



To that end, the RAMP committee have made important efforts to hold public meetings to engage the community and to hear their comments and concerns.

Now with a preliminary round of public meetings completed and distilled, the RAMP committee is preparing to table their recommendations and Henderson, co-chair of the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board recreational subcommittee is cautiously optimistic.

"I think people will be pleasantly surprised," he said.

For Henderson, an author, pilot, guide-outfitter, the controversy surrounding the BV RAMP process is nothing new.

"I've done a number of land-planning projects," he said.

"I knew this one was going to be contentious."

Henderson joined the current RAMP process following the resignation of the previous co-chair, Ben Heemskerk.

Heemskerk's association with Recreation Sites and Trails BC became an issue, with some members in the community arguing his employment with the province created a conflict of interest.

"There was a perceived conflict," Henderson said.

"It's unfortunate his employment became an issue, he's done an awful lot of work to get the process to this point.

"He should be commended."

The preliminary draft of the RAMP is expected from the table committee by the end of the week and available to the public shortly thereafter.

The RAMP table committee includes representatives from outdoor recreation groups, who at the outset may have had different perspectives on the management plan.

But, Henderson said, the diverse user groups, including quad users, horseback riders and backpackers, have worked diligently to find solutions.

"I'm impressed with how hard people have worked to accommodate each other," Henderson said.

For Glover, an important part of the process has been to engage the public in the process, particularly those opposed to the project.

Although much of the initial reaction to the plan was negative, Glover said continued efforts to engage those in opposition to the plan has had positive results.

"Once people understand what the process is trying to accomplish, they come onside really quickly," Glover said.

"The challenge is to get the accurate information out there."

Opposition to the RAMP has centered around two points, the mandate for the RAMP subcommittee and a perception the RAMP would restrict use of recreational areas for some user groups.

When asked where the RAMP subcommittee received its mandate, Henderson points to the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan completed in 1997, signed by the minister of forests, energy and mines and the minister of environment, lands and parks.

"In the LRMP, which has legal status, on pages 32 and 33, it says a RAMP process will be completed at a later date," Henderson explained.

The Bulkley Valley RAMP has also been mandated by Recreation Sites and Trails BC.

"They are using it [BV RAMP] as a pilot for their trail strategy," Glover explained.

Regarding restrictions on the use of the recreation area, Glover noted there were two misconceptions, the RAMP would further restrict the amount of area designated for motorized use and at the other extreme, significantly expand the areas open to motorized use.

"The quad users have made it clear their whole aim is responsible use," Glover said.

"We've made every effort not to restrict usage in the RAMP."

In fact, the area designated for motorized use has been increased in the draft RAMP, Hendeerson said.

Although the process has been difficult and time consuming, Glover views the eventual RAMP document as a living legacy to recreation in the Bulkley Valley.

"The plan establishes a way for recreational users to have greater certainty and cooperation in how they use their recreational area," Glover said.

"It's based on the value that everyone has an equal right to enjoy the recreational activity they value.

"It's a plan that is adaptable to incorporate changes in community values.

"It's a living plan that reflects the current values of the community."

Public consultation on the draft RAMP will continue in May, and in early October, prior to the release of the final RAMP document in late October.

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