

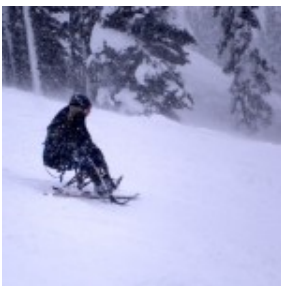
# Tahoe's talk of Vancouver, Jan. 25 pm edition

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia –WASP means something entirely different in British Columbia. It stands for Whistler Adaptive Ski Program.

Usually the staff numbers about 130 each year, with 10 paid and the rest volunteers.

A busy day would be about 20 clients participating. A normal day is five-10 people.



A sit-skier  
plows through  
the fresh  
powder at  
Whistler on  
Monday.

Photo/Kathryn  
Reed

Gil Tetrault was hauling a sit-ski up the Whistler Village Gondola on Monday morning for a client who is severely disabled. This 29-year-old client from the U.K. is here for three weeks. Last year he came out for six weeks.

Tetrault said many resorts in Europe have little regard for

skiers with special needs. He said WASP caters to a slew of disabilities in its large, all-encompassing program.

He said the adaptive program has a number of autistic clients. About 20 percent need sit-skis. Two WASP instructors accompany sit-skiing clients.

“Every year we get new volunteers in the program,” Tetrault said. “We put them in a sit-ski and it freaks them out.”

He also said the volunteers must try to ski with a blindfold to simulate what a blind skier experiences.

“We find a lot of capable skiers fall over because they are not thinking through their feet to stay balanced,” Tetrault said.