



SKIING

winter adventure

COLD FRONT: Build It and They Will Come



Photo courtesy of Pheidias Project Management, Corp.

Build It and They Will Come

By [Cameron Walker](#)

After decades of ski-area attrition, a handful of big projects are under way.

With yet another B.C. megaresort just a few years out, the Canadians, as usual, are leading the charge. Now that the British Columbian government has approved an environmental assessment put forth by Glacier Resorts Ltd., it looks like the long-awaited and highly controversial Jumbo Glacier Resort could become a reality. (Long-awaited because it will feature more vertical than Whistler Blackcomb-5,500 feet versus 5,280. Controversial because many environmentalists are opposed to it.) In the U.S., an estimated 250 ski areas have closed since 1975. But several new ones are in the works.

Below, a look at where you may-or may not-be making turns in the near future.

Jumbo Glacier Resort, Invermere, B.C. A gondola up 9,900-foot Glacier Dome (in the Purcells) could be in place by winter 2006-07. The master plan calls for 23 lifts. **The Goods:** Coliseum-size bowls, tree skiing, and steep chutes off the Commander Glacier. **Possible Snags:** According to the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society, opposition from locals is as high as 90 percent. **Status:** The proposed \$358 million resort still has to get a master development plan approved by the end of 2005.

Tamarack Resort, Donnelly, Idaho Ninety miles north of Boise, Tamarack features 700 skiable acres, five lifts, and 2,800 feet of vert. **The Goods:** Freeskiers can hike North Bowl to huck 30-foot cliffs. More realistically, you'll ski ridgeline cruisers with views of Lake Cascade and the Salmon River range. **Possible Snags:** None, at the moment, although 55 percent of the resort is intermediate, which could hinder ticket sales. **Status:** Opening day was scheduled for December 15, 2004. If all goes as planned, Tamarack will have 11 lifts and 1,100 skiable acres by 2010.

Bitterroot Resort, Missoula, Montana Rancher-skier Tom Maclay has cut runs on his cattle lands, which abut Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests. His goal: create a 52,000-acre (seriously), 5,300-vert resort beneath 9,096-foot Lolo Peak. **The Goods:** The north-facing lower elevations would stay shady for snowmaking (a must); steep shots off Lolo Peak often hold snow well into spring. **Possible Snags:** Access to national forests may not happen until the feds finalize the Western Montana Forest Plan in 2006. **Status:** Maclay released the resort proposal to the Missoula community this December. Maclay says skiers could be riding up Lolo Peak in the next 10 years.

Dyer Mountain Resort, Westwood, California Six lifts would service 2,400 vertical feet of north-facing terrain on Dyer Mountain (elevation 7,480), about an hour north of Tahoe. **The Goods:** ...Are the woods: Seven species of well-spaced conifers will lure tree-lovers off-piste. **Possible Snags:** In the 1980s, a similar idea was nixed because of unreliable snowfall. **Status:** Lassen County is expected to release its draft of an environmental impact report for public comment by January 1, 2005.

Mount Adams, Yakama Nation Recreation Area, Washington The resort, to be operated by Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort on 12,276-foot Mount Adams, would house a casino, Native American cultural center, and 5,700 feet of vert-the most in the Western Hemisphere. **The Goods:** At press time, official plans hadn't been released, but the buzz is all about a tram servicing the Mazama Glacier-currently closed to nonmembers of the Yakama Nation. **Possible Snags:** The Yakama Nation holds Mount Adams sacred-as do backcountry purists, in their own way. **Status:** The plans would have to be approved by the Yakama tribal council, then voted on by 10,000-plus members.