

Les Austin  
Houston Snowmobile Club  
Houston, B.C.

Dear Les

I understand from Mark Williams that you are interested in establishing a committee to address recreational access issues arising from the Telkwa Caribou Herd Recovery Plan. I understand that you wish the committee to have representatives from the Houston Snowmobile Club as well as the Houston Town council, and that you would like at least some of the meetings to be held in Houston.

In general, I support the concept of BC Environment representatives participating on an advisory committee, and I suggest that any Houston Town Councillors who wished to participate would be welcome. I also have no problem with some of the meetings being held in Houston. As Mark mentioned to you, it is our position that the opportunity to participate on any advisory committee would be extended to all user groups who have an interest in recreating in the Telkwa Mountains.

I think your suggestion of meeting with either Sean Sharpe or myself in the near future to discuss terms of reference for an advisory committee is a good idea. I suggest that for committee meetings to be productive, we will need to be very clear on what issues will and will not be addressed, who will be chairing the meetings and taking minutes, and what the responsibilities of each of the parties will be. For example, I don't believe it would be productive to expect a committee to address many of the long-standing issues of conflicting recreational access issues between the various user groups. I also don't believe it would be productive to get bogged down in discussions concerning the mandate of the wildlife branch in regards to protecting the Telkwa Herd caribou and the management requirements. It would be productive with regards to exploring options on how the caribou management recommendations can be implemented in order to achieve the management objective with consideration of the recreational opportunities.

As Minister Evans pointed out at the meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup> in Houston, MELP has legal obligations to work towards maintaining and protecting caribou in the Telkwa Mountains, and we have not deviated from the objectives laid out in 1997 in the Telkwa Caribou Recovery Plan. I do, however, feel that there are numerous issues that a committee could address that could further increase public acceptance of the recovery program, increase levels of compliance with the current voluntary access restrictions, and would increase levels of communication and trust between MELP staff and all user groups.

I will give you a call in the near future to arrange a mutually acceptable time for you to meet with Sean Sharpe and myself. September and October are extremely busy months for us, so we will have to see what can be worked into all of our schedules.

I am pleased to hear from Mark Williams that you, both yourself and the Houston Town Council, repeatedly stressed your support for the Telkwa Recovery Project. I look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss how an advisory committee can be structured to further advance the goals of the recovery program.

Sincerely,

George Schultze  
Skeena Region  
Wildlife Technician