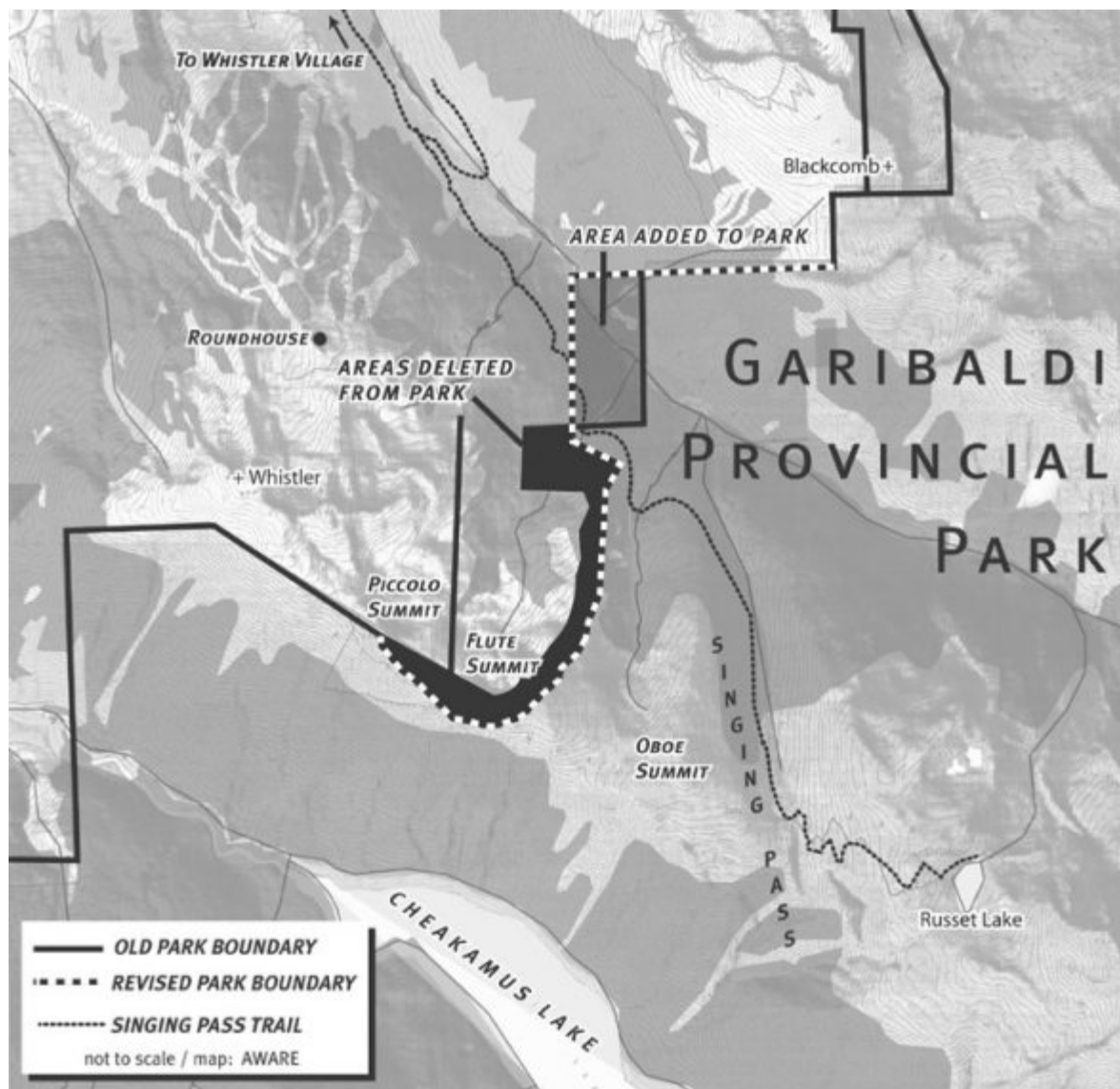


Map of the 2002 land swap between BC Parks and Whistler Mtn

[Back To Discussion List](#)

ArticleId: 1171 Written: 2004.06.18 by: [Mike Peel](#)

Description: I've reposted this map that was produced by AWARE and Bob Brett of The Sea to Sky Parkwatch group :



Comments

2006.04.06 [Scott Nelson](#) Glad to see ACC compromised accepted
I glad to see that the ACC compromise has been accepted. I think it will hold here, since flute is seeing so much hiker traffic now that it's controlled. I think W/B will want to keep the marketing appeal of in bounds backcountry skiing in place. They are after all sponsoring the Backcountry Freeride Jam later this month.

Still, it's still sad to see the park lose so much nice alpine terrain over the year (not just the latest land grab). Given that a land swap seems to be in vogue now, I wonder if it might be possible to petition the government to add new areas to the park in compensation for past park deletions that were outright removals.

2006.04.03 [Mitch Sulkers](#) Sorry, put my comment on ttips. Seemed more of a current discussion forum on ttips, so we posted there.

FWIW, the Whistler Section of the ACC proposed the single lift to the top of Piccolo a couple of years ago as a compromise, and--for the moment--it appears that's what we have.

It's what doesn't appear that seems more problematical. I'd guess that we will eventually see all three lifts in the picture, with another into Oboe Creek for good measure.

The thread is entitled "New Lift at Whistler." I included a short analysis of the probable impacts on the immediate area, without getting into the whole business of Oboe Creek and beyond. Seems the impacts in Flute Basin and Creek alone would (or should) be a reason for concern.

2006.04.02 [Sandra McGuinness](#) Comments from local skiers on new proposed lift? Just bumping this up again to see if any local skiers (I'm not familiar with the area myself) can comment on the new Piccolo lift?

<http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com/piccolo/index.htm>

2004.06.24 [Frank W. Baumann](#) Ski area expansion

First, to be fair, part of the reason for the acquisition of land along the ridge coming down off Flute Peak is to allow this area to be avalanche controlled- but could they not get a Park Use Permit to do this without acquiring any more land?

Second, a key issue here is user conflict. Oboe basin, Cowboy Ridge in the Singing Pass area, etc. are heavily used by-out-of-area skiers and ski mountaineers. A proposal to expand the ski area in this direction exacerbates this conflict with ski tourers.

I do empathize with Intrawest's need to stay competitive and expand into higher alpine terrain. But I believe the expansion should be to the northeast from Blackcomb Glacier, towards Phalanx Glacier. This area is far less used by ski mountaineers, and would provide Intrawest with a European-style high alpine skiing environment. Expanding in this direction would also encroach into park land, but in a less intrusive way than going south towards Singing Pass.

2004.06.23 [Mitch Sulkers](#) Agreed!

During discussions with Intrawest management two years ago, we first held the position that S2S Parkwatch and the Whistler Section of the ACC were categorically against the land swap and losing the Flute Basin and Flute Summit areas from Garibaldi Park. It was clear that Intrawest had no intention of relinquishing the "gift." Management asked for feedback on the proposed lift configuration (two lifts from low in Flute Basin: one to the Flute Summit, the other to the top of Harmony Bowl). We pointed out that we didn't want lifts at all, but that one lift, to the summit of Piccolo, would do the work of two and not compromise the winter and summer experience as much in Flute Basin. Intrawest was not receptive to this suggestion, which appears to support Frank's position. Realistically, a lift to Flute Summit from Flute Basin, with a further lift from deep in Oboe Basin coming back up to Flute Summit, would give Intrawest lift servicing to the height of land just west of Singing Pass. Hmmmmmm.

2004.06.22 [Frank W. Baumann](#) The land grab theory

It should also be noted that a lift to the top of Piccolo, rather than Flute, would allow virtually all the same terrain in Burntstew Basin to be lift-serviced. The fact that the proposed lift will go to the top of Flute Peak is pretty compelling evidence to me that the intention of this proposal is not to provide better skiing in Burntstew Basin, but to start moving the ski area boundary more and more into what is now a pristine part of Garibaldi Park.

2004.06.22 [Steve Grant](#) Original Park Boundaries

I dug out my old "Western Garibaldi Park" map, dated 1967. It shows the Garibaldi Park boundary very different from even recent times.

.. The west boundary used to extend from a point about 1 mile W of the outlet of Cheakamus Lake, north to about 1.5 miles WNW of the site of the Roundhouse. The boundary then turned due E, into Fitzsimmons Creek, where it turned N and went straight to Wedge Creek. So even the Roundhouse and all of Blackcomb above 5000' used to be in the park. .. This bit of unusable land in Fitzsimmons Creek is an insult. I have another, black and white map, also dated 1967, that shows all of Garibaldi Park and the original Golden Ears Park. .. Similar boundary crimes have been visited upon Strathcona Park, Cape Scott, Kokanee (which originally was a square), Tweedsmuir, and on and on. Will they ever have enough?

2004.06.22 [Frank W. Baumann](#) Don't encroach on Garibaldi Park

I have a real problem with this type of economic land grab, er, ah swap. First, trading a piece of beautiful and relatively rare alpine ecosystem that many people would enjoy for a lower valley wooded area that hardly anyone but a lost skier coming down from 7th Heaven would ever bother visiting is hardly a fair trade.

But what really bothers me is the insidious encroachment into one of the most pristine areas of Garibaldi Park that this represents. Now that the land grab is a fait accompli, Intrawest will correctly say that they have a legal right to build a ski lift to the top of Flute. But despite their claims that they will have the Garibaldi equivalent of the Berlin wall to stop hordes of skiers from going into the park and down Oboe Creek, the reality is that this won't happen- every powder hound wannabee will be there.

So my prediction is that Whistler will then say "Good Grief, all those people might get lost and ski down to Fitzsimmons Creek- for safety's sake, we've got to build a proper ski trail back around into Burnstew Basin." Then the next step will be to control this area, make it into a proper ski run, and then before we know it, Oboe Basin becomes part of another land "swap" and the ski area boundary moves to Singing Pass.

Sorry, folks, but this just doesn't cut it- it's a profit-driven and environmentally bankrupt scheme that will cause major user conflicts, and just shouldn't be allowed to happen. Remember- most of Burnstew Basin was once part of the park- the original boundary went almost straight east from near the summit of Whistler Mountain- so in many ways, this current business is all just déjà vu. The "old" boundary shown on the map above isn't the "old" boundary at all- but is a sad reminder of the first land grab.

2004.06.21 [Mitch Sulkers](#) Comments on the Map

For clarification sake, this map was drawn to demonstrate the latest changes in the boundaries of Garibaldi Park and Whistler Mountain Ski Area. The boundaries between both Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain and Garibaldi Park have been changed before, each time adding more area to Whistler/Blackcomb's tenure. This means that the "old" boundaries are really only old in that they reflect the new boundaries of the previous swap.

At the time that this most recent swap was passed as a part of an omnibus bill, Whistler/Blackcomb had argued that this was simply "correcting" an error made by the BC Parks' employees. This was not confirmed to my satisfaction by BC Parks' personnel, though we did ask them to confirm the original agreement. At that time, it appeared that it was proving too difficult to find the people within the system who were involved in the process some years before, although I suppose we could have been a little more tenacious on that point.

The block taken from Garibaldi Park, however, is an interesting and unique area of arboreal alpine meadows (Bob will probably shudder in his sleep at this term), with scattered subalpine fir and beautiful

seep meadows. As it is largely a wet area for the early part of summer and supports blooms that rival Singing Pass for complexity and vigour, I'm still not certain that it was "accidentally" left in park lands when the last swap occurred (especially given the physical characteristics of most Whistler chairlifts during that era in terms of vertical serviced). Since the Whistler management employees who were in charge of negotiating at that time have also moved on, who really knows what the actual agreement at that time was?

The land "added" to the park is land that was not originally--as I understand and recall--Whistler tenure before the previous swap. As it is, it has very little value for a ski area, and would not likely have been used by Intrawest except, possibly, as a right-of-way for a proposed gondola linking Whistler Mountain to Blackcomb Mountain (this was floated out there just after the Whistler-Blackcomb merger was announced, as I recall, and may have been slated for this unusual corridor that goes to valley bottom and then rises up to Blackcomb again). It is old growth forest, but was unlikely to be developed before the swap.

So, as we saw it in 2002, the "swap" involved Intrawest gifting land likely given to Whistler in the previous swap for land that had more park value and uniqueness in Garibaldi Park. As it is, IF LIFTS are not built in the Flute Basin, this area will be less impacted than the it would be by the previously proposed two lift system, but it will still be subject to summer tree felling and the accumulated detritous that our lift-based and backcountry skiers alike truck into the area but do not always remove.

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