

# Outdoor Recreation Alliance



To: The Board of Directors  
BV Community Resource Board  
Smithers, BC

November 16, 2006

Sirs,

On November 7, 2006 the Community Resource Board (CRB) heard a proposal by the BV Quadriders for the opening of the Orange and Higgins Creek roads to ATV use.

The proposals may have merit, but our Outdoor Recreation Alliance (ORA) directors suggest that the proposal should be held by the CRB without comment or recommendation until it can be reviewed by a re-opened public consensus-based RAMP process.

A decision on the Quadrider proposal demands a thorough knowledge of the terrain involved, and the effects of the proposal on other users. Public and stakeholder participants in a RAMP process will have the on-the-ground knowledge of the land and issues involved in the proposal. It's unfair to ask CRB directors to make decisions or recommendations without a thorough knowledge of the proposal, and based on a ten-minute presentation.

The ORA has noted in the past that side agreements to the RAMP are eroding the authority and reputation of the RAMP and the LRMP, and we have recommended recently that all side agreements should be phased out over the next five years.

If the CRB votes to endorse or recommend the Quadrider proposal and pass the recommendation to an agency or minister, that action bypasses the public consensus-based RAMP process and has much the same effect as entering into a side agreement with a special-interest group. It would weaken the RAMP process and delay the need for a re-opened RAMP. Do this often enough and there would be no need to open the RAMP.

The Quadrider proposal is more complex than may seem at first glance and should be considered as two separate proposals. The Orange Road is entirely outside Babine Mountain Park boundaries, and the ATV parking area at 4.2 km is also a considerable distance from the park boundaries. The only restriction to ATV use on the Orange road is a BC Parks Section 6 ruling imposed recently. That ruling would be easy to remove if BC Parks were convinced that it would be prudent.

BC Parks closed the Orange Road because ATV operators were driving past the sign at the 4.2km ATV parking area and into the park. The Orange Road proposal may be workable if there was a commitment by the Quadriders to guarantee that all ATV drivers could not and would not drive past the parking area at 4.2 km and further on the connecting road to the Onion Road or to the snowmobile cabin and into the Babine Mountain Park. Construction of a gate or deactivation may be necessary along with stringent monitoring. The conditions and wording of an agreement with BC Parks are crucial.

In contrast, the Higgins Creek Road is totally within the park boundaries where ATV access has always been prohibited by regulation based on the Park Master Plan that states on page 42, "*The emphasis for use will focus on low-impact, non-motorized recreation opportunities, outside of the designated snowmobile area*".

The Higgins Creek Road extends far enough into the park that ATV use would adversely affect non-motorized park users. Allowing ATVs into the Higgins Creek Road would alter the current function of the park for many residents and visitors as a refuge from the noise and smell of summer motorized recreation. A simple recommendation that ATV access is allowed on either road is not enough and is not responsible to the public interest.

The ORA is not recommending for or against the proposals at this time. That is the job of a public and consensus-based RAMP process along with a final decision by BC Parks. But we consider it essential that the CRB defend the intent of the LRMP and RAMP by simply noting the Quadridler proposal for inclusion in the future RAMP process without pre-judging the merits of the proposal or recommending the proposal to government officials whose decision may bypass our local RAMP process.

On February 23, 2006 and again in a recent letter, the CRB has asked that the RAMP be re-opened and completed. Until the RAMP is opened, the CRB should retain all proposals for related changes without comment, to keep the integrity of the RAMP process.

Yours truly,

Jim Easterday  
For the Outdoor Recreation Alliance

Contact the Outdoor Recreation Alliance by fax (250) 847-6156  
or email [ora@bcnorth.ca](mailto:ora@bcnorth.ca)  
1914 Lubbers Road, Smithers, BC V0J 2N6