Silver lining of Vail’s bid to take over skiing

By Devon O’Neil, Outside

When Vail Resorts announced this month its plan to buy Whistler Blackcomb, the Canadian ski resort, you could almost hear the sound of 10 million jaws dropping. It wasn’t Coke buying Pepsi, but to skiers and snowboarders and anyone who follows the balance of snowsports power, it was close.

For years, the only North American resort that has attracted more skier visits than Vail Mountain has been Whistler Blackcomb. Vail’s 5,289 skiable acres sounds like a lot. In fact, until last year’s merging of two other ski areas Vail Resorts recently bought, Park City and Canyons in Utah, it was by far the most in America. But Vail’s size is a mere 65 percent of Whistler Blackcomb’s 8,171 skiable acres.

A healthy ski industry is good for the towns and regions that host it, good for the people who work in it, and, most importantly, good for everyone who hopes their great-grandchildren get to enjoy this most fulfilling pastime of sliding downhill on snow.

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