



**Canada West Ski Areas Association**  
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## **Canada West Ski Areas Association 2017 Awards Recipients**

Lake Louise, Alberta – Three outstanding individuals were recognized for their contributions to the ski industry at last week’s Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA) annual Awards Gala.

- Don Murray (Senior VP, Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners Ltd) is the recipient of the 2017 Jimmie Spencer Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Stuart McLaughlin (President, Grouse Mountain Resorts) is the recipient of the 2017 Jim Marshall Leadership Award.
- Ryan Stimming (Risk Manager, Panorama Mountain Resort) is the 2017 recipient of the Lars Fossberg Excellence Award.

“Vision, leadership, and commitment are all accurate descriptors of these individuals,” said Christopher Nicolson, President and CEO of CWSAA. “CWSAA is fortunate to have them within our midst. The Board of Directors selected from a list of seventeen worthy candidates. The depth of the nominations made for difficult decisions, and it is a sure testament to the strength and character of the ski industry.”

The awards were presented during the CWSAA 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Conference, which took place in Lake Louise April 25 – 27, 2017. This conference was attended by over 500 ski industry professionals.

### **About the Recipients:**

#### **Don Murray, Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners – Jimmie Spencer Lifetime Achievement Award**

Don Murray was presented the prestigious Jimmie Spencer Lifetime Achievement Award by Darcy Alexander (General Manager, Sun Peaks Resort) and Jimmie Spencer (former President of CWSAA). This award is given to an individual that has shown exceptional leadership and lengthy service to the ski industry. Don Murray is only the third recipient since it was first awarded in 2009.

Don Murray has served the ski industry for over 40 years. During his tenure at various ski resorts and consultancy firms, including Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners, he has gained expertise in ski resort management and operation, mountain planning and design, construction management, terrain modification and slope revegetation, financial analysis, resort feasibility and more. He started as a snowcat driver at Whistler and has since worked on Ski Area planning at resorts in 26 different countries. Mr. Murray has held senior supervisory and management positions in all facets of ski resort operations, was responsible for the layout and design of all ski trails at the 1988 Winter Olympic site, Nakiska Ski Resort, and assisted in the planning for other Olympic and World Championship sites.

“Don has mentored me and countless other members of our industry,” said Darcy Alexander, GM of Sun Peaks Resort. “His innovation, tireless analysis of industry trends and extensive knowledge of operations and planning have made a tremendous impact on the industry.”

Don has been actively involved with the Canada West Ski Association, presenting at its annual conference and developing the CWSAA Annual Economic Survey and Analysis since 1987.

### **Stuart McLaughlin, Grouse Mountain – Jim Marshall Leadership Award**

Stuart McLaughlin, the longest serving President of Grouse Mountain Resorts Ltd., was presented the Jim Marshall Leadership Award by Dave Gibson (President, Marmot Basin) in memory of Jim Marshall. Stuart is the 38th recipient of this honour that is awarded annually to an individual for their skills and dedication to their profession, and for making a meaningful contribution to the sport of recreational skiing.

McLaughlin took the helm at Grouse Mountain in 1988, privatized the company and commenced its diversification into a truly four season Resort. He undertook major infrastructure developments, unique passholder product development, terrain evolution, and attracted key partners and community events that raised over \$10 million for charitable causes.

In 1997 Stuart McLaughlin partnered with Ballast Nedam to develop British Columbia's first major new resort in 25 years, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort that opened in 2000. All the while McLaughlin contributed as a director or chaired the board of every significant tourism board in the Province.

“I’ve had the privilege of working with Stuart, both in the early 90’s at Grouse Mountain and then again at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort” said Steve Paccagnan, CWSAA’s Board Chair. “Stuart’s entrepreneurial spirit and penchant for out-of-the-box thinking is so evident in the Grouse Mountain we know today. He was certainly instrumental in turning around the business fundamentals of the Resort, but his vision of developing young skiers and making Grouse Mountain a place for families to enjoy together is one of the strongest aspects of Stuart’s legacy.”

### **Ryan Stimming, Panorama Mountain Resort – Lars Fossberg Excellence Award**

Ryan Stimming, Risk Manager at Panorama Mountain Resort was presented the Lars Fossberg Award by Hildur Sinclair (President, Troll Resort). This award was created in remembrance of Lars Fossberg to encourage the younger up-and-coming individuals in the ski industry who exhibit the same strong character and passion that Lars did. Ryan is the 14<sup>th</sup> recipient of this award which is presented annually to a manager or supervisor who shows a high degree of initiative and creativity together with the ability to improvise when dealing with the unexpected.

Ryan is very active in industry initiatives participating in go2HR’s BC occupational health and safety committee since 2010 and chairing the CWSAA Safety & Risk Management Committee since 2012.

“I’ve had the pleasure of working alongside Ryan on a number of industry safety and risk management initiatives,” said Robert B. Kennedy, Q.C. Farris, Vaughan, Wills & Murphy LLP. “He has worked tirelessly to raise the standard of occupational health and safety for employees in the ski industry, and is very passionate about reinvigorate the school skiing program.”

After leading Panorama's efforts to become BC's second ski resort to be certified by the WorkSafeBC Certificate of Recognition (COR) program, he began promoting the WorkSafeBC COR program to the alpine industry, resulting in an increased awareness of occupational health and safety. Ryan graduated Selkirk College's Ski Resort Operations and Management Program in 2003 with Honours. During his studies, he began his career at Panorama Mountain Resort as a ticket validator during a school work placement. After graduating he returned to Panorama and has worked in Guest Services, Sales and Marketing and Safety and Risk.

### **About The Canada West Ski Areas Association**

The Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA) is a not-for-profit trade association that represents the Ski Areas of Western Canada. Its primary areas of focus are safety & risk management, government relations, industry development, new skier & rider development and communications. The industry generated 8.4 million skier visits in 2015/16 and employed 16,200 people. CWSAA was founded in 1967.

For more information the CWSAA Awards and previous recipients visit:

<https://cwsaa.org/about/awards/>

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Photos:

**Don Murray:** "Jimmie Spencer presents Don Murray the Jimmie Spencer Lifetime Achievement Award."

<https://cwsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/DonMurray-Spencer2017.jpg>

**Stuart McLaughlin:** "Steve Paccagnan congratulates Stuart McLaughlin on the 2017 Jim Marshall Leadership Award."

<https://cwsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/StuartMcLaughlin-Marshall2017.jpg>

**Ryan Stimming:** "Steve Paccagnan congratulates Ryan Stimming on the 2017 Lars Fossberg Excellence Award."

<https://cwsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RyanStimming-Fossberg2017.jpg>

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