

**Bulkley Valley
Community Resources Board
Box 577
Smithers BC V0J 2N0**

January 15, 2010

Jason Llewellyn
Director of Planning
Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
37 3rd Avenue PO Box 820
Burns Lake, British Columbia
V0J 1E0

Re: Bylaw No. 1521 Call Lake Strata Rezoning Proposal: Angela and Troy Souter

Dear Mr. Llewellyn:

The role of the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB) is to act as an independent steward of the community values identified in the Land and Resource Management Plan (the Plan). To accomplish this, the BVCRB reviews referrals and provides comment to Government as to whether or not the referral is consistent with the objectives and strategies defined during the Plan Development Process. With respect to this referral the BVCRB would like to express concern that four specific community values may be at risk as a result of this re-zoning referral.

Although the current referral is on private land within the Settlement Area of the Plan it is immediately adjacent to a Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) in addition to a Goal 2 Protected Area, which is a Core Ecosystem. The referral property provides a corridor between the Core Ecosystem and the Ecosystem Network, as demonstrated in Section 2 of the Plan. The General Management Direction within the Plan, as it pertains to this referral, is to maintain Biodiversity. This strategic level Plan suggests objectives to maintain biodiversity through adequate ecosystem representation within the Ecosystem Network and Protected Areas. It also recommends maintaining landscape connectivity, maintenance of endangered plant and animal life, designation of sensitive areas, and special management of specific areas. The specific area this referral is located within is Strategic Planning Unit 7: The Bulkley Valley. The Bulkley Valley Sustainable Management Plan (SRMP) was developed to identify opportunities for long-term sustainable development within Planning Unit 7: Bulkley Valley. It provides a framework for grounding community development in sound ecological reasoning. The SRMP provides strategies for each objective in the Plan, which is in place to maintain Core Ecosystems and Landscape Corridors. With that, the BVCRB is concerned that the re-zoning of this land may present potential risks to four of these objectives, as follows:

(1) Biodiversity is identified as a key objective in the SRMP and this Plan suggests that natural processes in Core Ecosystems be maintained. The current referral is contiguous to a Core Ecosystem and therefore this strata development may compromise the biodiversity of this Core Ecosystem by introducing a barrier to east-west movement of wildlife.

(2) Wildlife is also identified as a key objective in the SRMP, as some of the most productive wildlife habitats in the Bulkley TSA are in the Bulkley Valley Landscape Unit. The exposed southwest slopes in the WHMA adjacent to the referral property provide valuable deer forage while the Pine flats provide valuable thermal protection and cover for moose during winter and spring months. Since the referral

property connects the Core Ecosystem and WHMA to the Ecosystem Network, the BVCRB is concerned for continuity of wildlife habitat. Additionally, increased development will likely introduce domestic pets, which increase stress on wildlife and further place this objective at risk.

(3) Agricultural Development Areas and Wildlife Habitat Management Areas is an objective in the SRMP intended to provide strategies that allow access to arable soil while preserving key wildlife habitat. This section of the SRMP defines strategies for WHMAs, which states that infrastructure development may occur where compatible with wildlife and habitat conservation objectives. The BVCRB feels that a strata development contiguous to a Core Ecosystem and adjacent to a WHMA is not compatible with the existing wildlife and habitat conservation objectives.

(4) Settlement Zone is the final objective and the SRMP simply states that any expansion of the Settlement Zone is consistent with wildlife, water, and all other objectives set out in this Plan (SRMP).

Given the above-mentioned points the BVCRB does not feel that this rezoning referral is consistent with all objectives in the SRMP and therefore presents risk to the long-term sustainability of the Bulkley Valley.

In summary, the BVCRB echoes the perspectives of the MoE (Parks and Protected Areas Division as well as those of the Environmental Stewardship Divisions) and suggests that without specific conditions placed on this re-zoning referral this project presents risk to four of the community values identified in the LRMP. We encourage the Regional District to consider the objectives and strategies presented in the SRMP to ensure long-term sustainable development within the Bulkley Valley. Given that, the BVCRB requests that the Regional District consult with the MoE (Parks and Protected Areas Division as well as those of the Environmental Stewardship Divisions) to develop appropriate conditions for this re-zoning referral that reflect the community values identified in the LRMP, and ensure long-term sustainability of the adjacent Wildlife Habitat Management Area and Core Ecosystem, in addition to the wildlife that use them.

Yours truly,

Greg Storie
Chair, Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board