

Columbia Valley

Recreation Planning Initiative

2023-11-06 CVRPI Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Present:

Planning Committee: Adrian Pery, Clara Reinhardt, Roberta Schnider, Gerry Wilkie, Andrew Craddock, Brenda Hopkins, TJ Neault, Al Miller, Stephanie Stevens **Regrets/Absent:** Tracy Flynn, Lorne Shovar, Trevor Hann, Ember Heidt

Advisory Committee: Jenna Schulhof, Barrie Hawes, Suzanne Bayley, Franz Feldmann, Chris Fordham, Rick Hoar, Darcy Lehr, Ryan Bavin. **Regrets/Absent:** Brian Feeney, Tom Hoyne, Mike Caswell, Richard Tegart, George Tegart, Gordon Bagan, Brad Lawrence, Jason Smith (Toby Creek Adventures), Hanna McIntyre, Carey Collin.

Contractors: Jeff Zukowsky, Ingrid Liepa

1. Chair Update / Project Update

- No update from the co-chairs.
- Confirmed that AC will see final recommendations when PC has their final draft report.
- Contractors anticipate one more meeting with AC after the public engagement.

2. Public Engagement

- Discussion about whether to have a separate focus group for mechanized recreation users.
Agreement to ensure the mountain bike community is invited to participate in the user focus groups.

3. Feedback Draft Recreation Inventory Report

- Confirmation that Forster FSR is accessible by vehicle in the summer to the 42km mark, at which point there is a foot bridge for access to Forster Creek Meadows / Thunderwater.
- **Action:** Ryan Bavin will follow up on camping around Olive and Dave White cabins.
- Several AC members committed to providing photographs of the Welsh Lakes camping area, as well as evidence of biking and motorized summer use in the alpine regions of Forster LU.
- There has been very little commercial/public heli-drop activity in Forster according to those present.
Action: Adrian will reach out to local heli companies about bike/hike drops in the Forster LU.
- **Action:** Suzanne to provide clarity on difference between Whitebark Pine critical habitat and species at risk areas
- In the report, clarify that 'Woodland Caribou' is the Southern Mountain population and that Toby Creek Adventures Intensive Use site is for a yurt/cabin site
- Confirmed that North Star Mountaineering does not operate in the Forster LU
- Information about commercial land tenure fees will not be included in the Inventory Report

4. Survey on Recreation Impacts and Use Intensity

- **Action:** Jeff will update the recreation use intensity scale with examples from the Columbia Valley, and with potential user numbers for each category (Very low, Moderate, Very high) and circulate the updated recreation use intensity assessment for additional input.
- **Action:** Darcy to send Provincial guideline for dangerous tree assessment on trails which includes criteria for assessing trail use intensity.
- Committee members expressed concern about the recreation impact assessment scale and the potential to be misinterpreted. An option was discussed to multiply a generic 'recreation use impact

score' by the recreation use intensity score, to determine impacts level. Agreement to remove the proposed recreation impact assessment from the Inventory Report

- **Action:** Suzanne can provide existing scales for rating recreation use and impacts
- Clarification that the recreation closures in Forster were originally designed to prevent user conflicts – they were not for wildlife management. This should be reflected in the description of impacts. Agreement to update impact description to: *'Unauthorized winter motorized (snowmobile) use in existing recreation closure areas (Forster Creek Meadows, Catamount Glacier, North Star Glacier), including access into Catamount Glacier prior to the February 14th opening date.'*
- All impact/issue descriptions should be simplified to remove the “why” and focus on the “what”.

5. Recreation Management Options Brainstorming

- *Base case+ options for recommendations*
 - Increase enforcement of current recreation closure areas.
 - Increase fines for unauthorized access into closure areas.
 - Support better enforcement by identifying the time of year and the activities that are breaking the law.
 - Support Windermere Snowmobile Association as a source of education/information for safe and sustainable recreation for its members as well as the public.
 - Add simple signage at trailheads, staging areas, and designated camping areas to remind users of recreation guidelines - “pack it in/pack it out”, “don’t cut down trees”, “storing food safely”, “Campfire safety”, etc.
 - Assess public recreation use and access on existing roads within the LU to identify opportunities for road decommissioning.
 - Collect data on public helicopter access into the alpine and determine options for regulating heli-drop spots.
- *Infrastructure*
 - Install composting/green toilet at Thunderwater Lakes.
 - Assess use and access to Thunderwater Lake area and determine whether it should stay as is, become an established trail, or be decommissioned/restored.
 - Identify and designate trail(s) for mountain biking (mechanized use).
- *Restrict*
 - Identify and designate heli-drop sites. Restrict/prohibit helicopter access hiking/biking within the LU.
 - Suzanne Bayley presented three options for restrictions to mechanical recreation (two based on elevation), with all options maintaining winter snowmobile access along Forster FSR and snowmobile areas (Forster Creek Meadows, Catamount Glacier).