



# The Daily Gleaner

February 13, 2010

## Building an Environmentally Friendly Olympics

Just the other day, David Suzuki admitted that though they could have done even more, that the committee did a good job in creating the most sustainable and environmentally friendly Olympic Games in history. Now that's a stellar review from Mr. Suzuki!

I am currently in the midst of the Olympic frenzy in Vancouver - I temporarily relocated here to volunteer at the Games. I have been quite impressed by the actions taken by the VANOC Sustainability Committee and would like to share a few of them with you.

The largest undertaking, given the magnitude of such an event, is building new environmentally respectful infrastructure. But perhaps even more challenging than that is using and improving pre-existing infrastructure. The 2010 Olympic Committee has tried to do both. For existing infrastructure being used as Olympic venues, some level of environmental assessment was undertaken for each site. For instance, in existing venues such as Cypress Mountain and Whistler Olympic/Paralympic Park and Whistler Creekside, measures were taken to disturb as little of the natural habitats as possible. On Cypress Mountain the team went so far as to salvage and relocate wetland plant species from the site of the new snowmaking reservoir to nearby wetlands (an area remaining unaffected by venue construction).

In terms of new infrastructure, the two new venues constructed for the Games: the Richmond Olympic Oval and Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre, both buildings were built targeting LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. For example, both venues incorporated **rainwater capture and reuse**, and **waste heat energy reuse**. Rainwater is collected from the roof to flow into the building's utility systems supplementing toilet flushing. Heat recovered from ice making will be captured and reused for purposes such as domestic hot water and heating/cooling systems.

Furthermore the Richmond Oval has incorporated a very unique building material into its design. As you may know, British Columbia has incurred a destructive Pine-Beetle infestation in its forests, and much of the Pine-Beetle harvested wood has gone to waste, but maybe it didn't have to. Proving this point, the vast ceiling of the Richmond Oval was constructed of salvaged BC lumber previously damaged by the tiny insects.

And targeting net-zero green space loss, the Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre was built mainly on a gravel-parking site. The arena was also built to replace a nearby aging community complex. Existing trees within the construction area were relocated to other areas of the park. And after the Games, salvageable materials from the demolition of the old property will be recycled and the site remediated

back to park space. It is also good to note that just like all of the venues constructed for the '88 Winter Games in Calgary, Alberta, the Vancouver Olympic venues will have a legacy and remain in use by the outlying communities and by future athletes for competitive events and training.

Being in Vancouver for the past four weeks I have had daily opportunities to experience the extensive public transit system, which exists to connect Vancouver to many outlying cities, as well as all areas of the city itself. VANOC has made it very clear to all Olympic spectators, volunteers and workforce, as well as to all Vancouverites, that public transit will be the way to travel during the Games. Many downtown streets and streets leading to venues have already been shutdown for the duration of the Olympics and converted to pedways and walking plazas. Much of the existing parking near venues will also be blocked off during the Games. Public transit here includes buses (both electric and diesel), seabuses, subways and trains. It is exceptionally efficient and accessible already, but will be beefed up during the Olympics with added buses and subways as well as extended hours and additional runs.

This only touches on the measures VANOC has taken to make the 2010 Olympics the greenest Games ever. To learn more about these initiatives and many more check out [www.vancouver2010.com](http://www.vancouver2010.com) , click on '**More 2010 Information**', and select '**Sustainability**'.

GO CANADA GO!

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