



# The Right Balance

Blazing a trail in sustainable housing



## Glacier Creek Contracting

**Owner & General Manager**  
Eric Prall

**Location**  
Whistler, British Columbia

Affordable housing is not easy to find in today's real estate climate, but one British Columbia-based company is making it easy for people to find quality, affordable homes for all sizes and price ranges.

Glacier Creek Contracting, based in Whistler, has three divisions: residential contracting, commercial contracting and insulation services. According to Eric Prall, Owner and General Manager of Glacier Creek, the company's partnership with the Whistler (British Columbia) Housing Authority allows it to place its largest focus on building affordable housing.

"The majority of the work that we do is affordable housing, but when people think of Whistler as a world-class resort town, they don't think about affordable housing," Prall says. "Our history has been in affordable housing, working very closely

with the Whistler Housing Authority to deliver those types of projects."

Building affordable housing is extremely rewarding, but often challenging. Prall says that there is a balance that must be kept between sustainability and affordability.

"It's always a challenge to build affordable housing while trying to incorporate the green and energy efficient components," he says. "There is always a balance that we have to strike there. We can justify modest price increases to the purchasers if we are providing a lower ongoing operational cost for the life of the home, for however long they are going to own it. They'll be able to save on operational costs by us implementing these green initiatives."

### CURRENT PROJECTS

Glacier Creek currently has several projects underway, each of which promises to deliver quality, affordable housing while keeping a strong commitment to green initiatives.

One of these projects, made possible through Glacier Creek's partnership with the Whistler Housing Authority, is the Glacier Duplexes at Rainbow. Scheduled for completion in the spring of 2012, this \$35 million project has an impressive focus on sustainability. It earned a Built Green Gold rating with an Energuide 80 thanks to its solar panels for hot water and triple-pane windows, and drain waste heat recovery. Some of the units have a Built Green Platinum rating with an Energuide 82. The housing will also benefit from upgraded spray foam insulation throughout all units and heat recovery ventilators.

**These homes are approaching the higher end and will also be green with triple-glazed windows and spray foam insulation, as well as in-floor radiant heat, hardwood floors throughout and high-end appliances.**

-Eric Prall

Another project in Whistler, the WedgeWoods, is set to have its first two homes complete by summer of 2012. Construction is occurring in phases, the first of which focuses on the development of the first 13 of 108 total units. The homes are slightly larger and therefore more expensive than the Glacier Duplexes homes, but feature the same commitment to green initiatives.

"These homes are approaching the higher end and will also be green with triple-glazed windows and spray foam insulation, as well as in-floor radiant heat, hardwood floors throughout and high-end appliances," Prall says. "It's a little bit different from some of the things we've been doing, but we want to get our foot into that higher-end market and see where it goes."

Equally, The Maples at Fintrey Park in Squamish also recently broke ground. The 54-acre subdivision will be comprised of approximately 170 homes, along with an already-existing 27 acres of green space in the area that will be incorporated into the project.

"The green space is primarily adjacent property, which is part of an awesome recreation center in Squamish," Prall says. "It's got multiple soccer fields, baseball fields and a swimming pool. With the development being directly adjacent to it, we see that as a major selling feature. It's a place where young people can ride their bikes over and take advantage of these facilities."

Prall believes that the subdivision will attract a lot of buyers from the nearby mainland due to its proximity to outstanding recreation opportunities and general beauty. This attraction made it important for Glacier Creek to provide affordable housing in the area.

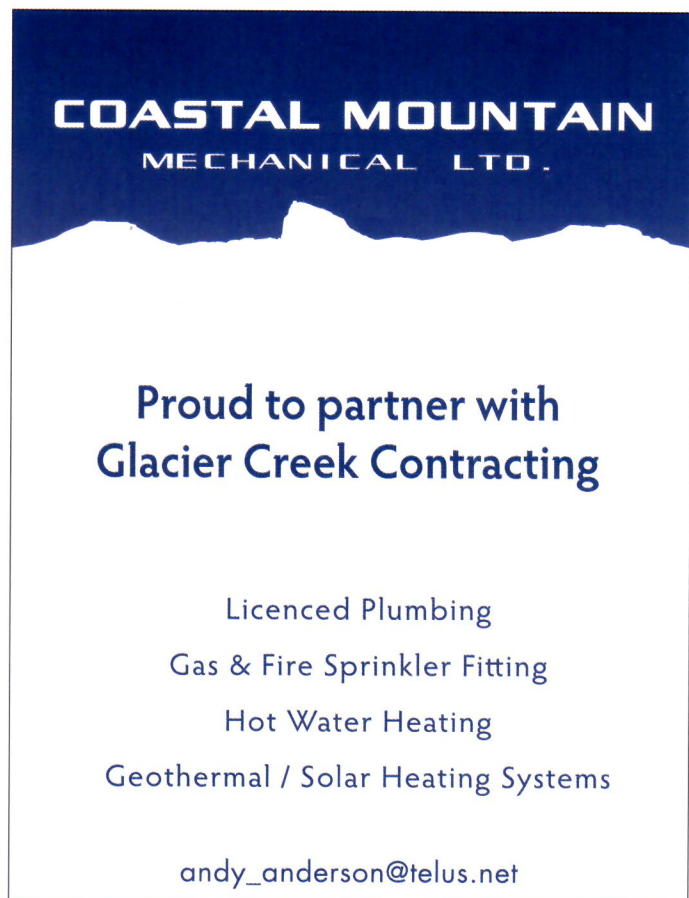
"We are approaching that project on the affordable end, so pricing is at the entry level for single-family homes," Prall says. "We really feel that we are going to see purchasers coming from the lower mainland and Vancouver, moving to Squamish as an alternative to some of the other areas in the lower mainland, which are typically very crowded and have traffic problems."

#### CASTING ITS NETS WIDER

In addition to housing, Glacier Creek Contracting also specializes in creating and selling insulation. Prall is optimistic that this additional business, called Glacier Pacific Insulation Services, will manage to reach the same level of success as the company's main branch.

"We started this company about three years ago, partly because we wanted to have control over that particular part of the work and also to initiate some of these green activities," he says. "Our plan is to grow that company, and it has been growing very rapidly. We are the premier insulation company in the corridor."

These "green activities" are just as important to Prall as providing affordable housing. "It's important for everyone to embrace the green movement because it's a responsibility for all of us," he says. **DDC**



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[andy\\_anderson@telus.net](mailto:andy_anderson@telus.net)