

**Proposed Process for Completing  
the  
Bulkley Recreation Access Management Plan**

November 2007

Prepared for

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## **Executive Summary**

As recommended by the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), a Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) was prepared in 1997, and consensus was reached for much of the LRMP area. However, there were some unresolved areas and there have been several conflicts in some of those areas in the ensuing 10 years. Several complaints were lodged with the Forest Practices Board and investigations undertaken. The Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB) has advocated for several years that the RAMP be completed.

The Integrated Land and Management Bureau (ILMB) agreed to undertake this scoping study to:

- describe the current status of the RAMP;
- identify key stakeholders, agencies, First Nations and others who may have an interest in a process to complete the RAMP; and
- identify process options for RAMP completion including pros and cons, and provide a sense of which option might work best and why.

The scoping study was primarily undertaken through interviews with 33 people from a wide variety of perspectives and organizations. The intent of the interviews was not to negotiate a proposed process, but to listen carefully to the variety of views held, and to propose an approach that make sense and could be broadly supported. The proposed process in this report is for the consideration of ILMB and the provincial government, and should a RAMP completion process be undertaken, for the consideration of those involved.

### **Current status of Bulkley RAMP**

The areas noted as unresolved, future process and non-designated in the May 2006 ILMB report “Current Recreational Access Agreements: Bulkley Timber Supply Area (TSA)”, based on interview feedback, appear to accurately portray the areas that need to be addressed in a RAMP completion process. Other areas also need to be addressed as proposed later below.

### **Key organizations with an interest in RAMP completion**

At least 13 outdoor recreation organizations based in the Bulkley Valley, four agencies, First Nations including the Office of the Wet’suwet’en, and local governments including the Town of Smithers are expected to have an interest in RAMP completion. In addition, there is interest by organizations outside of the LRMP area that recreate in the Bulkley Valley. In total over 20 organizations will likely need to be engaged in some capacity.

### **Proposed process approach**

Nearly everyone interviewed voiced strong support for completing the RAMP. Benefits include improved ability: (1) to provide certainty for recreation users, (2) to provide

support for recreation organizations who build and maintain trails and structures; (3) to promote tourism; (4) to reduce conflicts in the community that can take considerable resources to address; and (5) for the community at-large to better get along and respect each others recreational pursuits.

Based on a review of options and interviews, for the following topics *it is proposed that*:

1. issue to be addressed: *the* issue to be addressed is motorized (M) and non-motorized (NM) summer and winter designations, and that other issues be tracked and prioritized but not addressed in order to stay focused;
2. recreation and non-recreation use: the M and NM designation apply to both public and commercial recreation but do not apply to non-recreation uses;
3. areas to be addressed: the areas include (1) the unresolved, non-designated and future process areas in the 2006 ILMB report; (2) proposed amendments submitted to BVCRB; (3) existing post-RAMP agreements where it is collectively agreed to by the RAMP completion Table to revisit the agreement; (4) other non-designated areas in the LRMP; and (5) if supported by those involved in Morice LRMP implementation, the Starr Creek Cabin area;
4. government's roles and responsibilities: agencies work together to clarify and communicate their roles in recreation, including statutory authorities, in a document;
5. government commitment: agencies that champion the RAMP completion process obtain clear support from their respective ministers that the process will lead to a resolution of M and NM designations, and that reasonable resources be committed to effectively implement the plan including education and awareness, monitoring, and compliance and enforcement;
6. process champions: ILMB Planning and the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (MTSA) Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch co-champion the process;
7. inter-agency support team: the team consist of co-champions plus MTSA Adventure Tourism Branch, Ministry of Environment (MOE) - BC Parks, MOE fish and wildlife and Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR), and that the Office of the Wetsu'wet'en First Nations and local government be invited to participate;
8. Table approach: a RAMP completion Table be formed;
9. Table size and structure: that the Table be relatively small in size with sub-tables formed to address summer and winter recreation designations;
10. Table representation: the Table members represent one or more organizations in order to provide clear accountability and to develop constituencies of interests among organizations;
11. being strategic: a strategic package of decisions be made by the Table (i.e. no 'one offs') and that Table representatives rank areas from most to least important;
12. public involvement: draft Table recommendations get distributed for public review and that the Table carefully consider comments when making final recommendations;
13. timelines: following government preparation work, that a 12 month timeline be set from when the Table first convenes to when a final decision is made with milestones identified along the way;

14. dispute resolution process: (1) the Table strives to achieve shared agreement on all M and NM designations via a consensus-based process; (2) if the Table is unable to achieve this for some areas over a reasonable time-frame, that a mediator be provided to assist them reach agreement; and (3) if despite reasonable attempts to reach agreement, the Table still chooses to disagree about some areas, a decision be made on the unresolved areas based on an arbitrator's recommendation;
15. arbitration: if arbitration is needed, that the Table agree at the outset of the process to the use of an arbitrator and collectively decide who the arbitrator should be. This could either be a professional arbitrator from outside of the Bulkley Valley area that is brought in to make final recommendations for any unresolved areas or the ILMB regional manager;
16. implementation: RAMP implementation be primarily undertaken via voluntary means but that regulatory restrictions be considered in areas where non-compliance is anticipated and has expected consequential negative impacts on recreation, wildlife or other values; and that
17. amendment: the Table recommend an amendment process that strikes a balance between providing certainty and being responsive to change where warranted. The LRMP amendment process could provide a starting point for developing a process suitable for the RAMP.

## **Introduction**

The Bulkley Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) was prepared in 1997 as recommended in the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The LRMP area coincides with the outer boundaries of the Bulkley Timber Supply Area (TSA). Following several workshops and negotiations with public and commercial recreation user groups during the RAMP process in late '90's, consensus was reached for much of the LRMP area. Summer and winter maps showed areas zoned for motorized use, non-motorized use and "future process" areas. However, there were also some unresolved areas for which no dispute resolution process could be agreed to, and consequently, there have been several conflicts in these areas.

Over the last 10 years, recreation access agreements with various agencies and recreation clubs have led to some confusion regarding the status of RAMP implementation. The Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) released the document "Current Recreational Access Agreements: Bulkley TSA" in May 2006, to address these problems and improve communication and awareness through a consolidation of existing information. However, the unresolved areas still remain a contentious issue.

The Forest Practices Board has had five complaints and subsequent investigations regarding recreational issues in the Bulkley Valley subsequent to the original RAMP. A frequent recommendation is that the RAMP be completed and implemented. The Forest Practices Board also conducted a special report on access management in BC in 2005 where it urged agencies to clarify their roles and responsibilities regarding the management of public access, to identify and prioritize areas requiring access planning, and to carry out planning in key areas in order to secure recreation use opportunities, reduce environmental impacts and resolve disputes.

The Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB) has advocated that the provincial government complete the RAMP process with stakeholders for several years, most recently via correspondence in June 2007 which included the need for a 'scoping study' to assess an appropriate process for RAMP completion.

The ILMB agreed to undertake a scoping study with the main purpose being to:

1. Describe the current status of the Bulkley RAMP (e.g. that incorporates various agency/club agreements; that identifies what is believed to be the contentious unresolved areas).
2. Identify key stakeholders (e.g. local recreation organizations), agencies, First Nations, and others who may have an interest in a process to complete the RAMP; and
3. Identify process options for RAMP completion including pros and cons, and provide a sense of which option might work best and why.

ILMB is client-focussed and therefore receives direction from client agencies regarding priorities for strategic resource planning, based on input from stakeholders and First Nations. ILMB has provided the support and direction for this scoping project regarding RAMP completion, but the final decision on whether to undertake a RAMP completion process will be determined by ILMB's Board of Directors through the prioritization of all planning projects in the Northern Interior Region, and available resources to support those projects.

## **Methods**

The main method used to address this scoping study was:

- (i) targeted interviews with key stakeholders, agency staff, and First Nations, and
- (ii) review and comment of a draft report by those interviewed.

Appendix 1 lists those interviewed and those that provided feedback on an earlier draft document. Sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to all those who contributed many valuable ideas and comments.

Numerous potential contacts were identified during the course of the interviews; in order to keep the project within budget, not everyone identified could be contacted.

In total 33 people were interviewed from a wide variety of perspectives including individuals involved with motorized and non-motorized recreation organizations, BVCRB, resource agencies, local government, and First Nations. Although many of the stakeholders interviewed are presidents or on the executive of organizations, the interviews were focussed on their views; they were not asked to represent the official views of their organization.

The intent of the interviews was not to negotiate a consensus process for completing the RAMP, but to listen carefully to the variety of views held. The contractor shared the notes of each interview with the individual surveyed for review and comment, with final notes provided in confidence to ILMB. Considering all of this valuable feedback, a draft report proposing a process was prepared.

The draft document was distributed to each individual interviewed for review and comment (as noted in Appendix 1). The draft document was revised in the preparation of this report considering the many thoughtful comments received. The feedback comments on the draft document were also assembled and provided in confidence to ILMB.

The proposed process in this report is for the consideration of ILMB and the provincial government, and should a RAMP completion process be undertaken, for the consideration of those involved.

## 1. Current Status of Bulkley RAMP

The original Bulkley RAMP resolved several areas and subsequent local agreements have addressed some of the unresolved, future process and non-designated areas identified in the original RAMP. The May 2006 ILMB report “Current Recreational Access Agreements: Bulkley TSA” summarizes the current status of local agreements and identifies remaining unresolved, future process and non-designated areas within the TSA as follows:

### Summer areas (non-designated or future process):

- Ashman Ridge
- Canyon Creek Ski Trails
- Chris Dahlie, Pine Creek and Dog Ski Trails
- Dome Trail, Cabin
- Microwave Plateau
- Owen, Passby and Elliot Creeks and Passby Creek Trail
- Serb Creek

### Winter areas (unresolved, non-designated or future process):

- Blunt Basin
- Boulder Creek Trail
- Bud Lake, Louise Lake, and Sandstone Lake
- Coffin Lake Road
- Corya Basin
- French Peak
- Hankin Lake
- Hankin Lookout Trail
- McDowell Lake, Road and Trails
- North Mulwain
- Rocky Ridge Road
- Seaton Basin and Seaton Basin Road
- Serb Creek
- Silvern Lakes Trail
- Telkwa Pass
- Toboggan Creek Road
- Woodmere, McKendrick Circle

A letter from the BVCRB to ILMB dated October 20, 2006 summarizes the outstanding areas that need to be addressed by a RAMP completion process. The areas identified are based on, and identical to, the areas noted above from the May 2006 ILMB report. Initial interviews conducted as part of this study further confirmed that this list appears appropriate.

The Bulkley Valley Quad Riders Club has approached the BVCRB to amend previous LRMP and RAMP decisions in select areas, e.g. Orange Creek Road, Onion Road and

Cronin Road. BVCRB has recommended that these proposed amendments be reviewed as part of the overall strategic decisions that need to be made in a RAMP completion process. There was general support for this based on the initial interviews conducted where this question was asked.

In addition, some of those interviewed felt that existing local agreements could be improved if revisited through a RAMP completion process. And it was pointed out that other non-designated areas exist in the TSA not mentioned above that should also be considered.

In Section 3 on the “Process Options and Proposed Approach” suggestions are provided on what areas should be included as part of the RAMP completion process.

## **2. Key Organizations with an interest in RAMP Completion**

As listed in Appendix 2, there are at least 13 outdoor recreation organizations within the Bulkley Valley. In addition, likely several recreation organizations exist outside of Bulkley Valley who use the TSA area and have an interest in the outcome of the process. At least four provincial government agencies have an interest in RAMP completion (ILMB, MTSA, MOE and MOFR). Some government agencies have distinct functions that likely need to be considered separately; for example, within MOE, BC Parks and wildlife/ environment perspectives likely need to be represented separately. First Nations including the Office of the Wetsu’wet’en and local government including the Town of Smithers are also expected to have an interest in RAMP completion. There is general interest also by the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB) to get the RAMP completion process underway with outcomes that garners community support. In total over 20 organizations will likely need to be engaged in some capacity. The proposed approach for involving so many organizations is described in Section 3 below.

## **3. Process Options and Proposed Approach**

### **Support for RAMP Completion**

Nearly everyone interviewed voiced strong support for completing the RAMP for the Bulkley Valley. Several benefits from RAMP completion emerged from the discussions including:

- Need to provide certainty regarding motorized and non-motorized summer and winter designations so that people know where they can enjoy their preferred type of recreation (i.e. to help manage expectations);
- Need to provide certainty to better enable and support recreation organizations who build and maintain trails and cabins that their activities are indeed in areas suitable for activities they pursue; this helps streamline the trail and facility approval process within government and also can better position organizations to tap into potential funding sources for trail development;



- Need to promote appropriate areas from a tourism perspective by letting visitors know where they can recreate in the Bulkley Valley TSA and engage in various forms of outdoor recreation activities that the community supports; this can help generate tourism revenues to local communities and further diversify the local economy;
- Need to reduce conflicts within the community that can take considerable time and resources to address for both government and non-government organizations; and
- Need for the community at-large to better get along and respect each others recreational pursuits; if the outcomes of a RAMP completion process can be broadly supported by organizations, they are better positioned to work together in a more cooperative (versus competitive) manner.

It was pointed out RAMP completion needs to provide a balance of recreational opportunities in the Bulkley TSA. And that this cannot be achieved by continuing with past practices of one-off agreements.

### **Issues to be addressed**

Nearly everyone interviewed agreed that the main issue at hand that needs resolving through a RAMP completion process is the designation of ground-based motorized (M) and non-motorized (NM) areas for summer and winter recreation. It was also generally acknowledged that this is mainly, but not exclusively, a public recreation issue, where existing and proposed tenured commercial recreation interests need to be factored into the process.

That said, a number of people noted other issues that should ideally be addressed at some point such as cabin use agreements, appropriateness of new cabins, aerial recreation access using helicopters, and the need to foster low impact recreation use practices.

Some people interviewed feel a RAMP completion process should be focussed on the M and NM designations so that this key task is successfully tackled, whereas others feel that there is a unique opportunity to address other issues (such as those noted above) during a RAMP completion process that we should take advantage of. The concern here being if we don't do this now, there may not be another forum in the future to address other important recreation issues.

An important part of the M and NM designation process is addressing where dispersed use may or may not be appropriate, and where use should be defined to a corridor (e.g. to provide access while limiting use to an existing road). These determinations will also help support recent amendments to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) aimed at protecting the environment from damage caused by recreational activities.

*It is proposed that:* the issue to be addressed in a RAMP completion process is M and NM summer and winter designations, and that other issues be tracked and prioritized but not addressed in order to stay focussed.

Accomplishing the important task of M and NM designations alone will be a challenge and, if addressed well, a huge success. That said during the course of deliberations, other important issues could be listed and prioritized ('parked') for consideration in a possible future post-RAMP completion process or processes. If recreation organizations can work well together delivering M and NM designations, the improved communication and cooperation generated by the RAMP completion process can hopefully better allow those organizations to address other issues with limited government support.

The concern of addressing several other issues within the RAMP completion process is 'scope creep' or lack of focus which could significantly delay, or at worst potentially derail, the process. That said if the RAMP completion process is able to address the M and NM designations before the targeted timelines (see below) for process completion, process participants could then consider addressing some other key issues.

### **Recreation and non-recreation use**

When asked, there was general support that the M and NM designations apply to both public and commercial recreation, and that they not apply to non-recreational uses. For example, that a M winter recreation area be available for public snowmobiling and be potentially available also for commercial guided snowmobiling where appropriate (e.g. considering impacts on public recreation); and NM winter areas not be available to either public or commercial snowmobiling.

There was also general support that recreation M and NM designations not impact non-recreational access; for example use of snowmobiles needed to support a trapline, access to a communication tower, or First Nations traditional uses. That said there was concern by some that the distinction between what is a recreational activity, and what is not recreation, can be blurred and that a clear definition is needed. For example, it may be appropriate for staff working for a guided adventure tourism operator to provide base camps with supplies by using M access in a NM area that applies to their commercial recreation clients and public recreation users.

Most recreation access plans in BC, including those in the Kootenays and the neighboring Morice LRMP, apply to both public and commercial recreation, but do not apply to non-recreational uses. Adopting a similar approach for Bulkley RAMP completion would be consistent with approaches taken elsewhere in BC.

*It is proposed that:* the M and NM designations apply to both public and commercial recreation but do not apply to non-recreation uses. The distinction between recreation and non-recreation activities should be developed at the outset of the process including the use of clear examples.

## **Areas to be addressed**

As noted in Section 2, there is general support that the areas identified in the May 2006 ILMB report that remain unresolved, non-designated or future process, be addressed as part of the RAMP completion process.

Although there is support for ‘completing’ the RAMP and not revisiting previous decisions, there is also recognition that the original RAMP decisions do need to be amended if warranted i.e. that RAMP, like other plans, need to be living documents that can be updated and changed where needed. Given that context, there is also expressed support via the interviews for considering areas where formal amendments to the existing RAMP have been proposed to BVCRB where BVCRB has agreed that the issue should be best addressed as part of a strategic RAMP completion process.

Also, as noted in Section 2, some of those interviewed felt that existing local agreements could be improved if revisited through a strategic RAMP completion process.

Another issue is whether or not all areas within the TSA should be addressed in a RAMP completion process (i.e. leaving no ‘holes’ in the map for M and NM designations). Some areas within the TSA are relatively inaccessible and have very little recreation use. However, access within the TSA can change fast if roads are needed for resource uses such as timber harvesting and mining. Although it is easier to proactively provide a designation before an area becomes an issue, it may be difficult to decide today what the designation should be given limited information.

One special issue is the Starr Creek cabin area. Part of the area is in the Morice LRMP yet most (but not all) of the recreational use stems from the residents in the Bulkley Valley. The Morice LRMP includes M and NM designations but noted this area as a ‘future process’ area likely in part for this reason. Most of those interviewed that are aware of the issues would like the area addressed as part of Bulkley RAMP completion process provided it is done in a sensitive manner that can be supported by those involved in Morice LRMP implementation.

### *It is proposed that:*

- The unresolved, non-designated or future process areas noted in the May 2006 ILMB report (as listed in Section 2) be addressed;
- Proposed amendments to LRMP/RAMP that have been submitted to BVCRB be addressed (i.e. other existing RAMP decisions not be revisited unless there is Table support by consensus to do so);
- Where RAMP completion process Table (see below) collectively supports revisiting a post-RAMP local agreement, that those areas also be addressed;
- All other non-designated areas in the TSA be thoughtfully considered as part of the RAMP completion process which may lead to either: (i) a M or NM designation; or (ii) a decision that a designation is not needed at this time; and
- Those involved in Morice LRMP implementation be approached to determine if they would support the Starr Creek cabin area being included for consideration in

the Bulkley RAMP completion process provided that any recommendations regarding M and NM designations are ultimately decided by the Morice LRMP.

### **Government roles and responsibilities**

The BVCRB's October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006 letter to ILMB requested that government agencies clarify their roles and responsibilities in regards to the management of Crown lands for recreational use. They note a similar recommendation by the Forest Practices Board in this regard in a special report on access management in BC.

Although not explicitly asked in most of the interviews, several interviewees raised a similar concern that government roles in recreation management were not clear to them. With many public recreation responsibilities recently transferred from the Ministry of Forests and Range to the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, it would be timely for government agencies to clarify their respective roles in a manner that is understood by all.

*It is proposed that:* government agencies in the Bulkley Valley work together to describe or clarify their roles and responsibilities in a jointly approved document that would be made available prior to, or at the outset of, the RAMP completion process and that this document include links to statutory authorities.

### **Government commitment**

A number of people interviewed were concerned that government may not follow through and implement the outcomes of a RAMP completion process. Issues raised included concern that government might ignore the outcomes; that no or ineffective resources would be committed to RAMP implementation efforts (such as signage, maps, other communication efforts and, if necessary, enforcement); and those individuals who may not support outcomes of the process would try and do an 'end-run' by contacting elected officials, and that this could undermine efforts.

Although there is strong support to complete the RAMP, there is also some process fatigue and scepticism based on previous experiences that the outcome of a RAMP completion process will actually get effectively implemented. Some of the concerns also relate to obtaining clear support from government regarding a dispute resolution process where it is made clear to all concerned that designations decisions will in fact get made (see below).

*It is proposed that:* government agencies that 'champion' (see below) the RAMP completion process obtain clear support from their respective ministers that the process will lead to a resolution of M and NM access issues in the TSA, and that the minister's support the process (i.e. will make it clear that a political 'end run' is not an option, that those with an interest in RAMP completion need to participate in the process). And further that the respective ministry's signal clear support for reasonable staff and financial resources needed to effectively implement that plan including communication

(education and awareness including maps), signage, monitoring, and compliance and enforcement.

### **Process champions**

Potential co-champions for a RAMP completion process frequently raised or discussed at interviews included ILMB, MTSA and BVCRB.

ILMB has a clear mandate in strategic resource planning and its sustainable resource management planning (SRMP) framework enables focused sector-specific planning, such as for recreation, where needed. ILMB has championed several recreation-related SRMPs in the Kootenays that address M and NM recreational access designations, and is currently working with MTSA in testing the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) recreation planning process in two pilot areas. As noted earlier, ILMB is client-focussed and therefore receives direction from client agencies regarding priorities for strategic resource planning, based on input from stakeholders and First Nations. ILMB has provided the support and direction for this scoping project regarding RAMP completion, but the final decision on whether to undertake a RAMP completion process will be determined by ILMB's Board of Directors through the prioritization of all planning projects in the Northern Interior Region, and available resources to support those projects.

MTSA has overall responsibilities for public and commercial recreation on Crown lands outside of parks including the implementation of recreation-related plans undertaken under the auspices of ILMB (which are usually done as a result of MTSA support). Public recreation trails and facilities, and commercial recreation uses, need to be authorized by MTSA on Crown lands. MTSA has also been delegated enabling authority under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) to restrict or prohibit recreation uses in order to reduce recreation use conflicts or to protect recreation and range resource values. Plans prepared by ILMB for recreation have no legal effect on public recreation use unless MTSA uses its enabling authority under FRPA for that purpose.

Although MOE- BC Parks is responsible for recreational use of parks, this is a relatively small (although still important) component of the overall RAMP completion process.

The BVCRB was first established in 1991 to complete the Bulkley LRMP. The BVCRB is a collection of local citizens with a range of value perspectives. With the LRMP completed in 1998, a new BVCRB was formed with a new focus. The purpose of the BVCRB today is to advise government on resource management, monitor resource management plans on Crown lands, act as a vehicle for public input on issues arising from the LRMP (such as RAMP completion), and review any proposed changes to the LRMP.

Based on feedback from interviews, there was general support that ILMB and MTSA co-champion a RAMP completion process. Many also supported that the BVCRB play a role as co-champion whereas some did not feel it was appropriate or were not sure.

*It is proposed that:* ILMB and MTSA co-champion the RAMP completion process. Since the key issue needing resolution is public recreation, with existing tenured and proposed commercial recreation uses factored in, it is proposed that the key unit within MTSA that champions the process is the Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch.

### **Inter-agency support team**

An important role of an inter-agency support team is to help ensure the most up-to-date and accurate information is made available for consideration in the RAMP completion process. In addition to ILMB and MTSA Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch as proposed co-champions, the support team needs to include MTSA Adventure Tourism Branch so that information regarding existing and proposed commercial recreation use is made available.

Also other agencies have an interest in RAMP completion including MOE and MOFR. MOE's interests include wildlife conservation, environmental protection, and park management including recreational use within parks. Although MOFR no longer has a direct public recreation mandate (i.e. most FRPA recreation provisions have been delegated to MTSA), they are greatly influenced by and affect recreation use opportunities. The *Ministry of Forests and Range Act* mandates MOFR to plan for the use of forest and range resources in consideration of outdoor recreation values. For example, keeping access open or closing access (e.g. via access control structures) can have a significant impact on MOFR, forest industry and recreation users. If there were buy-in via RAMP completion for why control structures are in place, there would be less problems with vandalism.

MOE and MOFR also have conservation and forest officers needed to potentially help enforce RAMP completion decisions in cooperation with MTSA and ILMB.

The Office of the Wetsu'wet'en were not involved in the Bulkley LRMP or the original RAMP process in the late '90's. The Office of the Wetsu'wet'en would likely want to be involved in some capacity in a RAMP completion process to help ensure compatibility with its Territorial Stewardship Plan and other interests including tourism. The role of the the Office of the Wetsu'wet'en in the process would likely be government to government including possible involvement on, or in support of, the inter-agency team.

Local government such as Town of Smithers may also be interested in participating since the certainty afforded by a successful RAMP completion process could enable them to better market the backcountry for tourism.

The provision of relevant documents by the inter-agency support team should include the Bulkley Recreation Strategy prepared in 2001 and the Bulkley Tourism Opportunities Study prepared in 2002.

*It is proposed that:* an inter-agency support team be formed with representation from ILMB, MTSA Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch, MTSA Adventure Tourism Branch, MOE- BC Parks, MOE – fish and wildlife, MOFR, and the Office of the Wetsu’wet’en. Local government, such as the Town of Smithers, should also be contacted to determine if they would like to participate on a support team.

If the Office of the Wetsu’wet’en are unable to be on the team, the team needs to ensure that their interests and values, where known, are made available for consideration in the RAMP completion process. The team also needs to ensure the interests and values of the Lake Babine Nation are made available where known to help inform the process.

### **Table approach**

Initially during the interview process, two process options were explored for completing the RAMP: one where a Table is formed representing the diverse organizations with an interest in RAMP completion; and one where diverse organizations are approached one-on-one via a mediation process (i.e. without forming a Table) in an effort to develop a shared RAMP completion agreement. Several pros and cons were presented during these initial interviews (see Appendix 3) that were in general supported as appropriate implications between the two options. Most of the feedback received from these initial interviews strongly supported a Table approach, i.e. that a Table representing various organizational interests be formed to support RAMP completion.

*It is proposed that:* a RAMP completion Table be formed considering the discussions in Appendix 3 that in general were endorsed as appropriate based on initial interview feedback.

### **Table size and structure**

Given the support for forming a Table, most of later interviews focused on what kind of Table should be formed in terms of size and structure. One question asked is whether the Table should be a large one or a small one. Most of those interviewed on that question supported a small Table feeling that it would be more productive with less opportunities for counterproductive ‘grandstanding’. Some felt that a large Table is preferred since more organizations can be more directly involved and there is a greater chance for buy-in afterwards, and further that good ideas can come from larger groups. Most asked however felt that large Tables can be very difficult (and potentially expensive) to manage with a greater chance that the process could go sideways or be significantly delayed.

There was also general support when asked that two Tables (or sub-tables) be formed to address summer and winter M and NM recreation designations since the issues and interests are distinctive. The sub-tables can convene to share their respective recommendations and determine if some fine-tuning in the recommendations should be considered to take advantage of any shared interests among the two sub-tables.



*It is proposed that:* a relative small Table be formed (also see below) to address RAMP completion with sub-tables formed to address summer and winter recreation designations.

### **Table representation**

There was strong support that each Table representative has the bona fide support from the one or more organizations that that person represents. This could be achieved by a letter indicating that the organization fully supports that individual in negotiating on their behalf on the Table. This means that the Table representative has an implicit obligation to outreach with the organization(s) s/he represents as negotiations unfold during the process. The need for this kind of approach (relative to an interest-based Table) is to ensure organizational ‘buy-in’ of the outcomes from the RAMP completion process, and to help ensure that each organization takes responsibility to communicate and promote compliance with the completed RAMP to its members and also to non-members who share a similar interest.

There was also strong support that individuals selected on the Table to not be there to represent their personal interest, but to represent the broader interest of the organization they represent. Although many individuals can contribute positively to Table discussions based on their knowledge of the area and issues, and can offer great ideas that may not be based on personal interest, most people interviewed believed that it is very important to stick to an organizationally-based model regarding Table representation. This provides the clear accountability needed to help ensure the outcomes of the process do in fact get endorsed by the organizations needed to foster implementation.

From discussions in section 2, direct representation from all the organizations who likely have an interest in RAMP completion would result in a large Table likely exceeding 20 representatives. This would run counter to the desire and proposal that a small, more efficient and effective, Table be formed as noted above.

One way to ensure organizational involvement and to still establish a small Table is to base representation on a ‘constituency’ of organizations where applicable with a common interest. For example:



<b>Table representation</b>	<b>Sub-Table</b>	<b>Constituency of organizations (others may want to be included**)</b>
Motorized Summer Recreation	Summer	Bulkley Valley Quad Riders Club
Motorized Winter Recreation	Winter	Smithers Snowmobile Association
Fish and Wildlife Recreation*	Both	Bulkley Valley Rod and Gun Club Northwest Guide Outfitters
Hiking	Summer	Bulkley Valley Backpackers Alpine Club of Canada Bulkley Valley Naturalists
Backcountry Skiing	Winter	Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club Bulkley Valley Backpackers Alpine Club of Canada
Downhill Skiing	Winter	Ski and Ride Smithers
Horseback Recreation*	Summer	Backcountry Horsemen of BC
Tourism* (also known as Guided Adventure Tourism)	Both	Local government (see discussion below) Northwest Guide Outfitters Other applicable AT organization(s)
First Nations***	Both	Office of the Wetsu'wet'en Lake Babine Nation
Conservation: Wildlife/ Environment****	Both	Ministry of Environment – Fish and Wildlife

\* Northwest Guide Outfitters may want one of these other noted Table representatives to address their interests instead of Tourism

\*\* e.g. Northeast Slopes Trails Group if applicable

\*\*\* First Nations may prefer their interests to be represented in government to government discussions and not on the Table

\*\*\*\*MOE needs to be an advocate for conservation on the Table in addition to being on the inter-agency support team so that wildlife/environmental protection interests are factored. ILMB, MTSA and MOFR likely have no vested interest in a particular outcome other than one the Table supports.

Note: via interviews, individuals interviewed from the BV Outdoor Recreation Society and BV Freeriders did not feel they needed to be directly involved, but would need to review draft recommendations stemming from Table discussions (see public involvement below).

Feedback received via the interview process overwhelming favoured direct consideration of wildlife and other applicable environmental values in Table deliberations. It makes no sense to have a recreation designation supported by a solely recreation-oriented Table that results in inadvertent negative impacts on wildlife. It is also important that concerns related to conservation of fish and wildlife and other applicable environmental values are science-based and not a result of perceptions that may be unfounded. For this reason, it is important that a biologist within MOE fish and wildlife participate directly on the Table.

Local governments such as the Town of Smithers may or may not want to be represented at the Table. Some argue that they are not direct users of recreation resources though the tourism industry that is important to local government would benefit from RAMP completion through expected increased recreation activity. Discussions will be needed

with local governments to determine if it is appropriate for them to be directly involved or more appropriate that they be kept informed of the process.

Table members selected who represent one or more organizations located within the Bulkley Valley should strive to bring to the Table the interests in that form of recreation from organizations who may reside outside of the Bulkley Valley and other individuals in Bulkley Valley not affiliated with an organization.

*It is proposed that:* a small RAMP completion Table be formed based on a constituency of organizations (where applicable) similar to the example outlined above in order to provide clear accountability. In the example, there would be no more than 10 Table representatives: 7 for summer sub-table and 7 for winter sub-table (given some overlaps).

### **Being strategic**

There is strong support for RAMP completion in part because those interviewed recognize that a strategic set of decisions needs to be made versus a number of isolated ‘one-off’ decisions. There was concern about some of the local agreements following the original RAMP because they tended to be ‘one-off’ decisions by nature.

The recommendations of the Table therefore need to be a strategic package of decisions for entire TSA, and not incremental sets of decisions. In other words, even if some ‘easy wins’ are identified where M and NM designations can be readily agreed to, these interim agreements should be rolled into the entire TSA package of decisions and not be considered stand-alone decisions. For example, when dealing with some contentious areas where agreement may be difficult to obtain, it could mean re-visiting some of those ‘easy wins’ so that an overall desired balance is achieved.

To foster strategic decisions, it may be worthwhile for each Table representative to prioritize their interests among all the areas that are open for discussion. For example, if there are 20 winter recreation areas needing M and NM designations, the M and NM interests could rank those 20 areas from one (most important) to 20 (least important), respectively. Similarly, MOE could do this concerning areas where conservation values are relatively of higher or lower importance. This will help Table representatives think strategically, and based on those interviewed about such an approach, it seems to make sense.

*It is proposed that:* a strategic package of decisions be made by the Table (i.e. no ‘one-offs’) and that Table representatives rank areas from most to least important from their organization(s) perspective.

## **Public involvement**

Everyone interviewed who were asked stressed the importance efficient, robust and meaningful public involvement in order to garner community support for both the RAMP completion process and for the ensuing decisions stemming from the process. This would likely include open houses, newsletters, etc. that communicates to the public what the RAMP completion process is about, and how they can be involved to review and comment on draft material.

There was concern expressed in some interviews that the Table could make recommendations for public review, and then based on comments received, government could make substantive changes; and that if this were done without adequate Table involvement, this could undermine the process.

Resource sectors such as forestry and mining may either be indirectly affected by or may positively contribute to achieving some of the Table's recommendations. For example, if recommendations are made regarding the use of access control structures to restrict public access in some areas, or that certain roads be kept open to provide for public access in other areas. Getting buy-in and support from those sectors will be important and therefore proactive efforts to engage them in the public involvement process will be important.

*It is proposed that:* draft Table recommendations get distributed to the public (via robust process including open house and newsletters) for review, that comments received be carefully considered by the Table, and that the Table then make final recommendations regarding M and NM summer and winter recommendations providing a short rationale for their decision (e.g. that shows how it considered comments received). The final recommendations with rationale would be communicated back to the public.

## **Timelines**

Having clearly stated timelines are needed to help ensure the RAMP completion process moves forward in a timely manner. On one hand, no one is interested in a process that is excessively long where the need to make timely decisions is inordinately stalled, on the other hand, decisions that get made are consequential so rushing Table agreements is not supported either.

A 12 month timeline to initiate and finalize RAMP completion, including public involvement (see above) and dispute resolution (see below), was proposed to several individuals during the interview process. There was general agreement that a one-year timeframe is doable and appropriate to help drive the process, and ultimately, a decision.

A process that drags on excessively beyond a year can curtail the positive momentum needed to reach agreement, can cause stakeholder fatigue and risk disengagement, and will further stress limited agency resources. It is important the decisions be made using

the best readily available information without necessitating new inventory or data collection.

There was also recognition that before the process officially ‘kicks off’, that co-champions and inter-agency support team will likely need about 3 months preparation time to form the Table, develop draft Terms of Reference and communication strategy, and assemble relevant information and maps for the Tables consideration.

*It is proposed that:* following government preparation work to get the RAMP completion process set up, that a firm 12 month timeline be set from when the Table first convenes to when a final decision needs to be made. There should be milestones made along the way (e.g. 9 or 10 months for draft Table recommendations that are made available for public review and comment) in order to help ensure the 12 month timeline will be met.

### **Dispute resolution process**

The original RAMP, like most LRMPs, was designed to be based on consensus or shared agreement among the various interests involved. Unfortunately, those involved in the original RAMP ‘agreed to disagree’ about several areas that are noted as unresolved, future process or non-designated. The lack of making a final decision has caused problems in the ensuing years leading to support today by most organizations to complete the RAMP.

Ideally the recommendations from a RAMP completion process can be based on consensus or shared agreement; that should be the goal. But to prevent history repeating itself, it is important that Table representatives are aware of and support a dispute resolution process should there be disagreements with the understanding that at the end of a process, a decision will be made that all organizations are expected to support. Based on interview feedback, there was strong support for a dispute resolution process as proposed below.

*It is proposed that:* (1) the Table strives to achieve shared agreement on all M and NM designations via a consensus-based process; (2) that if the Table is unable to achieve this for some areas over a reasonable time-frame (given the timelines noted above), that a mediator be provided to assist them find agreement; and (3) that despite reasonable attempts to reach agreement, the Table still chooses to disagree about some areas, that a decision be made on the unresolved areas based on an arbitrator’s recommendation.

The Table should adopt a fair and straightforward process for consensus decision making and dispute resolution. The BVCRB developed a *Suggested RAMP Table Consensus Decision Making* document that should be considered. Other examples include rules for the selection of a mediator developed by the Mediation Roster Society, and dispute resolution processes adopted in support of LRMPs.

## **Arbitration**

Hopefully arbitration will not be needed, i.e. that the Table will develop consensus-based recommendations with or without the benefit of a mediator. However, if arbitration is necessary, it is important to know who the arbitrator may be. The arbitrator could be an individual or group within or outside government, and within or outside of the Bulkley Valley.

Government must approve the RAMP as it is ultimately responsible for recreation use on Crown lands. That suggests that the arbitrator should be an individual or group in government. The final decision maker for RAMP completion likely will be ILMB; therefore one option is that the ILMB regional manager be the arbitrator. The ILMB regional manager can seek advice from other agencies through the Skeena Regional Manager's Committee that is affiliated with the Northern Interior Inter-Agency Management Committee (IAMC).

Another option is to bring in a trained arbitrator outside of the Bulkley Valley with no vested interest in the outcome of the process. Arbitration rules developed by the BC Mediation and Arbitration Association could be adopted. The downside of this is the potential expense and lack of familiarity of that person with the recreational issues. They would need to be adequately briefed on the issues before making an arbitrated decision. It would need to be made clear that the arbitrator's decision is technically not binding on government but since government has signed off on the dispute resolution process at the outset of the process, it is expected to honour the final recommendations made by the arbitrator.

*It is proposed that:* if arbitration is needed, that the Table agree at the outset of the process to the use of an arbitrator and collectively decide who the arbitrator should be. This could either be a professional arbitrator from outside of the Bulkley Valley area that is brought in to make final recommendations for any unresolved areas or the ILMB regional manager.

## **Implementation**

Ideally all of the decisions stemming from a Bulkley RAMP completion process would be successfully implemented voluntarily by all recreation users. The organizations who have agreed to support the decisions would actively communicate those decisions to its members – and to others who share a similar recreation interest yet are not a member of that organization – and encourage compliance. This would be communicated as well to recreationists who do not reside in the Bulkley Valley yet use the area for recreation – to be respectful of the decisions made locally. Government would play an important role in communicating the decisions via maps, brochures, signage, etc.

Likely most non-compliance with the RAMP decisions will be inadvertent due to lack of information on the part of the recreation users. Most users will want to comply with the plan once they are aware of it.

Some recreationists will not agree with RAMP completion decisions, no matter how fair the process is, as there are aspects of the decision they do not support. Likely most of these recreationists will still respect the plan. Unfortunately, some who disagree with aspects of the plan will disregard the decisions and not comply. Hopefully in most cases where this happens the consequences will be low with respect to damaging the experience for the intended user group or wildlife/environmental values. However in some cases the consequences could be significant in terms of impacts.

MTSA has the enabling authority under FRPA to restrict or prohibit recreation activities on Crown land in order to reduce recreation use conflicts or to protect a recreation or range resource value. MOE has enabling authority to restrict or prohibit recreation activities under the *Wildlife Act* that may be damaging to wildlife. Although not common, these legislative tools have been used in other parts of the province where it was believed warranted. No legislative tools have been used as yet to help implement the original RAMP decisions or subsequent local agreements including those related to Telkwa caribou recovery.

On one hand, a legislative approach can work since most users will likely further respect the plan knowing that it is 'against the law' to not do so. On the other hand, enforcement capabilities are limited particularly in the backcountry, and it may be difficult to actually enforce a regulation that restricts or prohibits a certain type of use.

Three options were discussed with a number of people interviewed: (1) voluntary implementation only; (2) legislative implementation of all areas; or (3) voluntary implementation primarily but use of legislative restrictions or prohibitions in select areas based on risk. Most favoured the third option.

*It is proposed that:* RAMP implementation be primarily undertaken via voluntary means but that regulatory restrictions be considered in areas where non-compliance is anticipated and has expected consequential negative impacts on recreation, wildlife or other values.

A standard that defines unacceptable levels of non-compliance should be considered by the Table where, if breached, it would trigger the need for corrective actions that would include enhanced education and awareness, and where necessary legislative restrictions backed by compliance and enforcement.

### **Amendment process**

Although strategic plans, like LRMPs and RAMPs, are done to provide certainty regarding future uses, they also need to be responsive to change i.e. they need to be living documents that are updated where warranted without impacting on the strategic balance struck when the plan was prepared.

It is important that the RAMP amendment process be developed by the Table that tries to factor in need for certainty and need to be responsive to change, and that this become part of the Table's recommendation.

The BVCRB has a plan amendment process for the Bulkley LRMP that has been agreed to by ILMB. Some of those contacted believe this process should be used as the guideline for the amendment process for the RAMP. However some interviewed believe that process is too onerous and not responsive to changing circumstances or information, and should therefore not apply to a completed RAMP.

*It is proposed that:* the RAMP completion Table recommend an amendment process that strikes a balance between providing certainty and being responsive to change where warranted. The interview process did not explore options or a specific approach and none is proposed; that said, the LRMP amendment process could provide a starting point for developing a process suitable for the RAMP.



## Appendix 1: People Interviewed \* and Sent Draft Document #

<b>Person's Name</b> (in alphabetical order)	<b>Organization</b> (Note: individuals interviewed were not asked to speak officially for the organization they are affiliated with)
Gladys Atrill	Town of Smithers – Tourism
Eileen Astin	Bulkley Valley Backpackers
Wally Bergen**	Bulkley Valley Quad Riders Club
Ray Chipeniuk**	Northeast Slope Trails Group
Jamie Cox	Ski and Ride Smithers
Janette Daly	Backcountry Horsemen of BC – Northwest Chapter
Adrian de Groot***	Bulkley Valley (BV) Community Resources Board (BVCRB)
Steve Derby	Formerly on BVCRB and executive of Smithers Snowmobile Federation
David De Wit	Office of the Wetsu'wet'en
Jim Easterday**	Bulkley Valley Outdoor Recreation Society
Kevin Eskelin	Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (MTSA)– public recreation
Shannon Finnegan	Alpine Club of Canada – Bulkley/Skeena Chapter
Brian Fuhr**	Integrated Land Management Bureau
Robert Goldschmid**	Dispute Resolution Office, Ministry of Attorney General
Danelle Harris	Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts – adventure tourism
Dallas Kerr	BV Community Resources Board
Julia MacKenzie#	Integrated Land Management Bureau
Rob Maurer	Bulkley Freeriders Society
David Merner	Dispute Resolution Office, Ministry of Attorney General
Bob Mitchell	Ministry of Forests and Range
Sean Mitchell	Ministry of Environment – park recreation
Fred Oliemans@	Integrated Land Management Bureau
Gary Quanstrom**	BV Community Resources Board – Recreation Subcommittee
Geoff Recknell	Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club
Chris Ritchie#	Ministry of Environment – mountain pine beetle response
Brandin Schultz	Ministry of Environment - planning
George Schultze	Ministry of Environment – fish and wildlife
Joe Schwiegler#	Snowmobiler
Max Starr	Smithers Snowmobile Federation; also on BVCRB
Fred Thiessen #	MTSA - public recreation in Southern Interior (East) Region
Len Vanderstar	Ministry of Environment – ecosystems
Clint Walker**	Bulkley Valley Rod and Gun Club
Kathleen Yates	Bulkley Valley Naturalists

\* others were contacted by phone but did not respond

\*\* provided comments on draft document

\*\*\* provided feedback on draft document on behalf of BVCRB

@ provided feedback on preliminary draft document as contract manager

# was not sent draft document for a variety of reasons including not having an e-mail address



## **Appendix 2: Key Organizations with an interest in RAMP Process**

### **Stakeholders – recreation organizations**

- Alpine Club of Canada – Bulkley/Skeena Chapter
- Backcountry Horsemen of BC – Northwest Chapter
- Bulkley Freeriders Society
- Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club
- Bulkley Valley Backpackers
- Bulkley Valley Naturalists
- Bulkley Valley Outdoor Recreation Society
- Bulkley Valley Quad Riders Club
- Bulkley Valley Rod and Gun Club
- Northeast Slopes Trails Group
- Northwest Guide Outfitters
- Ski and Ride Smithers
- Smithers Snowmobile Association

### **Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board**

#### **First Nations**

- Office of the Wetsu'wet'en
- Lake Babine Nation

#### **Local Government**

- Town of Smithers
- Other local governments in the Babine Valley

#### **Provincial Government**

- Integrated Land Management Bureau
- Ministry of Environment – BC Parks
- Ministry of Environment – fish and wildlife/ecosystems
- Ministry of Forests and Range
- Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts – Public Recreation
- Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts – Adventure Tourism

### **Appendix 3: Process Options: Table vs Mediation Approach**

The following discussion was shared with most of those individuals initially interviewed, with feedback that the pros and cons in general seem reasonable. The overwhelming feedback was that a Table should be convened, so later interviews focused on options regarding the size of the Table and Table representation approaches. Note: although it was asked if another option existed, it became clear that the two options presented were the viable options.

#### Common to all options:

- Bulkley RAMP Update inter-agency technical support team formed
- Dispute resolution process defined and agreed to by RAMP Update participants should shared agreement/consensus not be reached for some areas
- Strategic assessment of motorized and non-motorized winter and summer recreation interests, and environmental values (wildlife, habitat) for areas to be addressed
- Visible ‘champions’ of process via chair or co-chairs: should that include ILMB, MTSA and BVCRB?
- No ‘one-off’ decisions; decisions are made for entire TSA that consider strategic context and seek a balanced solution based on the interests of various stakeholders and environmental values

#### Option A: RAMP Update “Table” Convened

- Diverse stakeholder and First Nations interests needed to update RAMP are represented on the “table”
- Individuals likely invited to ensure all key interests represented and balance (e.g. summer and winter; motorized and non-motorized; different activities – ATV and snowmobiling, hiking and backcountry skiing; public and commercial recreation; various agencies; First Nations)
- Should summer and winter uses be dealt with at the same time?
- Facilitator, TOR, process steps, dispute resolution process, timelines, etc, prepared and agreed to by table
- Key will be identifying a binding dispute resolution process that all parties agree to should consensus (shared agreement) not be reached, and agree to support and implement if process used to make a decision
- Top-down strategic view and bottom-up local user view both need to be considered
- Top-down strategic view would include ensuring range of recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes summer and winter; relative importance of unresolved areas to each interest (e.g. ranking them very high to low value to each interest); minimal impact on wildlife, particularly caribou
- Table may be able to decide on many unresolved areas via taking a strategic perspective in consultation with local interests

- Where Table can not resolve strategically, local level agreements could be sought via mediation
- Where draft local agreements can not be reached and “Table” consensus is not possible, the agreed-to dispute resolution process kicks in (e.g. binding arbitration by mediator with rationale).

Pros:

- Follows usual planning process
- Seeks consensus and locally supported shared agreements
- Can foster improved communication and relationship building
- If successful, the ‘buy-in’ will assist implementation
- Strong interest to update RAMP for many years
- A Table can provide a good vehicle for communication/outreach to other interests
- Potentially more transparent process

Cons:

- Can be time consuming and costly (e.g. getting good facilitator)
- Some interests may not like each other and meeting in same Table may result in more “storming” than “performing” (may need to select carefully individuals who get along)
- No assurance consensus will be reached (but dispute resolution process will assist in ensuring a decision is made)
- Some stakeholders in some communities are facing “process fatigue” and it may be a challenge to get them involved (but this may not be an issue for this area given the importance of the issue)

Option B: Mediation

Mediation is a process where an impartial third party helps two or more parties discuss a dispute and work toward a solution that is acceptable to all parties. Participation is voluntary. Unlike a judge or arbitrator, the mediator does not decide the outcome of the dispute. Mediated agreements tend to succeed because they result from a process that allows parties to create their own solutions.

In this option, a “Table” is not formed, rather:

- Key organizations with an interest in the unresolved areas are identified;
- Mediation works towards local agreements for each unresolved area for entire TSA (i.e. no ‘one-off’ agreements, but strategic agreement sought for all unresolved areas);
- Strategic context is applied as noted above;
- A dispute resolution process would be identified and applied, if needed, for each local unresolved area (likely a similar approach would develop); a default dispute resolution process may be required if local interests are totally unwilling to work towards an agreement and can’t reach agreement on a dispute resolution process
- BVCRB could be key NGO kept informed on RAMP update process and progress, and may play active champion role as co-chair of process

Pros:

- Seeks consensus via locally supported shared agreements for entire TSA
- Can foster improved communication and relationship building locally
- If successful, the 'buy-in' will assist implementation
- Would focus on local level agreements for unresolved areas and minimize process steps associated with forming a "Table"

Cons:

- Can be time consuming and costly (e.g. getting good mediator) but may be less so without having to form a "Table"
- Some interests may not want to work together and this may require shuttle diplomacy
- No assurance consensus will be reached (but dispute resolution process will assist in ensuring a decision is made)
- There could be miscommunication about process without a good communication strategy; could be viewed as 'backroom' deals without concerted effort to be inclusive

Option C: Other?