

# Sustainable Affordability

Glacier Creek Contracting  
Brings Affordable Housing  
Options To Whistler

Constructing both residential and commercial projects throughout British Columbia, Glacier Creek Contracting works primarily to serve the high demand for affordable housing in the Whistler area.

"One of the things we are quite proud of is our performance in providing affordable housing in Whistler," says Eric Prall, President. "It's a very expensive place to live, and the people who work here have to be able to afford to live here. We have been working very closely with the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA), which is an entity that was created to mandate affordable housing. We have built several hundred units in partnership with the WHA."

The contractor has managed more than C\$183 million worth of construction projects and built almost 1,600 units ranging from single-family homes to multi-residential concrete towers. Glacier Creek also places a great deal of importance on incorporating energy-saving and green measures into its projects, and it is a Certified Building Envelope Renovator and a Built Green Certified Builder.

"We have many green initiatives that we have been refining over the last several years, and we are incorporating many of those into affordable housing with only modest price increases," Prall says. "On all of our projects, it's a balance between asking for modest increases while offering lower operational costs at the homes."

According to Prall, one of the company's key areas of focus is to build high-performance building envelopes.

"We have efforts related to spray foam insulation and out-sulation to minimize thermal bridging, triple-pane windows and heat recovery ventilators," he says. "We are trying to incorporate that into all of our projects."

Furthering Glacier Creek's energy saving efforts has been its own insulation company called Glacier Pacific Insulation. The company developed the entity to keep up with the growing demand for more

## Glacier Creek Contracting

PRESIDENT  
Eric Prall

LOCATION  
Whistler, British Columbia

efficient insulation for both its projects as well as other contractors.

"We started that company about five years ago to look after our own internal company, while also serving other builders in the Sea to Sky Corridor," Prall says. "We recently did a 26,000 square-foot envelope renovation to the Glacier Creek restaurant at the 6,000-foot elevation on Blackcomb Mountain. The work included a complete new roof structure with 100 percent spray foam insulation. That renovation is going to provide Whistler-Blackcomb operations an ongoing energy savings that is quite significant."

#### EXPANDING BEYOND WHISTLER

Stepping outside of its normal geographical scope, Glacier Creek is currently working on its Maples at Fintrey Park project in Squamish, British Columbia. The first phase of the project is a single-family community offering 33 units on small lots.

"That project is entry-level, single-family, detached housing in the 1,500 to 1,900 square-foot range with an end price of around C\$500,000," Prall says. "We also have another project 'Crumpit Woods' in Squamish that is about to begin in the summer. The clients are coming from the lower mainland, with the only difference being that this is mid-level affordability, with homes in the range of 2,000 to 2,500 square feet and selling at around C\$800,000."

Located on the north end of Whistler, the Wedgewoods project allows Glacier Creek to embark on more high-end housing options. The contractor has begun construction of the first homes, and when completed the development will see 107 units built on large lots of more than 1.5 acres each.

"With Wedgewoods, we are moving into more of an upper-level type of housing with the purchasers there being mostly a mix of residents of Whistler and some lower mainland people who are looking for recreation property," Prall says. "These homes are in the range of 2,500 to 4,500 square feet and selling from C\$1.2 to 2.2 million. It's a slightly different market there, so we are really involved in different levels of housing."

#### COMBINING RESIDENTIAL WITH COMMERCIAL

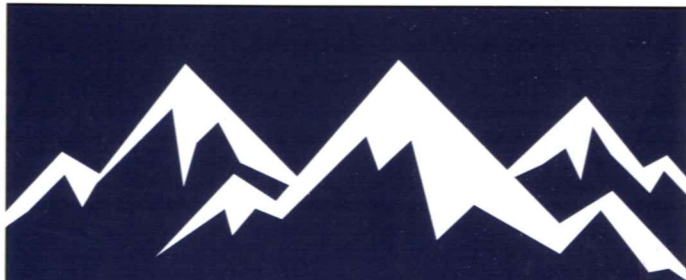
Returning to its extensive work with the Whistler Housing Authority, Glacier Creek Contracting is in the early development stages of the Rainbow Terraces. The project is scheduled to break

ground in April 2013 and will feature 22,000 square feet of commercial space and 46,000 square feet of affordable residential housing and associated underground parking.

"That project is mixed use," Prall says. "There is a commercial component to it, and the residential component is approximately 55 units of affordable housing. We are working together with the Whistler Housing Authority to incorporate some Built Green requirements, while still keeping it affordable."

Glacier Creek Contracting's current project will occupy the company's team for several years, but Prall says that while making progress on its current work, the firm will continue to strive to make advancements in green technology on its projects.

"These projects and subdivisions we are working in, like the Maples and Wedgewoods, have a bright future," he says. "There is probably another solid five years' worth of work in those projects. Obviously, we want to keep going with our green initiatives and keep learning and exploring new ways to improve in our execution of it. We are applying 'Green Thinking' to all levels of housing." ■



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