or private land.

- Preliminary consultation with Tourism and Resort Operations of MTSA and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to determine existing *Land Act* tenures and notations such as leases, licenses, *Water Act* uses, mining or forestry interests for resorts involving Crown land.

- Tourism and Resort Operations of MTSA is responsible for coordination of existing land tenures and their uses on Crown land. This office can provide assistance to the developer in negotiating directly with Crown land tenure and permit holders to facilitate the resort use. It can assist the developer in resolving jurisdictional overlaps within other line ministries.

- Determine if a Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) or Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP) exists for the region under consideration.

- Determine if a resort use of the site is consistent with the existing LRMP or SRMP, regional or local community plans. If not, determine whether there is a reasonable expectation that amendments to these plans could be made to support resort development in the area.

- Research freehold land interests through Land Title office searches. Consult local government to determine other potential development plans on private land in the vicinity of the resort.

- Meet with existing stakeholders to determine their issues, concerns and potential participation and consider whether resort facilities and uses will compete or be complementary with existing uses. Document socio-economic benefits for existing and proposed uses.

- The promoter, planners and government agencies review existing tenures and land uses early in the resort development cycle to determine if resources may be shared without detriment to other users.

AVOIDING AND MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS – GENERAL

Avoiding adverse environmental impacts in a resort environment is no longer a lofty goal, but rather a standard objective. Best practice for resorts is to mitigate impacts where they are deemed to be unavoidable. The minimum acceptable standard best practice for resorts in British Columbia is compensatory response to impacts. This approach is required to meet the expectations of a variety of stakeholders, as well as to document indicators and actions required to ensure that the existence of the resort does not come at the expense of its surrounding environment.

To protect or achieve conditions that have been identified as acceptable/desirable in a resort/recreational setting is the overall goal.

Key Challenges

- Resolving conflict between design and operational objective with the need to protect the environment.

- Reaching consensus on what amount of change (impact) is "acceptable" amongst various stakeholders and agencies.

- Determining indicators that accurately demonstrate change that can be attributed to human actions.

- Developing a monitoring program and management actions that can ensure the natural environment and desired recreation experience are protected.

Examples:

Resort Municipality of Whistler – River of Golden Dreams Watershed Management Plan, 2001.

This document lays out a watershed vision, fundamental goals, a series of objectives, indicators and recommended actions for maintaining and improving watershed health of the River of Golden Dreams watershed. The focus of the management plan is on streams, wetlands, and riparian areas within the watershed.

Other Technical References:

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency: www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/index_e.htm

BC Environmental Assessment Office: www.eao.gov.bc.ca/

Needham, Mark D., Masters Thesis Abstract – "Applying the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) to a Study of Summer Alpine Recreation On and Adjacent to Whistler Mountain, British Columbia" http://office.geog.uvic.ca/dept2/grad/abstracts/needham.html

Determining a Capacity for Recreation and Monitoring Effects from Commercial Recreation Operations on Crown land http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cr/resource_mgmt/lrmp/s2s/reports/rec_series_1.pdf

Best Management Practices for Recreational Activities on Grasslands in The Thompson and Okanagan Basins http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/grasslands_th_ok_bmp.pdf

Ministry of Environment, Guidelines & Best Management Practices (BMPs) http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html#regional

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Identify monitoring procedures for management strategy implementation.

- Approach local government to provide access to studies/reports/data concerning natural environment issues.

- Meet with provincial government agencies (Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Forests and Range, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts) to access studies/reports/data concerning natural environment issues in the vicinity of the resort. Through consultation identify key indicators and attributes to monitor for impact.

- Conduct Cumulative Effects Assessment as part of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* review process.

- Consult with the Environmental Assessment Office to determine if project falls within the parameters of the *Environment Assessment Act*.

ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

The preliminary economic feasibility analysis provides an early indication of the potential return on investment associated with a resort. The results of this analysis will indicate whether the resort proposal has the potential to be economically viable. More detailed analyses at each step of the resort design and approval phases are required to confirm potential economic viability to the provincial government and potential sources of capital funding.

This analysis should provide accurate estimates of financial feasibility to inform decision-makers and investors whether to proceed to the next phase of resort planning or development.

Key Challenges

- Desire to provide overly optimistic visitor and revenue forecasts to secure government approvals and/or development financing.

- Developing accurate long-range forecasts for revenues and costs.

- Underestimating the time to build market awareness of the resort product.

- Obtaining local information to use for capital cost estimating.

Examples:

All major resort developments in British Columbia such as Sun Peaks, Crystal Mountain, Red Mountain Resort, April Point Resort, Bear Mountain, et cetera, have conducted an economic feasibility study.

The Coast Hotel Redevelopment Feasibility Analysis
An online example of a feasibility analysis for the redevelopment of a hotel into a conference / resort lodging facility demonstrates the costs of expanding an existing hotel into a destination facility and provides the developer a picture of anticipated economic return.

Other Technical References:

Gee, Chuck Y., *Resort Development and Management* (2nd edition), Educational Institute American Hotel and Motel Association, Michigan, 1996.

Mill, Robert Christie, *Resorts Management and Operation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 2001.

Ryan, Bill and Michael Chrisler. *Guidebook on Small Resort Market Analysis.* University of Wisconsin, Extension Center for Community Economic Development and the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, 2003. http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/tourism/Small%20Resort.pdf

Development of a major resort concept – Jumbo Glacier Resort
http://www.jumboglacierresort.com/documents/refdocs.html

Expansion of a present alpine resort to all-season – Crystal Mountain Resort
http://www.crystalresort.com/development/new/index.html

The Coast Hotel Redevelopment Proposal (Santa Cruz, California) http://www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/pl/coast_hotel/PKF%20Proposed%20Redevelopment%20of%20the%20Coast%20Hotel.pdf

Small Business BC. *Explore Your Financing Options.* http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/bizstart-financing.php

Small Business BC. *Destination Resort Business Sourcing Guide.*
http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/pdf/resort.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The economic feasibility analysis is typically prepared by the resort proponent as part of an overall financing package and as part of submissions to government for use of Crown land. Local and regional government will often be able to provide a list of contacts for local contractors to assist in determining any local construction premiums.

- Evaluate market demand for preliminary resort concept. (See *Assessing Market Potential and Market Demand).*

- Base revenue forecasts on long range visitor forecasts prepared by suitably objective professionals. The assumptions used to prepare these forecasts should be clearly documented, carefully compared to any available statistics and subjected to intense scrutiny. Use sensitivity analyses to evaluate the impact of different visitation levels and understand "worst case" scenario.

- Use realistic, fact-based estimates of what money will buy. All cost estimates should reflect local construction conditions, should include contingencies and should be updated as concepts are refined and become more detailed.

- Prepare long-range pro-forma forecasts of revenues and expenses. Review and reassess the underlying assumptions. Update projections as new information becomes available.

- Prepare detailed budgets for capital investments.

ASSESSING SOCIAL / ENVIRONMENTAL / ECONOMIC IMPACT WITHIN A COMMUNITY

A new resort development offers the potential for economic, social and environmental benefits and costs. The nature of these impacts needs to be understood by all those affected, including First Nations, so that appropriate choices may be made. An objective assessment of the economic, social and environmental impacts of a proposed resort development helps facilitate a fact-based discussion of the desirability of the development.

Key Challenges

- Achieving agreement on a methodology for assessing social/ environmental/ economic impacts in an objective, defensible manner so that the assessment results are accepted by all involved.

- Addressing fears and misperceptions that can arise before the facts have been communicated. Traditional resource extraction industries and those employed by them may view a new resort development as being in competition for Crown land, thereby limiting their ability to operate and grow. The environmental community may also see the proposed resort development as harmful due to perceived impacts on wildlife habitat.

- Collecting cultural/archaeological information useful to both planners and approving agencies can be time consuming and costly and may require obtaining an archaeological permit from the Provincial Archaeology Branch.

Examples:

Bear Mountain

A socio-economic impact of the Bear Mountain development helped the District of Langford make the decision to allow the development to proceed.

Other Technical References:

District of Langford www.district.langford.bc.ca

Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, Archaeology Branch http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/arch/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The resort proponent will typically commission an assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of the proposal as a tool to advocate for the project.

- Meet with community stakeholders and discuss the process for assessing social/environmental/economic impacts to build mutual understanding of methodology, timing and opportunities for community input.

- Engage an independent third party to perform assessment to assure objectivity.

- Use well recognized methodologies for quantifying impacts to facilitate acceptance and permit comparison to other development opportunities.

- Consult with local area experts, for example, biologists, community interest groups, community at large.

- Communicate results of assessment fully and completely (good and bad news).

- Propose mitigation where impact is potentially beyond community tolerance.

Notes:
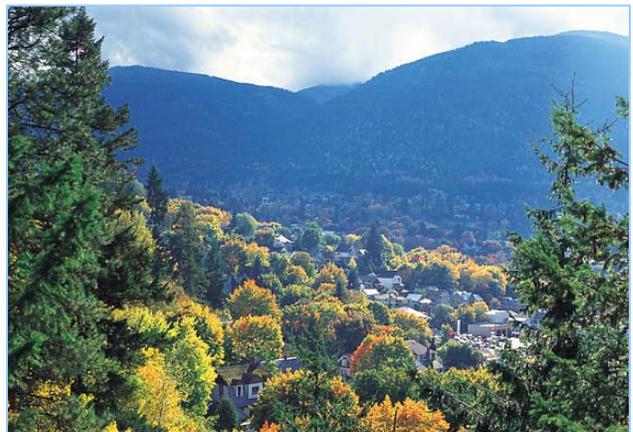
STAGE II – DEFINING THE VISION

Introduction

Once the initial screening in Stage I is complete and showstoppers are identified or mitigated, then it is necessary to create a vision for the resort – the experience it will offer to visitors. Questions to be addressed are access to the resort, the relationship of the resort with the natural environment, local communities, and First Nations and any other social or community concerns.

More detailed levels of study should be conducted in parallel to the development of the resort vision and design. In addition to verifying the existing inventory information gathered in Stage I, more specific studies should commence to:

- determine unique biophysical features such as air and water resources, soils, geology, geomorphology, wildlife, vegetation, and forest resources;

- clarify available watershed resources to accommodate the natural carrying capacity and/or proposed capacity of the resort facilities and programs; and

- identify natural activities such as mass soil movements, snow avalanches, flooding, extreme tides and/or wave action which may pose a risk to the envisioned building or operation of the resort facility.

At this stage, contact is affirmed with the Province if developing a resort on Crown lands, the local community is engaged more meaningfully and a formal working relationship begins to develop with First Nations. Considering community facilities and services and developing and negotiating partnerships occurs initially at this stage and evolves in Stage III – Developing the Resort Master Plan and Seeking Approvals.

Key considerations when creating a detailed vision of the resort

❑ Client assessment

❑ Community relationship

- Zoning, building restrictions, land covenants
- Official community plan &/ design guidelines
- Specific lands claim and/or tripartite treaty claim area

❑ Stakeholder partnerships and land access issues

❑ Resort characteristics

- Style / atmosphere
- Relationship to natural environment
- Providing services such as energy, water, transportation access
- Recreational amenities
- Services to the guest and nearby community

❑ Site characteristics

- Travel accessibility
- Visual impacts
- Nearby recreational, cultural, historical attractions
- Natural hazards
- Biophysical resources (air, water, land)
- Watershed capacity

NATURAL ATTRIBUTES – Biophysical Inventory / Baseline Studies

A thorough understanding of the physical and biological elements of the site provide baseline information that will assist planners in the design and approval decisions, and will create an inventory of attributes to assist with land use decision making and monitoring throughout the life of the resort.

The intent is to develop a successful resort concept plan that optimizes the unique physical attributes of the site in an environmentally sensitive manner and incorporates the biological limitations of the site. Optimizing a site's potential can only occur with environmental considerations.

Key Challenges

- Gathering environmental information in a timely, cost effective manner.

- Conducting site visits in the appropriate season(s) to account for impacts throughout the year.

- Collecting information that is useful to both planners and approval agencies.

Examples:

Juliet Creek Resort Proposal

A phased approach was used to gather biophysical information for baseline studies. A low cost Preliminary Environmental Overview document was prepared to provide guidance to the proponent in their application to Land and Water British Columbia Inc. Upon acceptance of the application a Preliminary Environmental Assessment was prepared as part of the British Columbia Environmental Assessment process to provide more detailed biophysical inventory information.

Blackstone Golf Resort Community

The Environmental Review conducted for the Blackstone Golf Resort Community in Fernie, British Columbia, provided baseline ecological information and interpretations thereby identifying the environmental issues arising from golf resort development and operation. The review included background research and ecological pre-typing, "groundtruthing" and field assessment, inventory and analysis, habitat cost accounting and mitigation/compensation planning for environmentally sensitive areas.

Silver Star Mountain Resort

Silver Star Mountain Resort commissioned an Environmental Review of a portion of Silver Star Provincial Park for the purpose of removing it from the Park and developing a golf resort. The primary focus of the Environmental Review was the identification and delineation of ecosystem units, environmentally sensitive areas, and ecologically sensitive habitats. The field data collected in combination with other data sources constitutes a baseline environmental inventory identifying the main ecological systems and processes that occur in the study area. The inventory information was then analyzed to identify constraints to potential development occurring within the study area.

Taynton Bowl Environmental Review

An environmental inventory and analysis of a portion of Crown land for a proposed high alpine skiing opportunity boundary expansion of Panorama Mountain Village. The primary focus of the Environmental Review was the identification and delineation of ecosystem units, environmentally sensitive areas, and ecologically sensitive habitats. Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) was utilized to develop an ecological framework to guide land use and resource management decisions.

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Environment, Resource Information Standards Committee
srmwww.gov.bc.ca/risc/pubs/tebiodiv/

Conservation Data Centre – Species at Risk srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cdc/

TEM Standards: srmwww.gov.bc.ca/risc/pubs/teecolo/tem/indextem.htm

PEM Standards: srmwww.gov.bc.ca/risc/pubs/teecolo/pemcapture/index.htm

Field Manual for Describing Terrestrial Ecosystems: srmwww.gov.bc.ca/risc/pubs/teecolo/fmdte/deif.htm

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Delineation of study area that includes the resort site.

- Work with local government to acquire support documentation, project scoping and report review where appropriate.

- Work with local government to determine local policies and visions for future growth and development in the area.

- Approach Provincial Government agencies for baseline information, biophysical assessment terms of reference and review.

- Prepare a screening document designed to collate existing environmental information coupled with field verification to address overall ecosystem conditions.

- The inventory should utilize acceptable field survey techniques and mapping procedures such as Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM), Field Manual For Describing Terrestrial Ecosystems, Resource Information Standards Committee (RISC), and Predictive Ecosystem Mapping (PEM).

- The overall analysis can identify potential areas requiring a more detailed level of study.

- Assessment should include ongoing, regular discussions with approving agencies.

- Incorporate environmental attributes in the development of a preliminary concept plan for the resort.

NATURAL ATTRIBUTES – Watershed Assessment

A watershed assessment is important as it provides watershed-level recommendations for development plans based on an assessment of the potential for cumulative hydrological effects from past activities such as forest harvesting and road building, and any proposed future developments. Under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, a watershed assessment may be required on watersheds deemed to have significant sensitivity due to landslides, erosion or channel stability, significant fisheries values or downstream licensed domestic water users. It also helps to evaluate the potential outcomes various proposed developments or operational activities may have on the health of the local watersheds.

The desired outcome is:

- to develop an understanding of the type and extent of current water-related issues that may exist within the watersheds associated with the proposed resort as well as recognizing the hydrological implications of the proposed resort development;

- to develop a watershed based planning tool that will provide guidance to resort developers and approving agents regarding direction, levels and intensity of development;

- to ensure that proposed developments or operational activities will not disrupt the natural hydrological and biological activity occurring in the watersheds to such an extent that natural habitats, their supported fauna (including fish), and humans, are adversely affected; and

- to prevent long term change to background water quality, quantity, and timing of flow.

Key Challenges

- Watershed assessment can be costly and may require updating every three years.

- Acknowledging the system components including other resource users that lie upstream and downstream of the proposed development area.

- Reconciling the resource demands of the proposed development with the current or future resource planning.

- Protection of upstream and downstream habitat within the watershed.

- Recreation and resource development interests may conflict with preservation of watershed areas.

- The zoning of community watersheds (open or closed) may prohibit resort development as communities look to provide sufficient protection of drinking water sources.

Examples:

Whistler/Blackcomb Coastal Watershed Assessment Procedure, 2002.

This watershed assessment examined natural processes occurring in the Whistler/Blackcomb ski area and evaluated the cumulative effects of forest practices on the stream systems draining the area. The results of the investigation indicated the sensitivity of the watersheds to development, and provided guidance for any future forestry-related activities including further development or, as necessary, watershed restoration activities. The assessment was voluntarily conducted at the recommendation of the Ministry of Forests and Range to provide an indication of the state of the community watersheds within the Controlled Recreation Area (CRA) of the mountain resort. The document remains an internal planning document.

Resort Municipality of Whistler – River of Golden Dreams Watershed Management Plan, 2001.

This document lays out a watershed vision, fundamental goals, a series of objectives, and recommended actions for maintaining and improving watershed health of the River of Golden Dreams watershed. The focus of the management plan is on streams, wetlands, and riparian areas within the watershed.

Red Mountain – Interior Watershed Assessment Procedure, 1996.

This watershed assessment was conducted, in compliance with Ministry of Forests requirements as part of the Forest Development Plan for the resort's proposed expansion. A Level 1 assessment for various creeks within the Red Mountain study area was produced by Dobson Engineering Ltd. The objective of the report was to assess the potential for cumulative hydrological impacts in the watersheds associated with previous forest practices and road construction. Four primary impact categories were assessed: peak flows; surface erosion; riparian buffers and mass wasting.

Other Technical References

Resort Municipality of Whistler. River of Golden Dreams Watershed Management Plan, 2001.
http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/132.asp?documentId=3820

Ministry of Forests and Range. *Watershed Assessment Procedure Guidebook*
http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/legsregs/fpc/FPCGUIDE/wap/WAPGdbk-Web.pdf

Ministry of Forests and Range. *Community Watershed Guidebook*. October 1996.
www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/legsregs/fpc/fpcguide/WATRSHED/Watertoc.htm

Environmental Performance Section of the Ontario Snow Resorts Association's Best Management Practices Manual http://www.c2p2online.com/documents/Introductorytexttoskitemplates.pdf

Centre for Watershed Protection. www.cwp.org A US based non-profit corporation that provides local government/watershed organizations with technical tools for natural resource protection.

Ministry of Environment. *Stormwater Planning: A Guidebook for British Columbia*
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/stormwater/stormwater.html

Watershed Tools Directory: http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/tools/ A directory of links and contacts for a variety of watershed related topics, run by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

West Coast Environmental Law: *The B.C. Guide to Watershed Law and Planning*
http://www.bcwatersheds.org/issues/water/bcgwlp/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Conduct a Watershed Assessment Procedure (WAP) on any community watersheds or watersheds containing watercourses with significant fisheries values or where significant portions of the watershed landscape are to be affected.

- Compilation of a digital database will facilitate expedient and cost effective updating.

- Approach Ministry of Environment for access to existing spatial database for compilation of baseline information (including air/orthophotos).

- Approach Provincial/Regional/local government for existing reports and studies.

- Watershed planning should aim to protect those streams that have significant fisheries values.

- Determine, locate and protect those aquatic species that are most sensitive to sediment deposition.

- Ensure developments occur in such a manner as to minimize sedimentation and that restoration and re-vegetation actions are implemented as soon as possible to prevent further soil erosion.

- Protect existing watercourses and minimize watercourse disruption and/or displacement.

- Identify "community watersheds" and establish what activities are "acceptable" within the boundaries.

- Contingency planning for disruptions/damage to water supply.

- Institute a water quality monitoring regime.

- Work with local government to help establish zoning for watersheds and community watershed areas.

- Adhere to existing regulations concerning community watersheds, streamside regulations and *Water Act*, and adjust development plans accordingly.

ADAPT – The Guiding Principles of Integrated Stormwater Management

The acronym **ADAPT** summarizes five guiding principles for integrated stormwater management. The Guidebook is based upon these five principles.

ADAPT

A gree that stormwater is a resource

D esign for the complete spectrum of rainfall events

A ct on a priority basis in at-risk drainage catchments

P lan at four scales – regional, watershed, neighbourhood & site

T est solutions and reduce costs by adaptive management

Excerpt from: *Community Watershed Guidebook.*

Table 4: Community watershed characteristics to assess and map. These are components of the watershed planning process.

Program/subject	Assess/map
waterworks	• location of all waterworks (e.g., water licences, intakes, dams, pipelines, points of diversion)
potentially sensitive sites	• riparian management areas • intake management area • moderate or high likelihood for landslides • high or very high surface erosion hazard • forest ecosystem networks • wildlife habitat areas
harvesting	• operable/inoperable land base • forest cover • existing cutblocks
roads and trails	• existing roads (e.g., forestry, mining, highways) • proposed roads; proposed deactivation
range	• areas of range use • riparian areas
protection	• sites denuded by wildfire • retardant buffer zones, machine restricted areas, unstable and erodible soils • possible fire camp locations, helipads, fire breaks, fire guards, etc.
forest health	• susceptible stands (i.e., age class and distribution of species at risk) • existing forest health problems
silviculture	• areas not sufficiently restocked (NSR)
recreation	• existing recreation facilities (e.g., campsites, cabins and trails)
mining and exploration	• mineral potential and occurrences • mineral, oil and gas exploration trails • existing claims and mine sites (e.g., placer, sand and gravel)
utilities/linear development	• existing and proposed corridors

NATURAL HAZARDS ASSESSMENT – avalanche, flooding, geological stability

The potential for natural hazards such as heavy snowfalls, avalanches, geological instability and hydrological events such as flooding, mud and debris flows are major biophysical risks to any project, with the potential to endanger life and property. A close examination of these risks is necessary at the very beginning of a project and will become more indepth during each design stage, with detailed site-specific investigations required prior to construction. An interface fire hazard assessment and mitigation potentials are required for most sites in British Columbia.

An early understanding of any potential natural hazards is necessary to assure government agencies and the promoter that the project has no critical flaws.

Key Challenges

- Gathering information on potential natural hazards in a timely cost-effective manner.

- While most high level information is available from existing government sources, professionals may be required at each stage of the project.

Examples:

An assessment of the potential for natural hazards is required for all Commercial Alpine Ski Policy (CASP) projects. Avalanche hazard assessment is required for B.C. heliskiing projects.

Other Technical References:

B.C. Government TRIM Mapping www.landdata.gov.bc.ca

Canada West Ski Areas Association www.cwsaa.org

B.C Heliskiing Association www.bchssoa.com

Canadian Avalanche Association www.avalanche.ca

Firestorm 2003: Provincial Review http://www.2003firestorm.gov.bc.ca/firestormreport/default.htm

FireSmart: Protecting Your Community from Wildfire http://www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca/downloads/#toc

B.C. Ministry of Forests and Range Protection Branch http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Local and provincial governments are a source of information about existing known natural hazards. Local governments may have guidelines or definitions as to what constitutes a natural hazard within their Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws. The BC government's TRIM mapping can be used for preliminary assessment of natural hazards during Stage I.

- Acquire and review BC government's planimetric and topographic maps with forestry, mining, agricultural and archaeological inventory overlays.

- Consult provincial land use plans and regional district strategic road plans to seek conformance with regional strategies.

- Complete professional geotechnical investigations for construction of roads and buildings.

- Prepare mitigation plans for snow avalanche and hydrological issues.

- Prepare fire hazard mitigation and evacuation plans. For example, provide for more than one access route where financially feasible. A second route could be constructed to a lower design standard and used for emergency egress, this may be particularly important in wildfire hazard areas.
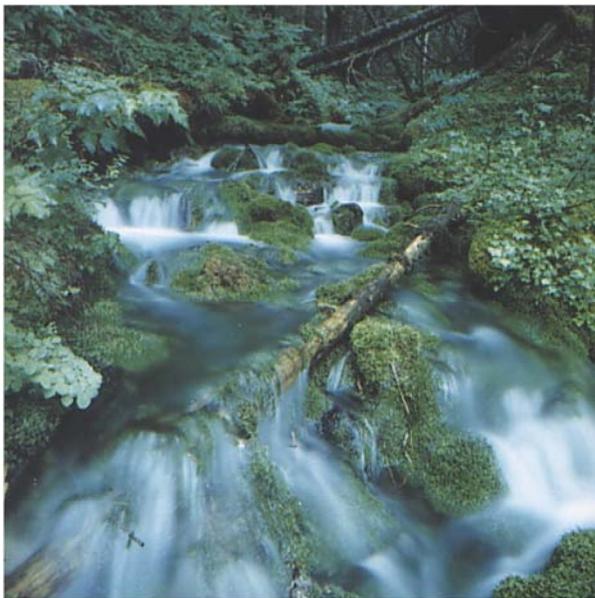
VISUAL IMPACTS ASSESSMENT

The visual beauty of British Columbia and the dramatic scenery of the province is a key resource for the success of tourism-related projects, and is integral to the branding of British Columbia resorts.

The visual impacts of proposed developments could be assessed through the use of computer simulation models. The design could then be adjusted to limit detrimental impacts to scenic resources.

Key Challenges

- Computer modeling techniques have become excellent and necessary tools, but there is a reasonable expense to build Digital Terrain Models (DTMs) and to model the impacts of ski lifts, trails, buildings, highways and transmission lines.

Examples:

Stonebridge at Whistler

The developers of Stonebridge at Whistler prepared a computer simulated three-dimensional fly-by of two alternative road networks to compare the visual impacts of the two schemes.

Sea to Sky Land Resource Management Plan

The Sea to Sky Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) recommends that Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) be established for all viewpoints along paved access ways and that

resource extraction industries such as logging, consider the visual impact of their operations. It further recommends that an inventory of key recreational features be established and considered in all development plans.

B.C. Hydro Transmission Line Visual Impact Assessment Studies

BC Hydro will often prepare a Visual Assessment Impact of proposed new transmission lines prior to finalizing the design.

Other Technical References:

Visual Impact Assessment: www.tdb.bc.ca/geom_via.htm

Visual Nature Studio: www.3dnature.com/vnsinfo.html

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Review existing documentation regarding key recreational features, visual quality objectives imposed on forest industry and other background info. The local government may be able to provide information on special or significant visual resources in the area.

- Complete photo-documentation of site – key view corridors and viewpoints.

- Build DTMs with "as-built" view of the existing scenic resources.

- Complete scenery analysis to document most sensitive scenic resources.

- Build computer models of proposed development.

- Consider preparing computer simulation "fly-by" to assist in explaining the development plans at public presentations and for investor marketing purposes.
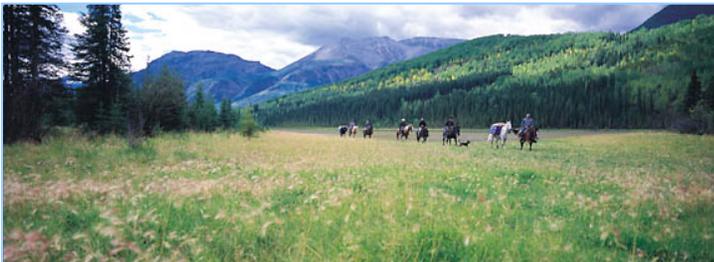
IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Valuation of environmental attributes is an important step in determining requirements for protection. Attributes may range from viewsheds and their associated scenic values to wildlife habitat for rare or endangered plant and animal species.

In addition to particular needs of individual animal and plant species, resort and tourism-based economies also rely on the protection of natural surroundings. A clear understanding and identification of environmental values allows resort developers to protect these values during the planning and implementation stages of facility development.

The ultimate aim is for resorts that provide enjoyment for resort users while preserving key environmental and ecological values for future generations.

Key Challenges

- Value assessment not based on scientific information is subjective and consensus from various stakeholders can be difficult to obtain.

- Environmental values may conflict with economic interests.

- Acknowledging values that conflict with economic interests and comparing non-monetary values with financial values.

Examples:

Wilderness Tourism Association – Environmental Initiatives

The Wilderness Tourism Association has adopted a very proactive role in establishing strong linkages between operators and environmental protection. This stance is reflected in the recent outflow of policy documentation. http://www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca/main.html

BC Helicopter Skiing and Snowcat Skiing Operators Association (BCHSSOA) – Best Practices for Sustainability

The BCHSSOA completed a Best Practices document for its membership and made the document available to public through its website. The information contained within the document is pertinent to a wide range of resort operations. http://www.bchssoa.com/

Nimmo Bay Heli Resort – Ecological Protection

Nimmo Bay Heli-Ventures is a wilderness resort that has developed an operation that strives to have minimal impact on the surrounding environment.
http://www.nimmobay.com/resort.cfm

Resort Municipality of Whistler – Environmental Strategy

Moving towards environmental sustainability is a priority of the Resort Municipality of Whistler. The strategy has created an environmental vision through the use of values, principals, directions, strategic goals and targets; and provides guidance for future environmental decisions. The strategy explores sustainability on local and global levels.
http://www.whistler.ca/files/PDF/Admin/WES_Full_Document.pdf

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Environmental Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/esd/esd_main.htm

Tourism Opportunity Studies http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/dss/initiatives/tourism/index.htm

Jackson, Siobhan and Doug Leavers. *Series Occasional Paper 1: Determining a Capacity for Recreation and Monitoring Effects from Commercial Recreation Operations on Crown land.* 2000.
http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cr/resource_mgmt/lrmp/s2s/reports/rec_series_1.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Generally, it is the developer's role to undertake the identification of existing environmental values for a new resort project. Local government can provide input on community initiatives and values related to the natural surroundings as well as Local Resource Use Plans (LRUP), official community plan processes and regional growth strategies. The provincial government can be a source of information on resource development, wildlife recovery programs, parks and protected areas.

- Review existing environmental inventory for the site and adjacent lands to delineate areas requiring special management or protection.

- Establish a digital database which includes TEM or PEM, and site specific information from the baseline inventory work will allow predictive design and management decisions.

- Consult LRMPs, Sustainable Resource Management Plans (SRMP), or LRUPs and any other regional land use plans to ensure that resource and tourism values are aligned with environmental values.

- Consult with approving agencies (Ministry of Environment and Department of Fisheries and Oceans) for valued ecosystem components, species at risk information and wildlife assessment and recovery programs and incorporate the findings into the digital database.

- Consult with local tourism associations and Provincial Tourism Opportunity Studies for high tourism valued areas and incorporate the findings into the digital database.

PRELIMINARY SERVICING PLAN

A servicing assessment and Preliminary Servicing Plan (PSP) will identify the types of infrastructure (utilities) proposed for the resort and the level of service to be provided. The PSP will generally include professional input to verify that sources for core services/utilities are available and technically feasible.

A successful PSP will identify one or two promising options for providing the core services at the envisioned level of service. Specifically the PSP should identify core services such as:

- water supply and distribution – water source identification which may include information on availability, quality, quantity, accessibility, required treatment and or conceptual cost estimates;

- sewage collection, treatment and disposal;

- energy supply and distribution – identifying economical methods of acquiring and / or generating a reliable energy supply to power the resort facility;

- communications – providing a bare minimum of some form of communication (such as telephone, cable, internet and wireless methods) to enhance client experience; and

- solid waste disposal.

Services (utilities) that may also be considered include: road access, natural or liquid propane gas; and cable or satellite TV.

Key Challenges

- Underestimating the difficulty and potential cost of providing core services.

- Determining jurisdictional responsibility for services.

- Compensating for changing technology and providing adequate services to a remote resort location.

Examples:

Sun Peaks Utilities Co. Ltd

Sun Peaks Utilities Co. Ltd. was awarded a Silver Eagle Award for Water Conservation from SKI Magazine. Their successful water conservation strategy requires mandatory use of low-flow plumbing fixtures and water meters in all developments and employs a consumption based charge for water use. This strategy has minimized water and sewer utility operating costs and enables the resort to favourably improve the timing for water supply and sanitary sewer treatment system upgrades.

Panorama Mountain Resort

Panorama Mountain Resort installed tertiary treatment when upgrading its sewage treatment plant due to perceived concerns about the downstream water quality in Toby Creek.

Kokanee Glacier Cabin

Kokanee Glacier Cabin, operated by the Alpine Club of Canada, is located in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park and produces its own micro-hydro generated electricity.

King Pacific Lodge

King Pacific Lodge listened to their clients request for more communication services and now offers internet access to its guests using satellite connection.

Other Technical References:

Green Buildings BC – New Buildings Program. *Guide to Green Buildings Resources.*
http://www.greenbuildingsbc.com/new_buildings/resources_guide/

Urban Water Demand Management Project – POLIS Project on Ecological Governance
http://www.waterdsm.org/

American Water Works Association (AWWA) www.awwa.org/waterwiser/

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CHMC). *Household Guide to Water Efficiency.*
http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/himu/wacon/wacon_068.cfm

Environment Canada – Water Efficiency/Conservation   www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/manage/effic/e_weff.htm

Master Municipal Construction Documents (MMCD) Association www.mmcd.net/

Ministry of Environment. *Municipal Sewage Regulations* and *Guidelines for Developing a Liquid Waste Management Plan* http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/mpp_home.htm

Ministry of Health. *Sewerage System Standard Practice Manual*
http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/protect/bcsr_spm_draft_may2004.pdf

B.C. Hydro http://www.bchydro.com/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The developer takes the lead role in preparing a preliminary servicing plan for the resort. If the resort falls within or in reasonable proximity to an existing service area the developer should consider the design standards of the local government. If the resort is located outside of existing serviced areas, employ provincial standards. Both local and provincial governments have approval processes related to provisioning of municipal services.

- Identify and target existing local infrastructure. Utilizing excess or expanded capacity of existing infrastructure often proves the most desirable option for providing services to a resort.

- Estimate the demand for services for the completed resort and identify options to provide services to meet those demands.

- Adopt conservation strategies to minimize demands and target sustainable solutions.

- Anticipate that facilities will be required to meet or exceed municipal standards.

- Aim to take the lead in using environmentally responsible strategies and technologies; customers, staff and local media recognize the efforts a business makes to be socially and environmentally responsible.

- Pursue community / provincial partnerships that will increase the feasibility of extending existing service infrastructure to the resort.

- Consult with service providers to assist in determining economic feasibility of different service options.

WATER SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

Early identification of viable and reliable water sources is key to determining the feasibility of a resort. Water supply and distribution are core services without which a resort cannot thrive.

The desired situation is a reliable and economically feasible water supply, storage and distribution network capable of meeting all the resort's water demands, including potable water, irrigation, fire fighting and snowmaking.

Key Challenges

- Identifying sufficient economically viable water sources to meet the demands of the resort at build-out.

- Providing an adequate level of treatment.

- Competing demands on finite water resources.

- Underestimating the cost of developing a reliable water system(s).

Examples:

Sun Peaks Utilities Co. Ltd.

Sun Peaks Utilities Co. Ltd. was awarded a Silver Eagle Award for Water Conservation from SKI Magazine. Their successful water conservation strategy requires mandatory use of low-flow plumbing fixtures and water meters in all developments and employs a consumption-based charge for water use. This strategy has minimized water and sewer utility operating costs and enabled the resort to favourably improve the timing for water supply and sanitary sewer treatment system upgrades.

Other Technical References:

Green Buildings BC http://www.greenbuildingsbc.com/new_buildings/resources_guide/

Urban Water Demand Management—POLIS Project on Ecological Governance http://www.waterdsm.org/

American Water Works Association (AWWA) http://www.awwa.org/waterwiser/

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CHMC). *Household Guide to Water Efficiency.* http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/himu/wacon/wacon_068.cfm

Environment Canada – Water Efficiency/Conservation http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/manage/effic/e_weff.htm

Master Municipal Construction Documents (MMCD) Association http://www.mmcd.net/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Review all options for water supply including existing developed sources, new surface water sources and potential groundwater sources.

- Consider linking to an existing municipal water system or regulated water utility, if one exists within reasonable proximity to the proposed resort. Whenever possible, avoid creating small, disjointed water systems.

- Adopt a water conservation philosophy from the outset to reduce overall water use.

- Specify and install water conserving plumbing fixtures such as ultra low flow (ULF) toilets and low flow faucets and shower heads. Specify and install water efficient appliances.

- Require the use of water meters and develop a consumption based water tariff.

- Encourage the use of native materials in landscaping (xeriscape).

- Consider using non-potable systems (irrigation or snowmaking) to supplement fire suppression requirements.

- Design the water system to meet or exceed the standards of neighbouring municipalities or regional districts.

- Determine who will provide services and maintain the infrastructure. If necessary create a private utility at arms length from the resort developer to ensure separation of costs.

- Develop a rate structure that will ensure ongoing operating, maintenance and capital replacement costs will be recovered from the users. Include rent charges for the provision of stand-by capacity on undeveloped sites. Set adequate hook-up charges so existing users will not subsidize extending the service to new users.

ENERGY SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION – Electricity, Natural Gas and Propane

Energy in one form or another is a core requirement. Without a viable energy source and distribution system a resort cannot thrive and therefore, should plan for a reliable, economically feasible network capable of meeting all of the demands generated by the resort to build-out.

Key Challenges

- Resorts are often located significant distances from any existing energy infrastructure, such as pipelines and electrical transmission lines.

- Finding an economic method of bringing a reliable energy supply to the resort or generating energy within the resort.

- Alternative energy sources.

Examples:

Whistler Blackcomb

2004 improvements at Whistler-Blackcomb (advanced energy controls) and Panorama Mountain Village (automatic heating and ventilation) will reduce chairlift operating costs.

Sun Rivers Golf Resort Community

Sun Rivers Golf Resort Community, Kamloops, B.C. successfully adopted geothermal

technology for the heating and cooling requirements of the entire community.

Kokanee Glacier Cabin

Kokanee Glacier Cabin, operated by the Alpine Club of Canada, is located in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park and produces its own micro-hydro generated electricity.

Other Technical References:

B.C. Hydro   www.bchydro.com

Terasen Gas   www.Terasengas.com

Green Buildings BC   http://www.greenbuildingsbc.com/new_buildings/resources_guide/

British Columbia Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Strategy
http://www.fuelcellscanada.ca/BC%20Hydrogen%20Strategy.pdf

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Adopt a design philosophy to minimize energy demands by

    - mandating the use of energy efficient fixtures and appliances;

    - using existing programs (such as B.C. Hydro's Power Smart) to facilitate the implementation of sewer technologies which reduce energy consumption;

    - embracing public education programs, which promote efficient energy use;

    - adopting building and subdivision design guidelines that maximize solar aspect and exposure; and

    - incorporating construction standards, which result in more energy efficient structures.

- Energy suppliers may require a contractual guarantee of future energy purchases to extend their distribution system into the resort location.

- Explore options for independent power production and/or geothermal technology.

- Pursue partnerships with others that will make the expansion of gas lines and/or power lines more feasible.

- Retain flexibility to minimize dependency on any single energy source.

- Consider visual impacts of overhead electrical transmission lines and consider using underground lines for the distribution system within the resort.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS TO AND WITHIN THE RESORT

Transportation and access to the resort is the single most important consideration in determining the market potential and economic feasibility of a resort. Air and major highway access defines the size of the market support for any project.

Key Challenges

- Many resort opportunities are in remote locations, such as ski hills and fishing resorts.

- Transportation infrastructure is expensive and is usually provided by governments.

- There are few potential sites for new airports.

- Air capacity with connections to international markets can be a major limitation and the airline industry is currently in financial crisis and has been reducing lift capacity and eliminating unprofitable routes.

- Negotiations regarding access roads or improvements to offsite transportation infrastructure is time consuming and complex.

Examples:

Vail and Summit County Ski Bus Transportation System.

The Town of Vail, Colorado provides free year-round transit service and is considered to be the largest free transportation system in the country offering its residents and guests timely service to and from Vail Mountain and throughout town.

Vail also supports nearby county transportation systems, such as Eagle County, which provides daily transit service (for a modest fee) to Vail, Leadville, Minturn, Eagle-Vail, Avon, Beaver Creek, Edwards, Eagle, Gypsum and Dotsero resort communities. Eagle County Transit provides multi-modal, environmentally sensitive public transportation choices and offers transit drivers 120 hours of training in driving skills, safety and customer service.

Whistler Air

Whistler Air provided floatplane transportation for many stranded travelers when road access to the resort was cut-off during the October 2003 floods. Although only a small operator, through cooperation with other west coast service providers, Whistler Air was able to help over 500 tourists leave the resort in one afternoon. Without the upgraded docking, fueling and terminal facilities this would not have been possible.

Sea to Sky Transit Association

The Sea to Sky Transit Association is a joint pilot project between the District of Squamish, the Resort Municipality of Whistler and BC Transit to provide public transportation for Whistler resort employees living in Squamish.

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Transportation http://www.gov.bc.ca/tran/

Council of Tourism Associations of BC http://www.cotabc.com/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

<u>Travel To the Resort</u>:

- Analyze existing and planned air and highway access infrastructure.

- Consider complete travel time (plane, bus, car) and costs for transportation to the resort.

- Plan and provide infrastructure to support multiple modes of transportation.

- Establish partnerships with transportation providers, such as air and bus lines. Work with travel agents and tour packagers to market and promote "car free" vacation packages by providing transportation from the airport to the resort.

- Lobby as a collective to influence airline lift capacity and routes.

- Offer and promote non-peak travel incentives.

<u>Travel Within the Resort:</u>

- Provide free public transit in large resorts.

- Design villages adjacent to amenities such as ski lifts and golf courses to reduce intra resort transportation demands.

- Utilize innovative transportation technologies to cement the mountain-village interface.

- Support pedestrian friendly design principles and provide networks of trails throughout the resort to encourage bicycle and other non-motorized use.

- Offer and promote carpooling or HOV incentives for guest and employees.

RESORT FINANCING PLAN

A resort financing plan detailing the overall financial structure and revenue/expense proformas must be developed to determine the sources of capital to finance planning, design, construction and operation of the resort throughout its lifecycle. Sufficient capital is required to proceed with resort planning and approval process and to reinvest in the resort as necessary throughout its lifecycle. Also important is a business plan to obtain financing for capital investment and operating cash flows during the initial development phase of the resort when it will not likely be financially self-sustaining.

Key Challenges

- The existing process for approving a new major resort in British Columbia can take time and involve the completion of detailed environmental, geotechnical, engineering, planning and socio-economic studies. Developers may rely on equity capital to finance studies.

- The long planning, approval, design and construction cycle makes financing emerging major resort ventures a risky business.

Examples:

City of Langford

City of Langford offers a five-year tax holiday for new hotel developments to enhance the relative attractiveness of Langford.

Municipality of Whistler

The Municipality of Whistler received funding from the Provincial and Federal Government under an Infrastructure program to expand the capacity of its sewage treatment plant.

Province of Quebec

The Province of Quebec provided significant government grants for public infrastructure at Mont. Tremblant to support Intrawest's redevelopment of the resort.

Other Technical References:

Check financial organizations for current financing information.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Seek financial advice from reputable financial institutions.

- In conjunction with financial institutions devise a diversified financial plan.

- The resort proponent generally undertakes the development of a resort-financing plan. Local and regional governments wishing to support economic development of this nature could consider ways to enhance attractiveness of development opportunities (example: property/business tax holidays.)

- Consider use of a Limited Partnership to attract private investors who are willing to accept tax benefits of operating losses in early years of the resort.

- Consider if services provided by a municipality or a regional district should be financed through the Municipal Financing Authority and repaid through the collection of taxes, development cost charges or system hook-up fees.

- Phase infrastructure to match anticipated land sales to permit elements of self-financing.

- Minimize risk of market downturns by not building ahead of demand.

- Consider partnering with senior levels of government for significant community infrastructure additions/upgrades.

- Local governments may consider community revitalization tax exemptions to improve return to investors in early years of operation.

- Local governments may introduce a mechanism to permit recovery of costs by developer from "late comers" – other businesses setting up operation once infrastructure has been built and paid.

PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public / private partnerships may offer opportunities to share the costs associated with the construction of resort infrastructure that will also benefit other users. By joining forces, the partnership may collectively finance construction of a facility, that otherwise would not be economically viable for either party. Public / private partnerships allow the public and private sector to come together to share risks and provide incremental value not otherwise achievable individually. Outcomes include mutually beneficial partnership arrangements and long-term relationships based upon equitable sharing of risks and benefits.

Key Challenges

- Negotiating mutually beneficial arrangements that have broad public support.

- Educating the public on the rationale for using public funds.

- Smaller local governments may not have the financial or staff resources to negotiate and administer a complex partnership agreement, and may require assistance.

Examples:

Mt. Washington

The improvements to the Mt. Washington Access Road were financed through the provincial Transportation Financing Authority and are being repaid through a surcharge on ski lift tickets.

Whistler Golf Club

Whistler Golf Club is owned by the Resort Municipality of Whistler and operated by the member-based destination marketing organization, Tourism Whistler. Profits from the operation of the golf course are reinvested in destination marketing for the benefit of all businesses in Whistler. A third party private management company with unique golf expertise, Intrawest Golf, is under contract to supervise daily operations.

District of Langford

The District of Langford has outsourced the operation of their utilities to a private company.

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Carney's Waste Handling is contracted to provide waste disposal and recycling services to the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and the Resort Municipality of Whistler.

Kinbasket Water and Sewer Company Ltd.

Kinbasket Water and Sewer Company Ltd., owned and operated by the Shuswap Indian Band, recently signed an agreement to provide water and sewer services to the Regional District of East Kootenay. This servicing strategy may be the first of its kind in Canada – a First Nation providing municipal services.

Other

There are examples of government owned and private sector operated alpine resort facilities such as Cypress, Manning, and Mt. Seymour ski hills.

Other Technical References:

Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships http://www.pppcouncil.ca/

Ministry of Community Services. *Public/Private Partnerships: A Guide for Local Government.* May 1999. http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/pol_research/MAR/PPP/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Public/private partnerships may be initiated by any entity involved in a proposed resort development or ongoing resort operation. However, to be successful, the partnership must offer benefits to all involved, regardless of which party initiated the negotiations. Each party should enter into "good faith" negotiations and should have an appreciation of the interests (social, economic, et cetera) and constituencies that must be represented.

- Look for opportunities to leverage the individual strengths in a partnership relationship (Example: design/build or design/build/operate relationships).

- Understand the value of infrastructure improvements to the broader community and cost share in a fair and equitable manner.

- Look for opportunities for shared use of facilities (Example: school used to provide after school recreation programs – public/public partnership between school district and municipal parks department).

- Negotiate a partnership that is able to withstand public scrutiny. Prepare a communication plan to educate the community of the benefits of the partnership to avoid criticism and misunderstanding. Involve an expert panel to scrutinize the process and assess if value arising from the partnership is truly incremental.

- Consider each public/private partnership venture on its own merits.

ENGAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Local community members can be the best advocates for their area. Their input at the resort visioning stage can assist in the inclusion of and the ability to leverage some of the unique attributes of the region. Local commitment to and advocacy of a shared vision for the resort and/or resort community benefits everyone.

Key Challenge

- Conveying the value of and overcoming the fear of tourism development. Many communities that have a history of resource extraction perceive tourism as displacing traditional sources of income and only offering minimum wage opportunities in their place.

Examples:

Bear Claw Lodge, Kispiox River

Cliffs Communities (a US-based company) hired a local family to co-ordinate the building of the Bear Claw Lodge on the Kispiox River. A local labour force using predominantly local materials constructed the lodge. Local businesses were used to purchase furnishings and fixtures that couldn't be supplied from within the region.

Nita Lake Lodge, Whistler

When Nita Lake Lodge in Whistler was seeking rezoning approvals, the developer held numerous public meetings with the neighbours and the community to solicit their input. The design was refined following each of these meetings. The final development proposal incorporated several community desires (a new train station, protected wetland areas and a substantial employee housing component). A local consultant with a history in the area was engaged to facilitate the communication program and several key champions in the community spoke on behalf of the project. Although the development proved controversial, the process for soliciting community input was well designed and executed.

Nimmo Bay Heli Ventures

Nimmo Bay Heli Ventures supports local communities in a number of ways. Fresh produce including seafood is purchased locally. Area residents make up the majority of the staff who are provided with an equitable and safe working environment and have been with the lodge for a long time. Also, all maintenance and building supply requirements are purchased locally while a local helicopter company provides the lodge's flying services.

Other Technical References:

Tourism and Resort Operations http://www.lwbc.bc.ca/02land/resorts/background/index.html

Environmental Assessment Office http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The public consultation process should begin with the proponent seeking input early in the development of the resort concept. Once official applications for rezoning or land use occur, local government can play a more formal role in ensuring that the local community has been appropriately engaged.

- Frequent consultation processes should include First Nations, elected officials, local government representatives, community stakeholder groups and the community at large.

- Provide multiple opportunities to solicit input – open houses, website, workbooks, surveys, et cetera.

- Create opportunities for the development to assist in resolving broader community issues.

- Include community members in resort visioning processes so the resort vision reflects community values.

- Incorporate elements of local culture and local pride in the resort designs and plan.

- Use local media outlets to convey information regarding the development to the local community.

- Solicit views of local champions and key influential people as "bell weathers" of project acceptability.

- Recognize the legitimate concerns of the local community and work collaboratively to develop solutions. Do not focus exclusively on the potential benefits and discount the community's concerns.

- Be realistic about the benefits to the community. Look for opportunities to create partnerships with local businesses, and to use local suppliers.

- Practice active listening – the solicitation of input must have the potential to influence the approval of the project and the form that it takes.

ABORIGINAL LAND ISSUES / RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS

The Province of British Columbia recognizes the rights of First Nations to use lands and resources for traditional purposes. These "aboriginal rights" flow from historic activities that were integral to the distinct society and culture of the First Nations peoples. To help ensure aboriginal interests are fully considered, First Nations are encouraged to participate in all land use planning processes.

If development is proposed for Crown land, the respective provincial agencies (EAO, Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation) need to be contacted and involved.

Support of local First Nations for the proposed resort and creating an ongoing positive relationship or sustainable partnership that contributes both to the success of the resort and the local First Nations community is important for a successful venture.

Key Challenges

- Identifying appropriate First Nation's representatives. There are overlapping boundaries that may necessitate consultations with multiple First Nations and within each First Nation, there may also be hereditary houses with overlapping jurisdictional claims.

- Response time from First Nations is often slow as a result of the significant number of developments, issues and concerns that a limited number of key individuals must address and the internal requirement of reaching a consensus within the First Nation, before providing a response.

- Understanding of social and cultural values that can be significantly different from the developers.

- Lengthy timelines for government-to-government negotiations and the impact of other unresolved issues between First Nations and the Provincial government on specific, individual project approvals.

Examples:

King Pacific Lodge

King Pacific Lodge is the first tourism business in British Columbia to sign a working protocol agreement with a First Nation. The 17-room luxury floating wilderness lodge is anchored in Barnard Harbour on Princess Royale Island. Eleven of the Lodge's 35 staff are from Hartley Bay, home of the Gitga'at and each year, eight (8) youths are mentored at the lodge. Guests pay a conservation surcharge that is accumulated and invested in projects to enhance the social and environmental sustainability of the region. Spirit Bear watching is contracted out to members of the First Nation, and opportunities for mentoring and

apprenticeship are provided to their youth. The entire product offering is founded on profound respect for the environment and First Nations' values and relationships are actively nurtured.

Nk'Mip Cellars

Nk'Mip Cellars is a joint venture project between the Osoyoos Indian Band and Vincor International to establish North America's first aboriginal winery. The winery is the second phase of $25 million resort development that includes the Nk'Mip Desert and Heritage Centre, an RV park, nine-hole golf course, conference centre and accommodation on Osoyoos Lake.

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation http://www.prov.gov.bc.ca/arr/

Ministry of Forests and Range Aboriginal Branch http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/haa/

Haida First Nation v. BC and Weyerhaeuser [Nov. 2004] (Supreme Court of Canada)

Taku River Tlingit FN v. B.C. (EAO et al) [Nov 2004] (Supreme Court Canada)

Delgamuukw v. British Columbia [1997] 3 S.C.R. 771

Best Practices in Business Partnerships Between First Nations and Resorts (Fall 2005), MTSA

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Have respect for significant cultural and spiritual values in any resort proposal.

- Consult local and provincial (Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, EAO) government to assist in determining appropriate First Nation contacts and identifying local First Nation interests.

- Early and continuous consultation with First Nations to share vision for resort development and commence dialogue regarding conditions that would be necessary to secure their support.

- Use site visits to explain the nature of the proposed activities and to "ground truth" aboriginal uses in the area.

- Consider using protocol agreements to provide a framework to facilitate discussion of specific issues.

- Consider of potential business partnerships with First Nations that provide a revenue stream to the First Nation and/or other methods of building capacity.

- Actively build relationship and foster mutual trust, respect and co-operation.

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANNING

Comprehensive land use plans help to determine the best fit of the resort product and its supporting land uses with the natural landscape and with other users of the land base (such as other industries, wildlife, fish). The desired outcomes include:

- a land use plan that successfully integrates a balanced resort product into the natural environment benefits everyone; and

- a comprehensive set of plans and written material that fully describe the proposed land uses and their interrelationships, transportation and circulation routes, the open space networks and the form and character of the proposed built environment.

Key Challenges

- Creating a plan for phased development that provides a finished and well-balanced resort product, including all necessary supporting land uses, at the completion of each phase.

- Determining the natural carrying capacity (social and environmental) for all contemplated recreational activities.

- Striking a balance between development and preservation of the natural landscape.

Examples:

City of Aspen

The City of Aspen built their new recreation centre across the street from an elementary school and connected the two properties with a pedestrian bridge. They saw an immediate drop in the after school traffic around the school as children could safely walk to after school recreation programs without the need for their parents to pick them up and drive them to another location.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Contact local government to review Official Community Plans, zoning bylaws and regional plans to determine what is currently allowed on the potential resort area.

- If on Crown land, review relevant LRMP for high-level management objectives.

- Start with good topographic mapping. Generally, first level screening to assess an opportunity can be achieved with TRIM mapping and 20 metre contour intervals. Conceptual land use planning and master planning requires 5-metre contour intervals for planning outdoor recreation activities and 2-metre contour intervals for planning real estate development, both of which may be prepared from aerial photography. Detailed design that occurs during the implementation stage will require mapping prepared from on-site legal and topographic surveys.

- Evaluate whether the area is suitable for development of a permanent or second home community since these components of a resort generally require more supporting commercial and institutional land uses than are required to service temporary guests.

- Develop diverse and well-rounded, multi-season recreational plans that take into consideration existing recreation opportunities in the surrounding region. Integrate the recreational and accommodation uses to reduce transportation demands within the resort. Provide an open space and protected area network.

- Balance the supply of accommodation with the recreational carrying capacity of the area, taking into consideration the anticipated number of day visitors to the resort.

- Let the landscape dictate the built-form. Identify and respect important natural features, views and drainage patterns and use these to shape the development sites and circulation networks.

- Create clusters of compact, medium density mixed use development to reduce transportation demands and to minimize the development footprint.

- Identify sufficient lands for commercial, institutional, employee housing and industrial facilities. Consult with local government to determine what proportion of these uses could be provided in neighbouring communities.

- Link development areas with multi-purpose (pedestrian, cycle, cross-country ski) trail systems.

- Consider the desired land ownership patterns during the Visioning stage and develop land "parcelization" and village designs that will satisfy those requirements.

- Bare land stratas can be an effective tool to provide cluster single family developments while minimizing the land dedicated to roads and parking.

Notes:

STAGE III - DEVELOPING THE RESORT MASTER PLAN AND SEEKING APPROVALS

Introduction

This stage requires a comprehensive multi-agency (federal, provincial, municipal, First Nations) review and approval processes to create a development plan for the first five years to full build-out and up to twenty or fifty years depending on the size and location of the resort. Meeting requirements and negotiating agreement(s) are vital at this stage for the resort to become a reality.

Ultimately, this stage entails the development of a master plan that will guide development and operation of the resort and enable the developer / owner / operator to identify growth constraints and opportunities. As well, one has to plan the resort to meet a particular brand or atmosphere to attract visitors. The brand and associated competitive positioning must be reflected in the architectural character of the resort and should find a physical expression on many levels. The brand and message to the target market is not reserved for marketing and sales efforts alone, but should permeate the entire resort experience.

Sound technical advice and analysis is required to help the owner / operator make important growth decisions in the long-term and maintain community relations. A feasible resort vision requiring approvals ranges from:

- permits and licenses with the Province and municipalities to build and operate;

- development and acceptance of an official community plan (OCP) if the facility is located in a resort area or near a municipality;

- accommodation agreement or partnership agreement with a First Nation asserting title to the land (unless development is on fee simple/private lands);

- a Provincial Master Development Agreement (MDA) if an alpine-based resort on Crown land;

- provincial environmental approvals if the resort design is on Crown land and large scale (over 3,000 bed units); and/or

- federal environmental approvals if the resort is to be built or expansion occurs near a salmon spawning stream/river or the planned resort recreation area includes endangered species – flora and fauna.

If the resort vision includes developing a remote wilderness resort or expanding a present facility, then approvals are sought with the Province on securing Crown land tenure and recreational land use and with municipalities on zoning and OCP adherence. If the development is to occur on private land, then approvals are needed on upgrading infrastructure/providing additional services with the local community (or regional district if no surrounding local community/municipality).
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Key considerations when creating the resort master plan

❑ Style of the resort

- Construction materials
- Ventilation and heating rooms, public spaces
- Use of green technologies
- Number of rooms by types and size
- Storage facilities
- On-site employee housing
- Height of the built facility
- Accommodation types

❑ Services at the resort

- Energy supply and conservation
- Water conservation and supply and distribution
- Sanitation (collection, treatment & disposal)
- Community facilities and services

❑ Risk management

- Natural & political hazards
- Client & employee liability and safety
- Debt management

❑ Operational success

- Relationship with surrounding community
- Relationship with natural surroundings
- Operating principles / ethical standards
- Market mix
- Service partnerships
- Capacity utilization
- Income generators and cash flow restraints
- Salary and wage rates
- Taxes and fees
- Debt repayment

Notes:
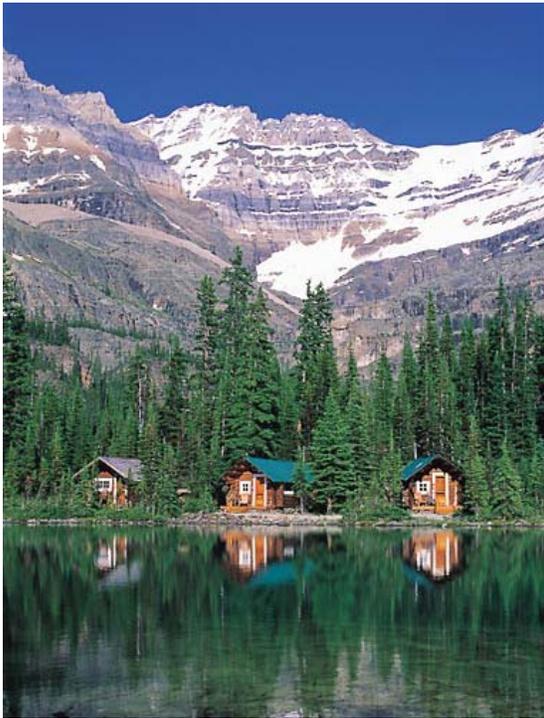
DEFINING A BRAND AND UNIQUE MARKET POSITION

A unique brand and market position for your resort allows you to differentiate your product in the minds' of target customers, helps motivate their purchase and, when expectations are met with regards to value and satisfaction, will provide a basis for continuing loyalty and repeat visitation.

The ultimate aim is to create a destination brand that provides "umbrella" messaging to potential visitors and is referenced by all resort businesses in their own marketing efforts. Also, the brand should outperform your competition on key attributes valued by your target customers.

Key Challenges

- Creating a truly unique brand that resonates with the needs/wants of target markets.

- Ensuring all aspects of resort design, development and operations reflect and are congruent with this brand on an ongoing basis.

- Avoiding the desire to be "*all things to all people"* and as a result, having nothing unique to offer or differentiate the resort from the competition.

Examples:

Beaver Creek

Beaver Creek and Steamboat (true western, down-home ski town) have both created brands that are unique in their competitive set and are reflective of their community's personality.

City of Kelowna

Kelowna's branding initiative has actively engaged the local community to ensure support for their soon to be launched positioning.

Disney, Four Seasons and Starwood

Disney, Four Seasons and Starwood are examples of brands in the hospitality sector that have achieved significant memorability with their target markets.

Other Technical References:

Tourism British Columbia http://www.tourism.bc.ca/

Gee, Chuck Y., *Resort Development and Management* (2nd edition), Educational Institute American Hotel and Motel Association, Michigan, 1996.

Mill, Robert Christie, *Resorts Management and Operation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 2001.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The definition of the resort brand and its unique market position is typically led by the resort proponent. However, best practices involve comprehensive community consultation to ensure that the truly unique "personality" of the destination is captured and to create a sense of ownership throughout the community. In larger resorts, the "ownership" of the brand may migrate from the developer to a central marketing body or "destination marketing organization" once this organization is established and a critical mass of resort infrastructure is in place and ready to promote. Once the brand and positioning is established, all public and private stakeholders should make decisions in support of the brand and promised experience.

- Identify the key attributes of the proposed resort product that are being sought by target markets (Example: luxury, family- oriented).

- Consult with the local community to determine unique character of place and gain support for brand direction.

- Identify the psychographic and demographic characteristics of the target market using primary market research tools.

- Combine unique personality of place with key attributes sought by target markets to find the product/market "match" and potential "brand strength".

- Define brand concepts for further market testing.

- Conduct market research to test brand concepts and to determine proposed resort positioning relative to competition (existing) or unfulfilled need in the marketplace (new).

- Share results of research with stakeholders including local community and tourism associations to secure their ownership of the brand and their willingness to offer the proposed brand promise or brand experience to future guests.

- Develop products and experiences that support the fulfillment of the brand promise.

- Monitor performance with target markets (See *Ongoing Market Research and Analysis*).

RESORT VILLAGE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

A resort village is a central gathering place for guests and defines the character of the resort. Research shows that resort guests spend most of their time in the village. The aim is to create a vibrant attractive central focus for the resort. (*This section refers to resort design, not land use planning controls*).

Key Challenges

- Developing a cohesive village plan allowing for individual development parcels.

- Ensuring an appropriate mix of facilities in each phase of village development.

- Integrating the natural surroundings and recreation facilities into the village.

Examples:

Vail and Whistler

The original Vail and Whistler villages are good examples of purpose built resort villages that provide lively gathering places for resort guests and community members.

Blue Mountain

The water feature in the Village at Blue Mountain provides an entertaining place for children to play in the hot summer sun.

Sun Peaks Village

The Village at Sun Peaks has been designed to allow guests to ski from their hotel down the village pedestrian street to the lifts.

Other Technical References:

Green Site and Building Guidelines, Town of Banff   www.townofbanff.com or www.banff.ca
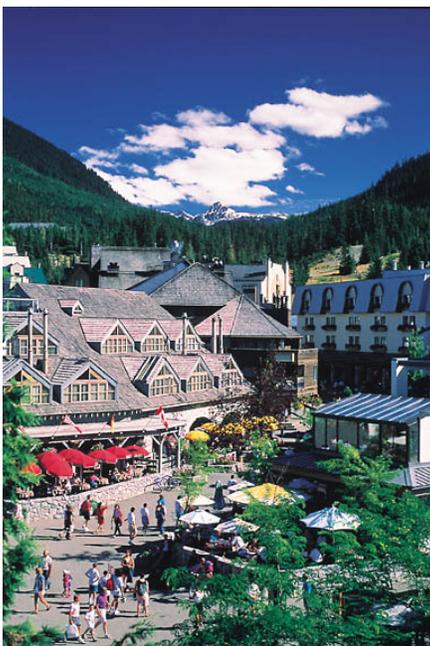
RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Built forms should fit into the natural landscape, avoid extensive site grading to create flat building platforms.

- Let nature into the village, preserve scenic views, provide green space buffers around hard surface areas.

- Limit buildings to a human scale. Site taller buildings to the north of public gathering areas to prevent shading or where they can blend into a hillside or tree stand.

- Create an accessible interesting pedestrian environment, with lots of opportunities for gathering spaces.

- The use of underground parking will free up land for public gathering spaces and landscaping.

- Use schematic 3-dimensional computer models of proposed village to evaluate shading and visual impacts. Refine building massing to avoid shading public spaces or interrupting scenic view corridors.

- Use a "visioning" process involving local stakeholders and the design team to assist in developing an architectural character for the village that draws from the surrounding area.

- Protect the intent of the final village design through the appropriate use of site specific zoning bylaws, design guidelines and building schemes.

- Carefully consider project phasing and desired land subdivision requirements before including design solutions such as combined underground parkades or joint access ramps which can severely limit the ability or the developer's flexibility to construct individual buildings.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES IN SKI AREA PLANNING AND OPERATION

The environment is a ski area's number one asset. Ski areas are set in some of the most spectacular terrain and the natural surroundings greatly enhance the overall recreation experience. The use of environmental principles in the design and operation of ski resorts can lead to the provision of a quality outdoor experience that complements the natural and aesthetic qualities that draw guests to the mountains.

The advantages of encompassing environmental principles in the planning and operation of ski areas include:

- creating ski area development plans that integrate ski operations into the natural environment while avoiding, minimizing and mitigating short and long-term environmental impacts.

- identifying opportunities to address existing disturbances from historical uses; and

- taking advantage of opportunities for environmental stewardship in day to day operations through conserving natural resources and achieving efficiencies.

Key Challenges

- Selecting appropriate professionals to design and develop resort concept.

- Operations personnel have good knowledge of their own mountain, but lack the overall technical skills to prepare a detailed Ski Area Master plan which optimizes the land, minimizes the environmental impacts and maximizes operational efficiency.

- Mountain and base configuration must integrate smoothly – planners need a thorough knowledge of mountain and base design, guests' wants and needs and requirements.

- Ski area construction, lift operations, snowgrooming and snowmaking are specific areas of expertise requiring training and experience.

Examples:

Most British Columbia ski areas have had a Ski Area Master plan prepared under the BC Commercial Alpine Ski Policy (CASP) and Ski Area Guidelines. These plans were prepared using sound environmental principles and good ski area design standards. Environmental awards have been given to Panorama, Sun Peaks, Blackcomb and others.

Other Technical References:

USA National Ski Areas Association. The Greenroom http://www.nsaa.org/nsaa/environment/the_greenroom/

USA National Ski Areas Association - *Sustainable Slopes, the Environmental Charter for Ski Areas* http://www.nsaa.org/nsaa/environment/sustainable_slopes/

Aspen Skiing Co. *Building Sustainable Resorts*

Environmental Performance Section of the Ontario Snow Resorts Association's Best Management Practices Manual http://www.c2p2online.com/main.php3?section=165&doc_id=545

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Resort areas should go "beyond compliance" in those areas where improvements make environmental sense and are economically feasible.

- Front-load the planning and environmental review process to save considerable time and resources in the approval and legal stages.

- Engage stakeholders in up front and continuing dialogue on development concepts, analysis of the alternatives and evolution of development plans and their implementation.

- Respect outstanding natural resources and the physical "carrying capacity" of the local ecology when planning new projects.

- Plan, site and design trails, on-mountain facilities and base area developments in a manner that respects the natural setting and avoids, to the extent practical, outstanding natural resources.

- Use simulation and computer modeling in planning to assist with analyzing the effects of proposals on key natural resources and viewsheds.

- Use good forest practices in the design, development and operation of the ski area.

- Make water, energy and materials efficiency and the use of clean energy a priority in the design of new facilities and the upgrading of existing facilities.

- Bring the ski trails and staging lifts into areas with high-density accommodation to optimize ski-in/ski-out opportunities and reduce ongoing transportation demand and the resulting pollution and energy consumption.

- Optimize efficiency and effectiveness of energy and water usage in snowmaking operations.

ACCOMMODATION PRODUCT MIX

Considering an accommodation product mix is important because it helps to determine the best fit of the resort product and its supporting land uses to the natural landscape, and to further meet the varying needs of target markets. It also produces a flexible plan for built product to appeal to a wide range of visitor demographics and income levels that is in balance with the recreational carrying capacity and in tune with the target market. This plays a major part in defining the character of the resort.

Real estate product mix may include hotels, timeshares and other vacation ownership options and second homes.

Key Challenges

- Currently, most tourist accommodation developments at resorts are financed by condominium sales and timeshare. Developers tend to concentrate on higher-end products that appeal to the second home purchaser.

- Over-dependence on high-end properties alienates the more price-sensitive regional markets and creates greater risk to business volumes in the long term.

Examples:

France

The French government requires land be set aside for camping, dormitory style accommodation and low budget tourist accommodation in its strategic land use plans for new resorts.

Mont Tremblant – Quebec

Mont Tremblant Resort in Quebec offers tourists a range of lodging options and budgets including hotel rooms, suites, condos and tourist homes. People looking for homes also have a variety of options.

Mammoth Lakes – California

This resort town provides cabins, condos, private residences, town homes, condo hotel suites and budget tourist accommodation to a serve a variety of tourist interests.

Sun Peaks - British Columbia

Sun Peaks has hotel suites and condominiums, townhouses, duplexes, single family homes, residential lots, and retail or commercial properties from which to choose.

Other Technical References:

Gee, Chuck Y., *Resort Development and Management* (2nd edition), Educational Institute American Hotel and Motel Association, Michigan, 1996.

Mill, Robert Christie, *Resorts Management and Operation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 2001.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Evaluate whether the area is suitable for development of a permanent or second home community. Consider limiting or excluding private accommodation in environmentally sensitive or remote areas.

- Develop a target mix of tourist, second home, permanent residential and employee units. Evaluate in terms of target market and predicted demographics. Consider the inclusion of product to appeal to a wide cross-section of income levels.

- Create a portfolio of accommodation types to manage risk arising from over-reliance on one market segment. The most successful projects have a mix of four to seven accommodation types available, which could appeal to transient visitors, second home owners or seasonal and permanent residents.

- Preserve high value locations (adjacent to lifts, beachfront) for public accommodation and protect public access to natural amenities.

- Scale the development to the landscape, avoid locating large buildings where they will block views or shade adjacent properties.
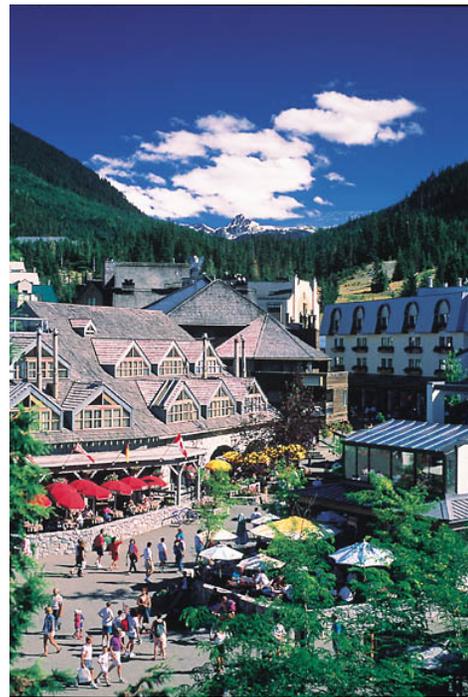
RENTAL USE AND RENTAL MANAGEMENT COVENANTS

The resort operator relies on visitors to keep the recreational product viable. If units originally built for tourist accommodation are sold to individuals not wishing to rent, the public bed base of the resort becomes eroded. Rental covenants are used to protect the long term supply of public accommodation in the resort's central core. These "hot beds" ensure a "lights on" feeling and contribute to the resort's vibrancy. The goal is to retain the tourist (hot) bed base as the resort matures.

Key Challenges

- Some local governments are reluctant to accept the role of covenantee for Section 219 Rental Covenants under the *Land Title Act* due to the difficulty of enforcement.

- Enforcement can be costly and prohibitive for small local governments.

- If covenants are not enforced, they can lose their effectiveness over time.

- The current *Assessment Act* allows strata hotel properties to be considered Class 1 (residential) instead of Class 6 (business) if there are two or more property managers operating in the building or if 15% or more of the units are not rented out. This taxation treatment has led to situations where there are multiple property management companies operating within one strata development which creates confusion for the resort guest and leads to variable service levels within the same property.

Examples:

Resort Municipality of Whistler

The Resort Municipality of Whistler has two classes of Section 219 Rental Covenants placed on all properties within the central village zone as well as several other key commercial properties. A Phase I (warm bed) Covenant allows the unit owner unlimited use of the unit, however, the unit must be available for nightly rental when the owner is not using it. A Phase II (hot bed) Covenant limits the unit owner's use of their unit to 28 days in the winter season and 28 days in the summer season. At all other times, the unit must be available for nightly rental.

City of Aspen

The City of Aspen relies on enforcing its Land Use Code to protect its public bed base. Owners of units within tourist accommodation must prove that the unit is available for nightly rental for at least six months of the year.

Technical References:
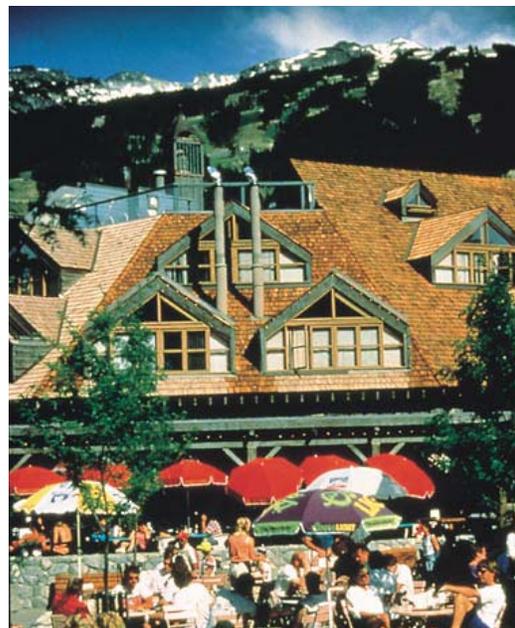
Resort Municipality of Whistler http://www.whistler.ca/index.php

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- During the resort master plan process, identify those properties that are most suitable for tourist accommodation development.

- Local government should structure zoning bylaws that clearly define the allowable uses within a zone and preserve the tourist accommodation capacity.

- Use Section 219 of the *Land Title Act* to place a covenant on title to these lands that requires all residential accommodation built on the land to be available for rental to the public as tourist accommodation.

- Use common law or Section 219 covenants to require that all the units developed on the land be managed by a rental management company having a front desk located within the property or at a central check-in facility and that all units have access to the common property amenities (pool/hot tub, exercise rooms, lobby).

EMPLOYEE / RESIDENT HOUSING POLICIES

A supply of affordable housing is necessary to attract and retain a committed workforce. As a resort becomes more successful, the market price of housing in the vicinity tends to rise beyond the affordability level of the local workforce. Over time price increases can extend to other nearby communities, making the provision of employee housing a regional problem.

Resorts and communities need policies and programs to deliver a sufficient supply of diverse affordable housing types within the resort to meet the needs of the resort's workforce through all stages of development. Studies show that a resident community adds to the vitality and vibrancy of a resort.

Key Challenges

- The belief that employee housing "won't be a problem here" or that "employee or resident housing is someone else's responsibility."

- Not addressing the issue of employee housing early enough in the resort development cycle.

Examples:

City of Aspen, Colorado

The City of Aspen uses proceeds from a 1.5% Land Transfer Tax to build deed-restricted resident housing. In this way, the overheated real estate market is funding the construction of resident housing.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler

The Resort Municipality of Whistler has a Works and Services charge for employee housing and has created the Whistler Housing Authority to oversee the development of employee restricted housing.

Colorado Housing and Finance Authority

The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, in partnership with the Northwest Colorado Council and rural resort region produced a resource guide in 2003. "Housing Your Workforce" was a guide for employers feeling the impact of affordable housing shortages and looking for alternative solutions in rural resort areas. It provided examples of employer assisted housing programs currently in practice across the state and provided tools on how to assess employee's housing needs, retention and affordability. Programs such as home ownership options and rental assistance are explained in this guide.

Other Technical References:

Planning for Housing 2004 An Overview of Local Government Initiatives in BC
www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/housing/planhouse/2004/tools.htm

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- All parties need to realize that the supply of affordable employee housing **will** become a problem if the resort achieves success. The inclusion of a lifestyle community or significant second home real estate component in the resort accommodation product mix leads to additional employee generation (to build, maintain, sell, renovate) and increases housing affordability pressures on local residents in the vicinity of the resort. If employee housing is not provided at the resort, the resort's workforce requirements can impact the affordability of the surrounding communities and create demands on the transportation infrastructure. Developers will not necessarily provide sufficient employee housing unless required as a condition of development approval due to the large costs.

- Recognize the need for employee/resident housing and set aside sufficient land for it at the resort master plan stage (10% to 25% of the total bed base, depending on proximity to existing communities).

- Employee housing should be considered part of a resort's infrastructure and mechanisms to provide it should be entrenched in the resort master plan and OCP.

- Set up policies in the resort master plan and OCP to ensure the "development train" which creates pressure on housing prices, will fund employee housing by requiring each development to contribute employee housing by:

  a) Building it within the development project,

  b) Building it on a nearby site within the community, and

  c) Providing sufficient cash or land in lieu to provide the housing, where authorized by an enactment.

- Utilize land use covenants, zoning and resale price controls to ensure units constructed for resident housing remain available and affordable for the resort's workforce.

- Integrate resident housing with market housing.

- Create a housing authority to build and manage employee/resident housing. Ensure a variety of housing types to meet the different needs of the work force. Use resale price and rent controls to protect the affordability into perpetuity.

- Consider creating incentives for employers and the private sector to provide employee housing such as auxiliary suites in single family houses, but ensure their use is restricted to employees through covenants and zoning bylaws.

- The resort developer should provide sufficient employee housing to meet their own needs.

AVOIDING AND/OR MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS – Wildlife Habitat Preservation Areas and Wildlife Management

Resort development and operation can impact existing wildlife populations by altering their habitat, either directly by reducing the availability of particular resources, or indirectly by increasing the likelihood of human encounters. These changes can result in physiological impacts to wildlife and in some cases can lead to displacement. Effective planning can minimize disturbance and identify areas requiring special management.

Maintenance of critical habitat components and bio-diversity within the study area and connecting habitat areas is desirable for resorts and resort communities.

Key Challenges

- Gathering representative wildlife data in a timely and cost effective manner.

- Predicting impacts to wildlife habitat and populations from construction through to resort operation is difficult.

- Ecological mapping inventory such as Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) or Predictive Ecosystem Mapping (PEM) provide baseline information for assessing habitat and corridor connectivity; however, wildlife use can only be determined through field data.

- Acquiring sufficient baseline map data for predictive assessments can be costly and may be insufficient to adequately define wildlife use.

Examples:

Panorama Resort – Wildlife Management Plan

Panorama Resort recognized that preservation of the natural environment would be a critical component of their success. They set about creating a system of preservation areas that were designed to protect sensitive habitats wherever possible. Primary goals included optimal tree retention and a minimal amount of disturbance to the preserved areas over the long term, also incorporating management strategies to reduce human wildlife conflicts. The ultimate goal of the plan included continued utilization of the area by wildlife for cover, nesting, forage, and migration. The preservation plan has the added bonus of improving the aesthetic value of the resort to visitors.

City of Canmore – Bow Valley Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Patch Guidelines

The Bow River Valley near the town of Canmore, Alberta is relatively narrow and provides a vital link for wildlife movement between the Kananaskis valley, Banff National Park, and areas to the north. The ongoing expansion of the City of Canmore required a strategy for maintaining the valley as a viable travel corridor for wildlife species through the identification and retention of linked habitat patch areas.

Whitewater Mountain Resort - Nelson

The Whitewater Mountain Resort in Nelson, applied for an expansion of ski terrain and in doing so required a review of existing wildlife use. Mountain caribou was identified as a

species of concern due to its red-listed status, old growth habitat requirements, and increased predation risk due to road building. The expansion application included the identification of a wildlife management zone to protect the Mountain Caribou habitat.

Kicking Horse Resort – Kicking Horse Grizzly Bear Refuge

The Kicking Horse Grizzly Bear Refuge is a conservation, education and research centre committed to becoming the world leader in the preservation of grizzly bears. The 22 acre refuge is an integral component to the development of rehabilitation protocols for

orphaned bears by wildlife professionals and researchers with the ultimate goal of releasing them back into the wild. Kicking Horse Resort provides the land and operation support for the refuge.
http://www.kickinghorseresort.com/summer/grizzly/index.asp

Jumbo Glacier Resort – Grizzly Bear Management Plan.

The proposal for the construction of the Jumbo Glacier Resort included the development of a management plan identifying specific wildlife resources and the potential impacts of resort development on those resources. In particular, grizzly bear habitat was of primary concern as the Jumbo Glacier Resort was proposed for one of two remaining areas in British Columbia where grizzly bears are not endangered. The plan includes long term monitoring of potential impacts and recommends mitigation of the potential and measured impacts.

Other Technical References:

Resource Inventory Standards Committee (RISC) is responsible for establishing standards for natural and cultural resources inventories, including collection, storage, analysis, interpretation and reporting of inventory data. A number of Government initiatives, including Forest Investment Account and Forest Practices Code, require participants in those initiatives to adhere to RISC standards.
http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/risc/pubs/tebiodiv/

Ministry of Environment Interim Wildlife Guidelines for Commercial Recreation in British Columbia
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/comrec/crecintro.html

Wildlife Information for Commercial Backcountry Recreation Opportunities in the North Central Monashee Mountains. http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/sir/fwh/hab/cbrhab.pdf

BC Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy, Ministry of Environment http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/grzz/

BC Guidelines & Best Management Practices (BMPs) http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html

A Strategy for the Recovery of Mountain Caribou in British Columbia
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/mtcaribou_rcvrystrat02.pdf

Ministry of Environment: BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC) systematically collects and disseminates information on plants, animals and plant communities at risk in British Columbia. This information is compiled and maintained in a computerized database which provides a centralized and scientific source of information on the status, locations and level of protection of these organisms and ecosystems.
http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cdc/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Employ environmental values and corresponding mapping to identify wildlife values and species of interest. (OR Contact the Ministry of Environment).

- Consult with local, regional and provincial government agencies for species-specific information (Inventories) and areas of interest, previous studies and special management zones.

- Consult LRMPs and regional strategies for protection of special interest species.

- Work with Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGOs) when developing management projects.

- Work with Ministry of Forests and Range to co-ordinate efforts with forest tenure holders.

- Adjust resort design to account for wildlife and their needs.

- Prepare wildlife management plan for species of interest and identify areas for special management or preservation.

- Establish and/or identify wildlife migration/dispersal corridors.

AVOIDING AND/OR MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS – Aquatic Habitat and Streamside Protection - Wetlands and Riparian Management and Fisheries Management

Resort development can have both direct and indirect impacts on aquatic habitats including wetland and riparian areas. In addition, many of British Columbia's species at risk are supported by riparian and aquatic habitats.

Legislation regulates development in and around aquatic habitats. The Provincial *Water Act* regulates works and changes in and about streams in British Columbia, and the *Fish Protection Act* provides protection for fish and fish habitat. The Federal *Fisheries Act* requires diligent and effective management of fish and fisheries habitat for fish of any life stage. Addressing existing aquatic protection regulation in the planning stage will avoid design / conservation conflict.

Resort development has the potential to impact fisheries habitat in several ways. Encroachment into stream channels and riparian areas can reduce the amount or quality of available habitat by reducing the buffer between aquatic habitat and development. Development can further impact fisheries habitat through the introduction of deleterious substances such as sediment, fuel and oil residue and concrete leachate.

Development can also affect the functionality of aquatic habitat by increasing impervious areas, thereby increasing runoff over the short term while reducing it over the long term. Culvert, channelization, and diversions can isolate areas of otherwise functional habitat by creating barriers that fish cannot or will not cross. Development may also reduce natural gravel recruitment and streams can eventually become sterile for lack of productive substrate. Wastewater discharge and armouring for flood

protection are also resort-related impacts to fisheries and habitat.

The Federal *Fisheries Act* and provincial *Water Act* require diligent and effective management of fish and fisheries habitat during all stages of construction.

The desired outcome is to ensure development proceeds in a manner that complies with existing legislation and avoids, mitigates or lessens potential impacts to aquatic and riparian habitats, water quality and quantity, and fish and wildlife populations.

Key Challenges

- Adequate riparian setback requirements should be incorporated into the design of the resort as it is preferable and more cost effective to retain existing riparian areas than compensate later in the development.

- Resort viability and size requirements frequently conflict with riparian area setbacks.

- Incorporating riparian setbacks into early design stages to prevent development planning within the setback areas.

- Field verification of top of bank is generally required to correctly establish riparian setback areas.

- The installation of stream crossing structures conducive to fish passage (such as open bottom culvert/bridge versus round culvert) can be costly.

- Designing around riparian protection areas can be difficult, particularly in areas with numerous small streams and around wetlands.

Garibaldi Springs Gold Course - Squamish

The development of Garibaldi Springs Golf Course in Squamish, British Columbia included the construction of an 18-hole golf course on lands that contained three permanent fish bearing creeks, which provide exceptional over-wintering, rearing and spawning opportunities for numerous salmonid and non-salmonid fish species. Consultation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada resulted in a mitigation and compensation plan that included limiting the impact to critical mainstream habitat; enhancing habitat by the establishment of new permanent flow areas; the creation of wetland pond features linked to fish bearing waters; and the retention of permanent and ephemeral drainages and wetland habitat areas. In addition the development provided off site compensation to further enhance the fisheries values in the Squamish area.
http://www.garibaldisprings.com/index_flash.htm

Blackstone Golf Resort Community - Fernie

A Habitat Balance was conducted for the Blackstone Golf Resort Community in Fernie, British Columbia to interpret levels of impact associated with the development. The habitat balance analysis is based on the "equivalent habitat area" methodology where different types of habitats are given ratings to ensure that a "no net loss" of aquatic habitat is experienced. The creation of additional wetlands and enhancement opportunities within preservation areas allowed for habitat losses due to golf coarse construction. The results of habitat balance were incorporated into the Environmental Impact Assessment and Compensation/Mitigation Plan for the project.

Coastal Resort Development in Costa Rica

Costa Rica has a history of popularity for foreign investment in real estate and resort development. In order to protect the marine riparian values, a buffer is established along the marine foreshore. This buffer controls the level of impact by tourism developments along the Costa Rican coastline.

Other Technical References:

Chilibeck, Barry, Geoff Chislett, and Gary Norris (MELP and DFO). 1993. *Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat.* BC Environment, and BC Ministry Environment, Lands and Parks, Integrated Management Branch.

BC Ministry of Environment. 2004. *Riparian Areas Regulation*:
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html

BC Ministry of Environment. March 2004. *Standards and Best Practices for Instream Works*
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/iswstdsbpsmarch2004.pdf

Stewardship Centre for British Columbia: Stewardship Series: *Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat*
http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca/sc_bc/stew_series/bc_stewseries.asp#ldg

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Ministry of Environment *Riparian Areas Regulation* provides protection for the features, functions and conditions that are vital in the natural maintenance of stream health and productivity.

- Guidelines such as the Canada / BC *Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat* and Ministry of Environments *Standards and Best Practices for Instream Works* should be reviewed during the planning and development process.

- Local governments have the authority to regulate development through zoning bylaws and the establishment of development permit areas. These powers can be used to manage specific resources such as watercourses and may define specific development restrictions in order to protect the riparian environment.

- The Developer must provide

  - adequate design and drawings for application and notification to the Ministry of Environment (pursuant to Section 9 of the *Water Act* and Section 44 of the *Water Act* Regulation) and

  - to Fisheries and Oceans Canada for authorization under Section 35 (2) of the Federal *Fisheries Act* for works affecting fish habitat and/or harmful alteration disturbance or destruction of fish habitat.

- May require professional assistance regarding applicable legislation and to liaise with all levels of government.

MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS THROUGH RE-VEGETATION PLANS

Site disturbance and impacts associated with resort construction and operation can be mitigated through comprehensive re-vegetation plans.

Vegetation plans help restore sites to provide suitable wildlife habitat, riparian features, retains natural beauty and environmental values of the site.

Key Challenges

- Enforcing landscape preservation zones.

- Ensuring compliance with restoration and re-vegetation plans.

Examples:

Garibaldi Springs Golf Course - Squamish

The development of Garibaldi Springs Golf Course in Squamish included a comprehensive plan for re-vegetation of disturbed areas during and following construction works and retention of existing vegetation in areas not slated for development. Preservation areas were identified in the field prior to construction to delineate clearing and grubbing boundaries. Topsoil was transferred from development areas to the re-vegetation areas.

The re-vegetation of riparian areas was included in the mitigation and compensation plan, created in consultation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to meet the requirements of fish habitat. Only plants native to the Squamish area were

incorporated into the revegetation plan. A mix of nursery stock and salvaged plants were used during all Stages of revegetation. The success of the re-vegetation will be monitored for 3 years following planting to ensure survival.
http://www.garibaldisprings.com/index_flash.htm

Nicklaus North Golf Course - Whistler

Nicklaus North Golf Course at Whistler included a $5,000.00 refundable landscape deposit in its Purchase and Sale agreements for single family lots. If the lots were not built or landscaped within a specified timeframe by the new purchasers, the vendor had the right to use their own forces to revegetate the lot and pay for it with the landscape deposit.

Other Technical References:

BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. November 1996. *Tree Replacement Criteria.*
http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/csd/forms/fwhp/hp/hp_inf_treereplcrit.htm
http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/csd/downloads/forms/vegetation_riparian/treereplcrit.pdf

BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, July 1998*. Planting Criteria for Restoring Fish and Wildlife Habitat.* http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/csd/forms/fwhp/hp/hp_inf_plantcrit.htm
http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/csd/downloads/forms/vegetation_riparian/plantingcriteria-i.pdf

Chilibeck, Barry, Geoff Chislett, and Gary Norris (MELP and DFO). 1993*. Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat.* BC Environment, and BC Ministry Environment, Lands and Parks, Integrated Management Branch.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Preservation of vegetation during final design and construction can be a cost-effective way to reduce site restoration and compensation requirements.

- Prepare a re-vegetation, restoration and compensation plan.

- Utilize baseline and biophysical information to identify key environmental values and areas requiring special management and preservation.

- Incorporate areas of special management and preservation areas in resort design, thereby decreasing the necessity for extraneous compensation and restoration of the site.

- During construction make all efforts to preserve vegetation and topsoil.

- When possible utilize native plants for site restoration and landscaping.

- Local governments could obtain performance bonds or other security for landscaping work to ensure that landscaping and re-vegetation work is completed.

- If local governments are unable or unwilling to obtain performance bonds, the resort developer/operator can require landscape deposits in the purchase and sale.

PLANNING AND LAND USE CONTROLS – Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws, Development Permits, Design Guidelines and Building Schemes

Planning controls are a method of guiding future growth and development and ensuring that the resort master plan created for the resort survives as development parcels are sold to third parties. An important first step is to work with the local government(s).

The desired outcomes are:

- a set of plans, policies, bylaws and documents that regulate the form and character of the proposed development; and

- legal mechanisms to ensure future landowners construct buildings that are consistent with the vision for the resort or resort community.

Key Challenges

- Some local governments may lack staff with experience in resort planning issues.

- Existing local government zoning bylaws may not be suitable for the type of buildings envisioned for the resort.

- The developer (and financial investors) needs certainty that a certain level of development will be allowed before commencing design and construction of expensive infrastructure.

- Developing planning controls that ensure key elements of the original land use plan for the resort survive development and redevelopment cycles.

Examples:

Regional District of East Kooenay

The Regional District of East Kootenay adopted Official Community Plans for Fernie Alpine Resort and Panorama Mountain Village that are consistent with the resort master plans for these resorts.

Thompson-Nicola Regional District

The Thompson-Nicola Regional District adopted a set of zoning bylaws specifically for the Sun Peaks Resort Area because their existing zoning bylaws did not allow the compact nature of development contemplated in the Sun Peaks resort master plan.

Sun Peaks Resort Corporation

Sun Peaks Resort Corporation placed Statutory Building Schemes containing Design Guidelines on all property before offering it for sale.

Resort Municipality of Whistler

The Resort Municipality of Whistler adopted site specific zoning bylaws for each development parcel in Village North.

City of Langford

The City of Langford created the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development Zone to regulate development of the golf course and residential community at Bear Mountain.

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Community Services (MCS): Local Government Department
http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/

Union of British Columbia Municipalities
http://www.civicnet.bc.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp?id=120&bhcp=1

Resort Municipality of Whistler http://www.whistler.ca/index.php

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The *Local Government Act* provides local governments with the authority to prepare regional growth strategies to promote settlement patterns that are socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that make efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources. Planning and land use management is regulated by local government through Official Community Plans (OCP), Zoning Bylaws and Development Permit areas. Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws in regional districts must be reviewed by MCS before they can be adopted.

- Check whether a resort use is consistent with an existing OCP or Regional Growth Strategy and if not determine whether there is a reasonable expectation that these can be amended to support resort development.

- The Developer needs to work with local government to determine the most appropriate planning control tools to use in their jurisdiction. Where local governments choose not to exercise their planning authority, the developer needs to investigate other tools such as Statutory Building Schemes, Design Guidelines and Design Covenants on title to reinforce the resort master plan image on private property.

- Develop an OCP amendment concurrently with the development of a resort master plan to avoid significant delays and complications that could arise if these processes are done sequentially. The OCP should clearly articulate the role tourism plays in the local economy and have policies and tools in place to facilitate.

- The developer may need to provide funding to local government to assist them in preparation of an OCP or Zoning Bylaws.

- Prepare zoning bylaws to apply to all contemplated land uses at the resort. Consult with other resort communities to discuss areas where zoning bylaws have been challenged and seek their advice in drafting bylaws to avoid these pitfalls.

- Identify any municipal/regional district by-laws that may impact the construction and/or operation of the resort other than land use restrictions.

- Develop design guidelines that address issues such as site planning and design, building design and character, landscaping, water and energy conservation, snow management and environmental protection during construction. Use Development Permits or Statutory Building Schemes registered on title to individual parcels to ensure all construction at the resort is in compliance with these guidelines.

- If a resort village is included in the resort master plan, local government should create Development Permit Areas that include details of the allowable building volumetrics to protect the form and character of the resort village plan. Each parcel should also contain site specific bylaws that include floor space limits. If local government is unwilling or unable to regulate the development of the village to this extent, the developer should use Statutory Building Schemes and Building Programs registered on title to the lands to achieve a similar level of control.

- Establish a design review process as part of the building scheme registered on title. Determine the process of design review and establish a system for ongoing funding. Usually a Design Review Panel should consist of representatives from local government, the architectural and/or landscape profession, the community at large and the resort developer.

ROAD DESIGN STANDARDS (Collector, Local, Pedestrian Trails)

Road design standards establish the character of a resort and can dictate which terrain is accessible for development. Appropriate road design standards help ensure the road network provides a safe and efficient transportation back bone for the resort without overwhelming the natural landscape. The desired outcome is a set of practical and replicable standards suited to the terrain and character of the resort and provides safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian access to all parts of the resort.

Key Challenges

- Providing efficient access routes and parking facilities for large vehicles such as buses, fire-trucks and delivery vehicles while maintaining a pedestrian friendly character at the resort.

- Designing roads and parking lots to facilitate snow removal and snow storage.

- Striking a balance between constructing roads that follow the natural terrain and providing alignments that will be safe in adverse driving conditions.

- Understanding that urban or suburban trip and parking demand generators for commercial establishments may not be applicable to a pedestrian oriented resort context.

- Enforcing parking regulations in unincorporated areas.

- Obtaining local or provincial government approval for special resort road standards.

Examples:

Municipal Road Standard Guidelines

The City of Kelowna has developed hillside street standards while the Resort Municipality of Whistler adheres to its *Guidelines for Accommodation Development on Difficult Terrain*.

British Columbia Ministry of Transportation

Ministry of Transportation, BC Supplement to TAC Geometric Design Guide, Chapter 1500 Alpine Ski Village Roads (recently adopted after a joint planning study between the Ministry of Transportation and Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA) identified the challenges of applying typical design standards in mountain topography).

Other Technical References:

TAC Geometric Design Guide. Order from Transportation Association of Canada http://www.tac-atc.ca/

BC Supplement to the TAC Geometric Design Guide
http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/eng_publications/geomet/TAC/2001_Supplement.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Develop a road network and circulation plan that minimizes conflicts with recreational facilities and pedestrian routes. Include secondary access/egress routes for emergencies such as fires.

- Locate buildings within easy walking and cycling distance of resort amenities.

- Prepare a multi-purpose (walk, cycle, ski) trail network that encourages non-motorized forms of transportation within the resort.

- Consult with the Ministry of Transportation.

- Retain design professionals to collaborate with the appropriate approving authority to adopt standards suited to the character and topography of the resort; often accomplished with slower design speeds, narrower right of ways, short sections of steeper grades, tighter curve radii and reduced roadside parking.

- Prepare standards for several classes of roads, from arterials to pedestrian trails.

- Strategically, schedule certain elements of construction (such as the second lift of asphalt pavement) to both delay capital investment and provide a higher quality end product.
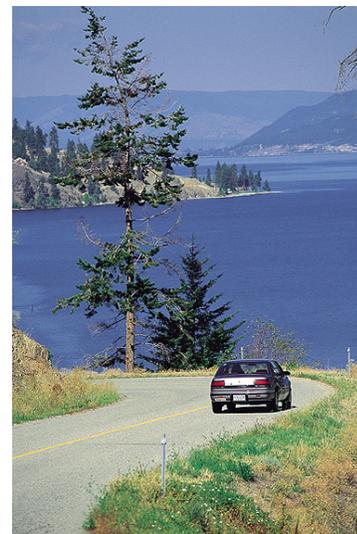
SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION, TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL

Providing sanitary sewer collection treatment and disposal is one of the core municipal services without which a resort cannot thrive. Identifying disposal options and establishing design guidelines will ensure that sanitary sewage can be properly dealt with throughout the life of the resort.

The desired aim is to have a reliable, economically feasible and sustainable sewer network and treatment facility capable of handling all sanitary wastewater generated at the resort.

Key Challenges

- Identifying a sewage treatment plant location that is acceptable to surrounding property owners.

- Minimizing wastewater generation, inflow and infiltration.

- Identifying acceptable disposal options.

- Underestimating the cost of providing this core service.

- Obtaining consensus from approval authorities on the required level of treatment.

Examples;

Panorama Mountain Resort

Panorama Mountain Resort installed tertiary treatment when upgrading its sewage treatment plant due to perceived concerns about the downstream water quality in Toby Creek.

Nimmo Bay Heli-Ventures

Nimmo Bay Heli-Ventures uses the Hydroxyl waste management system where black and gray water is reduced to clear water with no bacteria. Hydroxyl is an owned and operated British Columbia Company.

Other Technical References:

BC Ministry of Environment – *Public Safety and Prevention Initiatives* – includes links to: Municipal Sewage Regulations; and Guidelines for Developing a Liquid Waste Management Plan
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/mpp_home.htm

Ministry of Health Planning, *Sewerage System Standard Practice Manual*
http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/protect/bcsr_spm_draft_may2004.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Adopt a water conservation philosophy from the outset to minimize wastewater generation.

- Identify and prove out treatment and disposal options that will meet the resort demands at the projected build-out. The level of treatment should be determined using good engineering practices and should be commensurate with the proposed disposal method.

- Incorporate design and construction practices which minimize/eliminate inflow and infiltration.

- Provide public education and obtain input when determining sites for sewage treatment plants and use modern technologies that minimize the impacts to the surroundings.

- Design and construct facilities to meet or exceed municipal standards.

- Consider wastewater re-use as a disposal option. It has the added benefit of reducing the demand on the water supply (usually for irrigation or snowmaking).

- "Packaged" sewage treatment plants are often a viable solution for providing sewage treatment for a resort development.

- Determine who will provide services and maintain the infrastructure. If necessary create a private utility at arms length from the resort developer to ensure separation of costs.

- Develop a rate structure that will ensure ongoing operating, maintenance and capital replacement costs will be recovered from the users. Include rent charges for the provision of stand-by capacity on undeveloped sites. Set adequate hook-up charges so that existing users will not subsidize extending the service to new users.

- Waste management permits are required from the Provincial Health Authority for any new wastewater disposal facility or for additions to an existing one.

COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF SOLID WASTES

Regional solid waste management plans (RSWMP) are the legislated responsibility of the regional district; however, local governments are closer to most generators of solid waste than any other level of government and often play a vital role in the implementation of these plans. A solid waste strategy at the resort is required to ensure compliance with the regional district's plan.

The desired outcome is a blueprint for reducing, reusing, recycling, and responsibly managing the residuals that is commensurate with the local and/or regional strategy for solid waste.

Key Challenges

- Wildlife – improper storage of garbage is a key attractant and may lead to conflict with wildlife, particularly bear/human conflict.

- Terrain/remoteness – local government waste transfer stations may be a long way from the resort location.

Examples:

Nimmo Bay Heli Ventures

Nimmo Bay Heli-Ventures has recycled their garbage since 1981 by transporting everything (nothing remains on site) to a regional district landfill and recycling centre every four days (1 hour by boat). As a result of this practice the resort has never exposed wild animals to the need for the resort's food.

Regional District of Central Kootenay

The Regional District of Central Kootenay's *Regional District Solid Waste Management Plan - Stage III* provides an essential waste management service to residents, businesses and industry of the Regional District. As stated in the plan, the RDCK's goal is to introduce newer cost effective ways to minimize the generation of waste and is guided by the **"4 R"** principal: **R**educe, **R**euse, **R**ecycle, **R**eturn. http://www.rdck.bc.ca

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Environment – Municipal Solid Waste: http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/solid_waste_index.html

Recycling Council of British Columbia   http://www.rcbc.bc.ca/index.htm

Bear Society http://www.bearsmart.com/

Alpine Club of Canada http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/

Solid Waste Association of North America - BC Pacific Chapter http://www.ecowaste.com/swanabc/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Adopt and promote a reduce-reuse-recycle philosophy.
- Allow for separate containers for recyclables and/or composting at collection locations and transfer stations.
- Incorporate eco-centres or re-use it depots that enable the exchange of unwanted goods that are not at the end of their useful lives.
- Develop and manage a waste management system that is bear proof and minimizes conflicts with wildlife (Example: bear-proof containers within the resort and at transfer stations and timely removal of waste).
- Be innovative in addressing solid waste (Example: many mountain lodges operated by the Alpine Club of Canada have adopted a pack out what you pack in philosophy.)
- Develop design guidelines, which mandate waste management plans for construction sites.
- Work closely with the Regional District to ensure the Resort's waste management strategy fits with the RSWMP.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

A stormwater management plan is required to determine the infrastructure (sewers, culverts and detention ponds) required to minimize the impact of stormwater run-off from the development on the downstream environment and to safely convey stormwater throughout the development. The desired end product is a strategy and plan for infrastructure to minimize the impact on the environment and protect the capital works at the resort from damage by flooding.

Key Challenges

- Challenging terrain.

- Utilizing the best stormwater management practices available in an area of practice that is rapidly evolving.

- Competition for limited land area with other aspects of the resort.

Examples:

SilverTip Golf Resort - Canmore

Stormwater management was a critical design factor at SilverTip Golf Resort in Canmore, Alberta due to mountainous terrain, environmental sensitivity and restrictions on post development flows downstream of the site. Five detention ponds were incorporated into the layout of the 7,200-yard championship golf course, with a sixth located in a wildlife corridor, and a seventh within a future development parcel.

Nicklaus North Golf Course - Whistler

Nicklaus North Golf Course in Whistler is built within the floodplain. The homes and golf clubhouse were built above the predicted flood level and the fairways were designed to act as floodways during major storm events. During the 2003 flood event, the facility functioned as designed, the streets and homes remained above the flood level and the fairways and adjacent wetlands flooded.

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Environment, Water, Air and Climate Change Branch, – *Water Quality – Best Management Practices* *http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wat/wq/nps/BMP_Compendium/BMP_Introduction/bmphome.htm*

A Guidebook for British Columbia Stormwater Planning
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/stormwater/stormwater.pdf

Fisheries and Oceans Canada – website includes links to:

(i)   *Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat*, http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/publications/pdf/165353.pdf and

(ii) *Access near Aquatic Areas: a guide to sensitive planning, design and management*
http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/213410.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Combine stormwater management facilities with other infrastructure (Example: a water feature on a golf course can be used as a stormwater detention pond).

- Where possible, focus development on areas with the least permeable soils.

- Incorporate natural drainage features and follow existing topography and drainage paths wherever possible.

- Include considerations for controlling the quantity of runoff such as detention/retention ponds, construction materials and design techniques that encourage infiltration and/or minimize runoff (Example: porous surfaces for parking lots and walkways, narrower and shorter roads, green roofs).

- Include considerations for the quality of runoff such as source control and treatment best management practices (Example: oil/water separators in parking lots).

- Maintain or reinstate vegetated areas and establish riparian setbacks from existing creeks.

AVOIDING AND/OR MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Although relatively short in duration, the construction stage of resort development has the potential to heavily impact the natural environment (Example: water quality and wildlife habitats). The creation and utilization of an "Environmental Protection Plan" (EPP) can help avoid and mitigate construction related impacts.

The intent is to minimize impacts to the environment (watercourses, vegetation et cetera) during construction. The guidelines are intended to give field crews and contractors direction in conducting works in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Key Challenges

- Ensuring the EPP details all potential environmental impacts during construction.

- Ensure the EPP is updated for all stages of construction – from design stages to final product.

- Ensure all contractors are aware and follow the EPP.

Examples:

Panorama Resort

An Environmental Management System was developed for the Panorama Resort golf course development. The guidelines provided contractors direction in constructing their project in an environmentally sensitive manner. The guidelines were developed to preserve as much of the aquatic and riparian habitat on site as possible and included goals of tree preservation, preservation of the natural environment, avoiding negative impacts to surrounding habitats, and achieving high levels of environmental quality associated with the development of the site. An Environmental Construction Plan was created to address mitigation of potential impact to aquatic and riparian habitat and protection of nesting avians by reducing disturbance caused by construction.

Intrawest Peaks Residential Development, Whistler

The Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Intrawest Peaks residential development in Whistler provides guidelines for conducting construction works in an environmentally responsible manner while preserving water quality and wildlife habitat. Goals of the EMP included maximizing tree preservation areas, enhancing the natural environment as a part of post construction restoration, and minimizing negative impacts to surrounding lands and waters.

Other Technical References

Chilibeck, Barry, Geoff Chislett, and Gary Norris (MELP and DFO). 1993. *Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat.* BC Environment, and BC Ministry Environment, Lands and Parks, Integrated Management Branch.

BC Ministry of Environment. 2005. *Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia – DRAFT.*
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/urban_ebmp/urban_ebmp.html

BC Ministry of Environment. 2004. *Approved Water Quality Guidelines.*
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wat/wq/BCguidelines/approved.html

BC Ministry of Environment. 2004. *Working Water Quality Guidelines.*
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wat/wq/BCguidelines/working.html

BC Ministry of Environment. 2004. *Integrated Pest Management Manual for Structural Pests in British Columbia* http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/ipm/docs/tablcont.html .

BC Ministry of Environment. March 2004. *Standards and Best Practices for Instream Works.*
http://Wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/iswstdsbpsmarch2004.pdf .

Environment Canada. 2004. *Canadian Water Quality Guidelines.* http://www.ec.gc.ca/CEQG-RCQE/English/Ceqg/Water/default.cfm   .

Province of British Columbia. 2004. *Schedule 4 – Generic Numerical Soil Standards, Environmental Management Act – Contaminated Sites Regulation.* Queen's Printer, Victoria, BC.
http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/E/EnvMgmt/EnvMgmt375_96/EnvMgmt375_96Sch4.pdf

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- It is the developer's role to produce an Environmental Protection Plan specific for the resort and to ensure all subcontractors adhere to it. Local government and provincial government representatives will have input into the content of the plan and will review it for completeness as part of the development approval or tenure licensing processes. Government representatives may also conduct periodic checks to ensure compliance with the plan.

- The EPP should refer to all matters related to the protection of the environment (site specific) and should include (but not limited to) protection of streams and watercourses, protection of air and water quality, protection of wildlife and wildlife habitats, protection of vegetation, protection of social, cultural and historic resources and site restoration.

- A qualified environmental professional may be required to monitor construction activities.

- The developer must obtain all applicable construction permits – soil removal and deposition permit, tree preservation / tree cutting permits.

- Ensure all contractors comply with permit conditions.

Notes:

STAGE IV – IMPLEMENTATION AND ONGOING OPERATIONS

Introduction

Agreements and proposals achieved through Stage III have ramifications for the ongoing operation of the resort and must be revisited regularly. While building and developing the resort may seem like the end of the process, this stage begins a whole new process – the successful operation and financial growth of the resort destination, which includes:

- "preparation and implementation of an aggressive sales and marketing campaign;
- recruitment, training, and retention of staff;
- provision of services per negotiated agreements;
- organization and management of each operating department (for a large scale resort);
- continuing control and reduction of operating costs and expenses; and
- generation of profits, maintenance of facilities, and enhancement of the resort's image."[3]

The strength and success of a resort depends on its expertise, planning, inclusion, and ability to adapt to maintain a competitive advantage and conserve its natural surroundings – which is the primary attractor for visitors in British Columbia. Competing resorts will also recognize the intrinsic values associated with environmental protection and stewardship while striving to achieve market differentiation for their efforts.

Destination marketing tools range from resort marketing associations to resort chain central reservation services. Once operational, a resort will continually assess market demand, identify emerging and target markets, refine the brand and selling proposition for the resort, produce a variety of festivals and events to attract visitors and lengthen stay, and research emerging market and service trends in the resort and tourism industry.

Key considerations in sustainable operations of a resort

❑ Human Relations
- Seasonal employee retention strategy
- Employee-guest relations
- Conflict management
- Recruitment
- Training / certification strategy
- Management training and promotion strategies
- Employee housing and transportation strategy
- Scheduling and supervision
- Guest services, health and safety parameters

❑ Operational estimates
- Room capacity estimates
- Average room rate by season
- Allowances, discounts, partner promotion rates
- Food and beverages
- Local suppliers for food, beverage, repairs
- Estimated sales volume
- Reservations and sales

❑ Green technologies and recycling activities
- Laundry, sanitation
- Energy, water use
- Guest recycling
- Environmental principles

❑ Income streams and costs
- Accommodation mixed revenue (such as room, timeshares, real estate sales and strata fees)
- Other revenue sources related to services and amenities
- Salary, wages, other employee costs
- Facility maintenance, other capital, service expenses
- Government taxes, permit fees
- Liability insurance, legal fees
- Marketing, promotions

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[3] Chuck Y. Gee. Resort Development and Management (2nd edition). Education Institute, American Hotel and Lodging Association, Michigan, 1996 pps. 120-121.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

The natural environment is one of the prime elements drawing people to visit resorts, therefore resorts should be leaders in implementing energy efficiency techniques and increasing the use of renewable energy sources within their operations to conserve natural resources and minimize their impact on the environment. Environmental and social responsibility is increasingly important to consumers, employees and shareholders and that responsibility can be converted into market advantage. Strong efforts should be made to demonstrate that the resort strives for sustainability.

Energy conservation can take many forms, whether it is southern orientation of glass-faced buildings, geothermal heat pumps as heat sources for buildings, power systems management software, load shedding monitoring equipment and state of the art lighting and control, or simply the use of compact fluorescent lamps in hallways and corridors. The desired outcome should be that the main design philosophy behind the resort will be one employing an "energy conscious" approach.

Key Challenges

- Recognizing the value in sustainability through conservation and adopting philosophies, such as full cost accounting that promote sustainability.

- Recognizing the downstream effects all conservation measures (water conservation, waste reduction) play in energy conservation and sustainability.

Examples:

Whistler Blackcomb

2004 improvements at Whistler Blackcomb (advanced energy controls) and Panorama Mountain Village (automatic heating and ventilation) reduce energy use and chairlift operating costs.

Sun Rivers Golf Resort Community - Kamloops

Sun Rivers Golf Resort Community, Kamloops successfully adopted geothermal technology for the heating and cooling requirements of the entire community.

Fairmont Hotels and Resorts

Fairmont Hotels and Resorts received the "Power Smart Certified" designation from BC Hydro recognizing exceptional achievements and commitment to energy efficiency. Fairmont Hot Springs Resort incorporates features to conserve water, save energy and protect the natural environment and is designated a "Power Smart Green Hotel".

Other Technical References:

BC Hydro Power Smart – http://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/

Terasen Gas – www.terasengas.com

Green Buildings BC – http://www.greenbuildingsbc.com/new_buildings/resources_guide/

Canada Green Building Council – http://www.cagbc.ca

Sustainability Now (APEGBC) – http://www.sustainability.ca

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Adopt an "energy conscious" or "energy conservation" philosophy from day one. These would include the principles of sustainability.

- Consider micro-climates and outdoor comfort in the orientation of buildings.

- Strategic placement of trees and landscape structures can modify solar penetration and wind patterns. Adopt building and subdivision design guidelines that maximize solar aspect and exposure.

- Meet or exceed energy efficient standards in new construction or retrofits by specifying energy efficient heating systems, fixtures and appliances. Consider Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines (Green Buildings) for resort building design.

- Incorporate natural daylighting in buildings, appropriate window design and form.

- Utilize power systems management software, load shedding monitoring equipment and state of the art lighting and control technology as prominent features of systems design.

- Utilize existing programs (such as BC Hydro Power Smart) to facilitate the implementation of newer technologies which reduce energy consumption.

- Embrace public education programs, which promote efficient energy use.

- Incorporate water conservation, waste reduction strategies and other methods which result in downstream energy savings (Example: utilize full cost accounting).

- Consider alternative heating or energy sources (geothermal or IPP).

TOURIST INFORMATION AND CENTRAL RESERVATION CENTRES

Tourist information centres provide a comprehensive one-stop information service for resort visitors to enhance their enjoyment of their visit. In some condo-style hotel properties, there may not be a front desk or check in service. The Tourist Information Centre can act as a central check-in point for arriving visitors. Central reservation services provide an important distribution channel for resort accommodation and activities. They are particularly important for first time visitors to the resort who do not have a history with, or loyalty to one specific provider. The ultimate aim is to provide a friendly and convenient provision of information and reservations to facilitate the purchase of the resort's product offerings and increase overall visitation and satisfaction levels.

Key Challenges

- Visitor Information Centres typically require financial subsidies since the sale of activities on a commission basis provides a modest revenue stream, but is generally insufficient to cover the costs of staffing the facility.

- The broadest representation of products and services available at the resort is desirable both from a revenue generation perspective and to provide guests using the service with complete information. However, the advent of the internet as a distribution channel has made it easier for businesses to opt out of

participating in a Central Reservations service.

- Central Reservations services are difficult to staff particularly in more remote areas and require specialized skills and training for management and staff.

- Sophisticated Central Reservations technologies are prohibitively expensive and require a massive volume of transactions to amortize the costs of software development. This frequently necessitates the use of packaged software that is generally deficient in some manner relative to the user's requirements.

- Once a critical volume of reservations is reached and the operation approaches breakeven, competitive reservations services that do not have the cost burden of also providing general resort information are likely to appear and capture market share.

- Stakeholders need to recognize that a central reservations service will ultimately only capture a small percentage of total resort reservations and will likely only be modestly successful on a financial basis. However, it will fulfil an important role as an objective source of information, particularly for first time visitors.

Examples:

Tourism Vancouver Visitor Information Services

Tourism Vancouver Visitor Information Services – all staff are trained to sell activities and accommodations. Business relationships have been negotiated with transportation and events companies to further increase revenues and reduce operating subsidy.

Whistler Central Reservations

Whistler Central Reservations reviewed all fulfillment vehicles available in the marketplace and outsourced the provision of fulfillment services to a third party provider, while still maintaining ownership and control over the customer database. The outsourcing is transparent to the caller or website visitor.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Central Reservations Services and Visitor Information Centres are planned for early in the resort's infrastructure design. Ongoing operations are typically managed either by the resort owner, a Resort Association, Business Improvement Area or in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce.

- Secure rights to use the intuitive "url" for the destination (Example: "whistler.com").

- Offer a unified call to action for the destination so as not to confuse the marketplace and to create a critical mass of reservations necessary to support financial investment in infrastructure, technology and staffing.

- Identify and prioritize the requirements for a central reservations system. Review currently available packaged software against prioritized requirements and select the most suitable package.

- Minimize the customization of software to ensure ease of maintenance and upgrading.

- If one unified call to action is not possible, operate at least one reservation service within the resort that is locally owned and representative of the broad range of resort accommodation and activity offerings.

- Consider outsourcing the staffing of this reservations service if suitable management and staff are not available locally.

- Maximize use of web-based fulfillment to reduce cost of printing and mailing collateral. Offer web-based reservations.

- Offer integrated packages including accommodations and activities.

- Locate the Visitor Information Centre in a high traffic, easily accessible location.

- Train staff to offer professional, friendly service and to be exceptionally knowledgeable regarding the resort product.

- Offer resort concierge service, village hosts and mountain hosts – easily identified individuals available to answer visitor questions knowledgeably.

- Offer interactive kiosks to assist guests in locating their destination.

- Within Visitor Information Centre, train staff to up-sell accommodations and activities on a commission basis in order to reduce/eliminate operating deficit.

- Partner with other organizations inside the Visitor Information Centre (Example: foreign exchange, last minute tickets to events et cetera in return for a rights fee and percentage of gross revenue).

ROLE OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Festivals and events enhance market awareness of a resort destination, generate animation and interest for guests visiting the resort, and create motivation for repeat visits. Festivals and events are used to generate visits throughout the year and can be particularly effective to attract incremental visitation during shoulder seasons.

Incremental visitation and the building of loyalty to a resort destination is the desired goal.

Key Challenges

- The creation of unique, "signature" events that are competitively distinct and that support the overall brand message of the resort in the marketplace.

- Initial production of festivals/events may require three to five years of subsidies before the event itself is popular enough to be self-financing although spin-off benefits from incremental visitation will accrue immediately.

- Corporate sponsorship of a specific event may be in conflict with other sponsorships in place or contemplated.

Examples:

Aspen Food and Wine Festival

Aspen Food and Wine Festival sponsored by *Food & Wine Magazine* brings significant profile to Aspen and is an example of a signature event.

Cornucopia – Whistler Celebration of Food and Wine

Cornucopia – Whistler's Celebration of Food and Wine brings visitors to Whistler in early November, when there is typically no other reason to visit the resort.

World Ski and Snowboard Festival - Whistler

World Ski and Snowboard Festival – Whistler has effectively extended the ski season to the end of April each year and has generated significant incremental visitation

Other Technical References:

Food and Wine Classic in Aspen www.foodandwine.com/classic

Whistler Wine and Food Celebration Cornucopia www.whistlercornucopia.com

Telus World Ski and Snowboard Festival www.wssf.com

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Successful festivals and events require the involvement of many stakeholders throughout the resort. The idea may originate with one party, but will require the active support of local government (permits, security, emergency services et cetera), the Resort Association (if any), local businesses and the resort operator to succeed.

- Consider potential festival concepts early in visioning stage and provide for necessary infrastructure to support production of events.

- Create a limited number of signature events that are consistent with the resort brand (rather than multiple small events), while still programming a continual level of animation through the use of street performers, displays, et cetera.

- Establish a central agency for coordinating festivals and events that works closely with independent event producers as well as potentially producing its own events.

- Set clear goals and objectives for the festival/event and quantifiable measure results.

- Constantly innovate and renew the event with new components every year.

- Involve local constituencies in the creation of the event through an Advisory Council.

- Involve leading experts to keep event at the forefront of its field.

- Involve a media partner to maximize market penetration and profile. Create news value to obtain media coverage.

- Secure sponsorship to assist with financial investment. Ensure sponsors are compatible with and support the resort brand.

- Use events to extend the busy season.

- Shoulder season events are an opportunity to involve local and regional population.

ROLE OF CONFERENCE FACILITIES

Conference facilities provide an opportunity to diversify a resort's portfolio of business by adding business travelers to the market mix. The prime season for meetings is spring and fall, typically shoulder seasons for many resorts. The inclusion of conference and meeting facilities can assist a resort in moving toward a four-season operation. Meetings may also be secured in the summer and winter thereby reducing dependence on leisure travelers. Conference facilities or shared meeting space can support the smaller lodging properties which usually do not have their own integral meeting facilities thereby opening this market segment to properties that would not otherwise be able to participate.

The benefits include incremental visitation and spending by conference attendees and a diversified portfolio of business to manage overall resort risk profile.

Key Challenges

- Conference facilities are typically loss leaders to secure spin-off economic impacts of spending on accommodation, meals, transportation, retail et cetera and therefore may not offer a return on capital investment suitable to attract private investors. Consequently, most conference facilities require some form of public investment.

- In smaller resorts, shared meeting facilities can provide similar benefits, however, since conference delegates are adverse to lengthy travel times, the ease of access to the resort is of critical importance.

Examples:

Telus Whistler Conference Centre

Telus Whistler Conference Centre generates significant visitation in traditional shoulder seasons and is financed in part through the 2% hotel tax.

Keystone Conference Centre

Keystone Conference Centre has significantly diversified the business base in Keystone and generates visitation in the shoulder season.

Other Technical References:

Keystone Conferences http://keystone.snow.com/keystoneconventions/

Meetings Incentive: Whistler's Official Meetings Site http://www.whistlermeetings.com/

Meetings, Conventions and Travel Incentive http://www.canadameetings.com/mcit/app/en/us/home.do

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The construction of a conference facility is typically led by the resort developer in cooperation with a Resort Association, if one exists. Local government plays an important role in providing zoning for a suitable site and all levels of government may be requested to consider a capital contribution to the construction of the facility to support the broader economic benefits that arise to the business community.

- Assess market potential associated with offering meeting facilities bearing in mind sensitivity to travel times and ease of access to the resort.

- Identify target market whose conference needs are most suited to resort product such as association meetings versus corporate meetings versus incentive travel.

- Ensure the bed base suited to needs of the target market exists in appropriate quantity and quality.

- If the market potential exists and the bed base is suitable, secure commitment for funding and construct conference/meeting facilities tailored to target market.

- Consider public/private partnership to generate needed capital (Vancouver Convention Centre expansion) or shared use of other resort facilities (The Copper Mountain Daylodge is designed for use as a conference centre outside of the ski season).

- Invest in sales and marketing effort and building of relationships with meeting planners.

- Target business that meets in shoulder seasons.

- Leverage resources of destination marketing agencies, provincial and national tourism bodies to attract business (Example: Canadian Tourism Commission).

- Offer outstanding service in particular food and beverage experience for delegates to ensure repeat bookings.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

The cost of marketing to an existing customer and securing their repeat visitation is significantly lower than continually securing new customers. The goal is to create a base of loyal customers that repeatedly visit the resort and also act as ambassadors in the target market thereby attracting new clientele.

Key Challenges

- Creating unique offerings that have value for a customer and will secure their loyalty.

- Gaining "top of mind" awareness with your customer amongst the myriad of loyalty programs in the marketplace.

- Recognizing that repeat visitation requires true value in the customer's mind – outstanding service is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for loyalty.

- Tailoring these offerings based upon value patterns in the customer base to avoid creating myriads of individual offerings that cannot be managed cost effectively.

- Executing these offerings "in resort" in a seamless manner that delivers on the promised experience and builds the desired loyalty.

- Securing appropriate technology that achieves Customer Relationship Management objectives at a reasonable cost – simple solutions are often forgotten in the maze of software options.

- Adequately addressing privacy concerns of customers associated with database use and management.

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Examples:

Amzaon.com

Amazon.com leads best practices in Customer Relationship Management by providing tailored information to their customers and special offers designed to promote repeat purchase. Book or music suggestions are offered that are in keeping with identified preferences of customers, newsletters highlight special offers, price and service meet and exceed customer expectations.

Intrawest Corp

Intrawest Corp has established a dedicated department for Customer Relationship Management led by a Vice-President, that creates initiatives to promote return visitation to the same or another resort within the Intrawest family.

Other Technical References:

www.crmmagazine.com

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The responsibility for customer relationship management typically resides with either the resort operator or the Resort Association, if established. All business operators and local government, to the extent it contributes to the provision of services, maintenance of infrastructure, et cetera, contribute to the guest experience in the resort and ultimately to their perception of value and willingness to return.

- Engage in primary research to understand customer values.

- Build and update a database of past and potential customers at every opportunity.

- Create unique offerings that address this definition of value for identified segments of the customer base.

- Monitor customer perceptions of value on an ongoing basis through in-resort surveys and in-market tools such as focus groups, web-based surveys.

- Consolidate multiple databases and coordinate the approach to the market to ensure that a multiplicity of offers from the resort do not arise and confuse the marketplace.

- Identify all the "touch points" with your customer and actively monitor interactions at these points.

- Allow everyone in the resort to work as a team and share information about customers rather than keep separate databases.

- Provide everyone in the resort with up-to-date customer information.

- Establish Visitor Information Centres to increase customer returns and length of visits.

ONGOING MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Ongoing market research and analysis enables a resort to identify changing market trends and to respond quickly to those trends in order to preserve/enhance market share, visitation and associated revenues.

In depth knowledge of customer trends, demographics, psychographics and the implications of these trends is important for product development, for marketing and sales efforts and for the ongoing delivery of the guest experience.

Key Challenges

- Since it is difficult to identify a direct correlation between an investment in market research and visitation levels, research is often foregone in favour of more tangible advertising and sales programs. However, without this ongoing research effort, expenditures on marketing and sales programs can easily be misdirected and may not generate the anticipated results.

Examples:

Tourism Whistler

Tourism Whistler annually spends approximately 5% of its marketing budget on market research. Large research projects are partnered with Tourism British Columbia and/or the Canadian Tourism Commission.

Other Technical References:

Tourism BC http://www.tourismbc.com/

Canadian Tourism Commission http://www.canadatourism.com

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The responsibility for conducting ongoing market research typically resides with either the resort operator or the Resort Association, if established. Tourism British Columbia offers market research services which may assist the industry in developing an understanding of its target markets.

- Invest in market research regularly to identify changing market trends using focus groups, internet database surveys and other tools.

- Solicit feedback from current guests with friendly in room or in resort surveys.

- Keep a core of survey questions constant year over year to permit trend analysis.

- Use collective marketing funds (managed through a Destination Marketing Organization) to commission research projects that will benefit all businesses in the resort.

- Leverage significant research projects with Regional, Provincial and National tourism bodies to subsidize costs to resort.

FUNDING MODELS FOR RESORT MARKETING

Throughout the various stages of resort development and ongoing operation, and particularly in the early years, marketing and sales budgets may prove insufficient to generate target market awareness quickly. Funding models for resort marketing consider opportunities for joint marketing that create a critical mass of funds that will have a larger and more immediate response in the marketplace.

It is desirable to create a funding model for resort marketing that effectively leverages individual marketing and sales budgets, and delivers results to the resort measured in increased visitation.

Key Challenges

- Multiple potential stakeholders with different and potentially conflicting objectives and needs that must be accommodated within the mandate and governance structure of the resort marketing model.

Examples:

Whistler Resort Association

Whistler Resort Association (Tourism Whistler) has mandatory membership model for all owners of designated "Resort Land" in close proximity to the commercial core of the village.

Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Association

The Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Association (Tourism Sun Peaks) operates in a similar fashion to Whistler.

Other Technical References:

Ministry of Community Services *Mountain Resort Associations Act*
http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/gov_structure/mountain/index.htm

Tourism Whistler http://www.tourismwhistler.com/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The creation of a Resort Association or Business Improvement Area is often led by the resort developer since it is critically important to have the organization and assessing mechanisms in place prior to the first land sale so as not to create two categories of owners. The Provincial government is responsible for processing applications to create a Mountain Resort Association while the local, regional governments and the community at large should be supportive of its creation and willing to participate in its governance.

- Create a destination marketing body with mandatory assessments (quasi-taxing authority) from the broadest base of interests. (Note: A Mountain Resort Association may be created as soon as a mountain resort area is established, where 50% of the landowners representing at least one-half of the net taxable values within the mountain resort area, sign and present a petition to the Minister.)

- Develop bylaws of the Resort Association to ensure that the selection of representatives on the Board of Directors results in a balance of power and does not allow one sector's interests to dominate decision-making.

- For new resorts, create the destination marketing organization before any land is sold to third parties, so that mandatory participation in the resort association can be placed on title to the land.

- Have a variety of stable and dependable sources of funding – hotel tax, membership fees, profit centres to permit multi-year commitments to various marketing investments.

- Understand stakeholder needs, create programs to address these needs and communicate with stakeholders regularly and effectively.

- Monitor the program results frequently and adjust quickly to market response.

EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYEE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The experience of the guest leading to favourable word of mouth, repeat visits and loyalty is directly affected by their interaction with front line employees in a resort. The visitor does not differentiate between businesses when having a "good" or "bad" experience – rather these moments of truth reflect on the reputation of the entire resort. Therefore, the establishment of service standards and training and skills development programs are important tools for achieving consistently excellent guest interactions.

All parties in the resort benefit when a visitor's resort experience consistently supports the brand promise made to guests and generates positive and memorable experiences.

Key Challenges

- Agreement on service standards within and amongst organizations interacting with guests.

- Consistent execution of a seamless guest experience when resort businesses are owned/operated by individual entrepreneurs.

- High employee turnover requiring frequent training.

- General shortage of suitable labour in remote locations.

Examples:

Whistler/Blackcomb

Whistler/Blackcomb uses web-based recruiting for seasonal employees, thereby permitting potential employees to apply for jobs prior to making the journey to the resort.

Whistler/Blackcomb has embraced the vibrancy of the youth culture in their staff and provides frequent opportunities for its staff to celebrate "Whistler" style. In addition, considerable staff housing is provided, with a focus on first season recruits who are less familiar with the housing market and require more assistance "settling in".

Whistler Golf Club

Summer workers at the Whistler Golf Club are often employed on-mountain during the winter thereby creating year round employment opportunities.

Whistler Spirit Program

The Whistler Spirit Program provides discounted season passes to employees who participate in an annual service training/resort orientation program. Employees are only eligible if they

complete the training and if their employer has participated in the annual Spirit Lunch where a motivational speaker is engaged to educate the participants on the importance of outstanding guest service.

Whistler Chamber of Commerce

The Whistler Chamber of Commerce hosts an annual Employee Recognition event with highly valued rewards (Example: mountain bike) for winners.

Go2

Go2 is an independent organization created in 2003 to support tourism operators in hiring and keeping skilled staff. The website http://www.Go2hr.ca/ provides information and resources for employers on a wide range of recruitment, retention, management and training issues. Go2 also works on long-term strategic initiatives including industry research, a campaign to improve the public perception of working in tourism, industry career awareness activities, and works with educators to ensure graduates have the skills industry seeks.

Walt Disney World

Walt Disney offers a constant holiday experience to guests around the world and places high importance on hiring and retaining employees. Disney's employees work under the motto "Work while others play". Prospective employees undergo a screening process that includes a video highlighting responsibilities and expectations and is effective in weeding out passionate from uninterested employees.

Disney also benefits from the belief in "hiring for the right attitude and then train for the skills". Disney managers realize that if a person is passionate and has the right attitude, they can train the individual in the needed skills set.

Boca Raton Resort

The Boca Raton Resort in Florida, U.S.A. partnered with the American Hotel and Motel Association to provide educational opportunities to newly hired staff. Through the program people can take advantage of a wide variety of hospitality courses including accounting, serving, food and beverage. Resort managers with practical experience within the hospitality field teach the courses providing an applied learning experience. Employees can receive their diplomas in Hospitality Management which increases their skill sets and competencies.

Other Technical References:

Whistler/Blackcomb http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com/index.htm
Whistler Chamber http://www.whistlerchamberofcommerce.com/
Workforce Management http://www.workforce.com/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Resort operators generally lead the development and roll out of employee training programs. The local Chamber of Commerce often serves as the "umbrella" organization to address the collective needs of resort businesses with regard to employee skill development.

- Create a memorable experience for employees that in turn allows their contagious enthusiasm for the resort product to spread to guests.

- Offer fair wage, affordable housing and other programs to mitigate the typically high cost of living in remote and/or resort settings.

- Co-ordinate seasonal job opportunities to create year round employment in order to improve staff retention rates.

- Consider a central employment agency, on-line job fairs, and in-resort job fairs as recruiting vehicles.

- Develop a resort wide training program that is available to the staff of all employers and use meaningful benefits to encourage participation from both employers and employees.

- Recognize and reward outstanding performance on a regular basis.

PRELIMINARY GOVERNANCE MODELS – Form of Local Government

As a resort grows it may evolve into a resort community with permanent residents who demand higher levels and quality of services (or different services) than those provided by the resort operator to tourists.

A framework that will provide local government services to the resort as it grows will help ease transition. Forms of local government in British Columbia are discussed in the report *Transitions: Planning, Servicing, and Local Governance in BC's Resort Communities.*

Key Challenges

- Establishing a structure that can evolve as the resort grows.

- Keeping administrative costs low while providing sophisticated levels of service.

- Voter eligibility – second home owners often have no voting rights as their primary residence is out of province.

Examples:

Sun Peaks Resort

Sun Peaks Resort Mountain Improvement District was created to provide specific local government services such as fire protection, utilities, snow clearing and parks maintenance to the resort community of Sun Peaks. Other local government services are provided by the Thompson Nicola Regional District.

Regional District of North Okanagan

The Regional District of North Okanagan has established a Governance Committee consisting of representatives from Silver Star Resort, the regional district and local residents to study future governance options for Silver Star.

Regional District of East Kootenay

Through a Local Service Area, the Regional District of East Kootenay provides fire protection to Fernie Alpine Resort, by contracting with the nearby City of Fernie to deliver the service.

Resort Municipality of Whistler Act

In 1975, the provincial legislature passed the *Resort Municipality of Whistler Act* to facilitate development of the ski resort. The *Act* granted to the residents of the area a unique combination of local government and, through later amendments in 1979, resort association powers. This enabling legislation is seen to be one of the key elements to the world class success of Whistler.

Other Technical References:

CitySpaces Consulting Ltd. And Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners Ltd. *TRANSITIONS: Planning, Servicing and Local Governance in BC's Resort Communities*, November 2004 http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/resortdev/cabinet/best_practices_transitions_report.pdf

A Guide to British Columbia's Mountain Resort Associations Act. http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/gov_structure/mountain/

Mountain Resort Associations Act   http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/M/96320_01.htm

Ministry of Community Services. *Guide to Regional Service Arrangements and Regional Service Reviews*, 2001 www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/pol_research/lgadvice/rsguide.html

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- The Provincial Government, through the Ministry of Community Services can provide guidance and expertise on various governance models, if required. Local and/or regional governments may be joint participants in governance studies and will need to ensure the proposed governance model provides the best fit with their existing and future plans for service provision. Local governments may create Local Service Areas to provide higher levels of service to a resort area.

- Determine if it is likely or desirable that the resort development will result in the creation of a new resort community with permanent or semi-permanent residents.

- Identify long term governance and service requirements and explore the various available options for provision of each service. Include consultation with other resorts, local governments, and the Ministry of Community Services.

- Develop a governance and service delivery model to be included in the resort master plan.

- Prepare appropriate establishing/constating documents for the governance framework whether legislative, corporate or through covenants on title and related common law tools.

- A periodic (5 to 10 year) review of the governance model (including public input) to determine if additional requirements or adjustments should be included in any resort enabling documentation.

- Resort developer should ensure the appropriate tools for governance are in place before proceeding with property sales to third parties.

FINANCIAL TOOLS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN RESORT COMMUNITIES

Resort communities need to provide services to a large and seasonally variable transient visitor population. However, in British Columbia most local government services, infrastructure and the ongoing operating funds for maintenance, and operation in resort communities are funded primarily through property taxes collected from a relatively small resident population. Funding allocations from the province for other services such as medical facilities are based on this small permanent population, although these facilities must also provide emergency care to the large transient visitor population. If the resort is highly seasonal (Example: summer resorts), this burden is more pronounced as the community must "over-invest" in infrastructure to meet peak period demands.

Sufficient financial tools are necessary to allow the resort community to maintain a high standard of quality for public areas and facilities and to provide the infrastructure (water, sewer, emergency services) to cope with a large influx of visitors during peak occupancy periods while still maintaining a level of affordability for local residents and businesses.

Key Challenges

- Increases in user fees or sales taxes may put the resort at a competitive disadvantage if the overall cost to the guest increases beyond the level of competing destinations.

- Property tax revenues tend to have a sluggish rate of growth while the demands for services and infrastructure grow rapidly in new resort communities.

Examples:

Colorado

Many resorts in Colorado collect a Real Estate Transfer Tax that is levied on most real estate sales transactions. In Aspen, this tax is used to fund resident housing. In Vail, it is used to purchase space for parks, construct recreational facilities and general maintenance. Telluride uses proceeds from this tax for capital projects.

Many resort communities in Colorado collect a general sales (consumption) tax. Vail has a general sales tax of 4.0% that generates approximately 45% of its revenues. Telluride collects over 28% of its revenues from a 4.5% general sales tax and Aspen gets over 25% of its revenues from a 2.2% general sales tax.

Province of Quebec

The Province of Quebec has provided over $100 million in infrastructure grants for development at Mont Tremblant.

Resort Municipality of Whistler

The Resort Municipality of Whistler receives the 2% additional hotel room tax collected on short-term accommodation. This tax generates about $3.5 million annually, and is used to fund tourist related services such as free transit in the village, Tourism Whistler, village maintenance and visitor related capital projects.

The Resort Municipality Of Whistler collects Development Cost Charges (DCCs) for Employee Housing and Recreation Facilities.

Other Technical References:

MCS *Development Cost Charges: Best Practices Guide*, October 2000
http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/irpd/growth/PUBLICATIONS/dccguide.pdf

Canada West Foundation. *Whistler and the World: The Funding of Ski Resort Municipalities*, 2002

KPMG. Economic Impact of the Whistler Resort, prepared for Tourism Whistler and Whistler One, 2002

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- Institute development cost charges to allow local government to collect fees from developers to offset some of the costs of infrastructure which must be constructed to service new development. For most communities in British Columbia, DCCs are limited to capital funding for roads, drainage, sewers, water mains and parks. However, the *Mountain Resort Associations Act*, gives a municipality which contains a designated "mountain resort area" the ability to collect DCC's for services other than those specified in the *Local Government Act*.

- Local governments should explore public/private partnerships with the lead developer and public/public partnerships with the Province to fund certain resort-related infrastructure.

CONSIDERATION OF A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK / MODEL

The long term success of a resort development and the overall health of the community within which it resides depend upon a collective ability to not systematically undermine the biological and human systems upon which all rely. A framework for sustainability provides guidance to monitor improvements or declines in these essential biological and human systems – it is a compass to assist making decisions that support long-term resort viability.

A broadly accepted framework used consistently by the community as a tool to assess the long term impacts of resort development and operating decisions on the economic, social and environmental conditions for success is an important asset.

Key Challenges

▪ An objective, science based framework with broad acceptance to ensure the guidance provided truly moves the resort towards long term success.

Examples:

Resort Community of Whistler

The Resort Community of Whistler has adopted the Natural Step Framework to guide all its decisions in a manner that moves the community towards long term sustainability. All community planning is vetted against this

framework, in *particular Whistler 2020 – Moving Toward Sustainability* will inform the upcoming review of the Official Community Plan. In addition, all public infrastructure is designed to LEED standard.

Other Technical References:

Whistler 2020: Moving Towards a Sustainable Future
http://www.whistler.ca/files/PDF/Admin/Whistler_2020/RMOW_2020SustainBook.pdf   OR
http://www.whistler.ca/Sustainability/

The Whistler Centre for Sustainability http://www.whistleritsournature.ca/

The Natural Step http://www.naturalstep.org/

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

▪ Adopt the Natural Step framework for sustainability. This framework has the acceptance of the global scientific community as a framework to provide guidance in decision making that assists organizations, business or communities in moving towards sustainability in their operations.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BCHSSOA	British Columbia Helicopter Skiing and Snowcat Skiing Operators Association
CASP	Commercial Alpine Ski Policy
CRA	Controlled Recreation Area
DCC	Development Cost Charge
DTM	Digital Terrain Model
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
ENGO	Environmental Non-Government Organization
EPP	Environmental Protection Plan
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
LEED Guidelines	Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
LRUP	Local Resource Use Plan
MCS	BC Ministry of Community Services
MDA	Master Development Agreement
MTSA	BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts
OCP	Official Community Plan
PEM	Predictive Ecosystem Mapping
PSP	Preliminary Servicing Plan
RDMO	Regional Destination Marketing Organization
RISC	Resource Information Standards Committee
RSWMP	Regional Solid Waste Management Plan
SRMP	Sustainable Resource Management Plan
TAC Guide	Transportation Association of Canada Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads
TEM	Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping
TRIM	Terrain Resources Information Mapping
ULF	Ultra Low Flow
VQO	Visual Quality Objectives
WAP	Watershed Assessment Procedure