

Hans Smit
Chair, Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board
Box 577
Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N0

June 6, 2003

Honourable Joyce Murray
Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection
PO Box 9047
Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Re: Managing Angling Use on Classified Waters

Dear Minister Murray,

The Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (CRB) would like to provide comment on the recently released draft strategy entitled, "Managing Angling Use on Classified Waters", dated May 2003.

A significant number of the Classified Waters are in the Skeena region and two, the Babine and Bulkley rivers, are in part within the Bulkley TSA. The angling opportunities on these rivers are a very valuable resource to our communities. Many residents consider angling on these waters to be one of fundamental reasons for living in the area.

Firstly, we believe that the public comment period for the draft report is unrealistically short. The draft came out in May 2003, and comments are requested by June 6, 2003. For most members of the public, reviewing and commenting on reports such as this has to be done between the duties of work, home and community. Therefore, we request that a 30 day extension be made for public comments so that all residents of the area can provide comment if they wish.

An overall concern of the CRB is that the previously agreed to Angling Use Plan (AUP) for the Bulkley River seems to have been ignored or forgotten. A great deal of volunteer effort was put into creating the AUP, as it required all users to agree on how the angling resource would be allocated. The Bulkley AUP was signed by government, but for the most part was never instituted. If the several years of effort by the group who created the AUP, supported by the government, does not result in any concrete action, why should the public continue to devote time to such efforts?

The Bulkley LRMP states on page 57 that a management direction in the Babine River planning unit is to, "Maintain the provincially significant angling values associated with the Babine River". On page 81, under management directions for the Bulkley Valley planning unit, the LRMP states, "Agencies will provide management to address recreational user conflicts, including the Bulkley River". In the Bulkley LRMP Monitoring Report dated September 25, 2000, the implementation of the AUPs was given as the means of achieving these objectives. However, the Bulkley AUP has never been implemented, even though it has support from a broad spectrum of users.

The CRB requests that you inform the CRB, and the group who created the AUP, how the proposed Angling Management Plans (AMP) will differ from the AUP, and how the recommendations in the AUP will be incorporated into the AMP. The CRB would also like to know how the government intends to make the AMPs effective, as opposed to the AUP which has never been fully instituted. We request that you arrange for a meeting between your ministry staff in Smithers and the CRB to discuss this issue.

The CRB, and all residents of the area communities, value the resources in the rivers of our region. We trust that you will respect the effort of the people who volunteered many hours to create the AUP and that local people will play a major role in deciding how the resources of the area will be utilized. Sincerely,

Hans Smit
Chair, Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board

Cc: Dennis MacKay; MLA
Hugh Markides; WALP
Dana Atagi; WALP
Kevin Kriese; MSRM