



Press Release

Hockey Hero Takes off Gloves to Protect Wilderness

Scott Niedermayer says No to proposed Jumbo Resort

September 17, 2007 (**Kimberley, British Columbia**) The NHL's most valuable player has added his voice to a twenty-year land-use controversy in the Kootenay Region of British Columbia.

NHL superstar and multiple Stanley Cup champion Scott Niedermayer has declared his support for the efforts of conservation groups to protect a wilderness area in British Columbia's Purcell Mountains, threatened by a proposed 4-season ski resort in the Jumbo Creek area near Invermere.

"I have been fortunate to play hockey and travel all over the world. Wilderness and wildlife values are disappearing, due in part to development proposals similar to the proposed Jumbo Resort. I am continually amazed we still have them here in the Kootenays," said Niedermayer.

"I am not only concerned about the loss of wilderness and the negative impacts on wildlife and on the area I call home. It's clear local people feel both their concerns and those of wildlife experts have been consistently ignored."

Dave Quinn, spokesperson for Wildsight, a Kootenay based conservation group that has been actively opposing the proposed development for nearly two decades, echoes Niedermayer's concerns and applauds his commitment to the issue.

"Local residents from all walks of life have been fighting this issue for decades," said Quinn. "Every local poll and even the province's own EA process has received over 90% opposition. Scott's support comes at a critical time. The time has come to finally close the door on this unsustainable development, and Scott's message clearly reflects the position of Kootenay people."

Quinn notes there are no permits in place allowing the resort to proceed, and that, from a legal land-use perspective, the Jumbo Valley is not zoned for a permanent city.

"Kootenay residents are waiting for the proponent to apply for rezoning of the Jumbo Valley to the local Regional District, as was stipulated in the Provincial Environmental assessment for the project. We anticipate public hearings on one of the most controversial projects ever proposed in the region. This will allow elected representatives to reflect their constituent's concerns and bring final resolution to this project. This area needs to remain wild."

Niedermayer agrees.

"As my kids get older and I have more opportunity to recreate with them, I want to think that my family, and families all over BC will continue to have the opportunity to explore wilderness like the central Purcells as it is today. This is not the place for a resort, no matter what the size. We already have 15 incredible ski resorts within a five-hour drive – including world-class, Kootenay community-based resorts near Invermere, Kimberley, Fernie, Golden and Nelson. I'd like to see those thrive and grow, and see areas like the Central Purcells remain

wild. Wilderness is one of British Columbia's greatest assets, and we need to work to keep it that way."

Niedermayer's announcement comes on the heels of a new study revealing grizzly populations in the immediate vicinity of the proposed resort are roughly 50% of what they were thought to be in 2004, when the Jumbo Environmental Assessment occurred. According to biologists, this new data renders the resort's grizzly mitigation plan obsolete, as all the planned mitigation action will now be used to simply recover the declining population.

Over his 16-year hockey career, Cranbrook, BC native Niedermayer has won nearly every accolade and championship he is eligible for as an NHL defenseman. His accomplishments include 4 Stanley Cups, an Olympic Gold, the Memorial Cup, and the World Cup of Hockey, as well as a long list of individual NHL awards including the Norris Trophy and the Conn Smythe trophy.

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Television: High definition footage of Niedermayer discussing the proposed resort is available. Clips include aerial footage Niedermayer at the proposed resort site, on a peak within the proposed boundaries of the resort with his Jersey and hockey stick, and extensive interviews footage – on site and in studio. Footage will be available for network procurement and immediate release Monday, September 17.

Interviews: To arrange a phone interview with Scott Niedermayer, please contact the Wildsight Program Manager below.

For more information:

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About Wildsight

Wildsight works locally, regionally and globally to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable communities in Canada's Columbia and Southern Rocky Mountain region. This area is internationally recognized as a keystone to conservation in western North America. Wildsight received the *2005 Canadian Environmental Award for Conservation* in recognition of its successful work to protect the region's wildlife and wildlands. For more information, please visit www.wildsight.ca.