

June 15, 2023

Ministry of Forests  
Skeena Stikine Natural Resources District  
Bag 6000  
3333 Tatlow Road,  
Smithers, BC, V0J 2N0

Atten: Glen Buhr, RPF, Stewardship Forester

Re: Review of Land Use Designation for Area - Ag/Wild Zone FID #79

Dear Glen,

Thanks very much for speaking with me recently regarding concerns related to the future land use designation for the Ag/Wild zone FID #79. I appreciated your assistance to refer the concerns to Mr. John Stevenson, Regional Agrologist, and Mr. Marc Schuffert, DSS Range Officer for their comments and review. A screen shot of the FID #79 location is below:

Location Map: Ag/Wildlife Area FID#79



As discussed, the Schedule A Lands of our Woodlot 1481 are located just to the west of the FID #79, and we have been managing these lands to maintain continuous mature forest cover since 1995. The parcel in question, FID #79, is a vital link in a contiguous forested wildlife corridor allowing animals to move from the Babine Mountains to the Hudson Bay range. Wildlife uses this crossing at the Bulkley River to access the Toboggan Creek drainage and beyond into the mountains west of Highway 16. This corridor is only broken by Hwy 16 and some of its adjacent agricultural pasture. FID #79 is bordered to the east by a narrow Wildlife Habitat Management Area corresponding to the Bulkley River Riparian Corridor. Due to the scarcity of mature forest in this area, this specific parcel and the corridor it helps create, is also extremely valuable winter range and spring calving grounds for ungulates (moose, deer and now elk). FID #79 forms part of the critically important riparian habitat for

the Bulkley River in this corridor. Black bears den in the FID #79 area and private land portions of the corridor, and grizzly bears use the river crossing east of FID #79 and the forested corridor to access winter denning sites in subalpine areas to the west.

During the past 30 years, through the management of the woodlot forest, we have gained intimate knowledge of the wildlife habitat value of this parcel and the forested corridor as a whole. FID #79 is mature forest on valley bottom which has become quite scarce over the last few years. Recent timber harvesting activities on both private lands to the south, and on agricultural leases and private lands to the north of FID #79 have now made this particular forested corridor even more important for wildlife habitat and movement. Even while moose populations have generally declined in our area, we have documented (using wildlife cameras) significant increase in winter and summer use of the FID #79 and corridor forests by moose, deer and elk, presumably because there is far less mature forest to the north or south to provide mature forest habitat and a contiguous corridor. Due to the significance of this area for wildlife, we personally have a no hunting policy on our private lands which compose part of the corridor. We have not allowed hunting and we have not hunted on this area since 1995. (See the image below to illustrate cleared areas adjacent to FID #79 taken using Sentinel Hub June 2023)



*Harvested forest and cleared lands to the north and south - FID #79 and corridor in red polygon*

In our view, **FID #79 (part of the corridor circled in red) should absolutely not be approved for agricultural land clearing and use.** Its value to various wildlife populations is extremely high. This area must remain as a protected wildlife habitat area for the various reasons stated above.

I would be very willing to host a field review of the FID #79 with you at your convenience, or any other government staff who may be involved in the review of the land use designation. I think a site visit could really be helpful to illustrate the value of this forested habitat compared to the surrounding lands which no longer provide the habitat value required. Please let me know if this would be of any value to the Ministry of Forests or your colleagues in the Ministry of Agriculture.

I would like to be kept up to date on any planned review and decision regarding the long-term land use for FID #79. Please contact me to let me know how I may be able to contribute further to any review process.

Thanks very much,

Dean Daly, RPF  
Woodlot 1481  
250-877-1708 (cell)