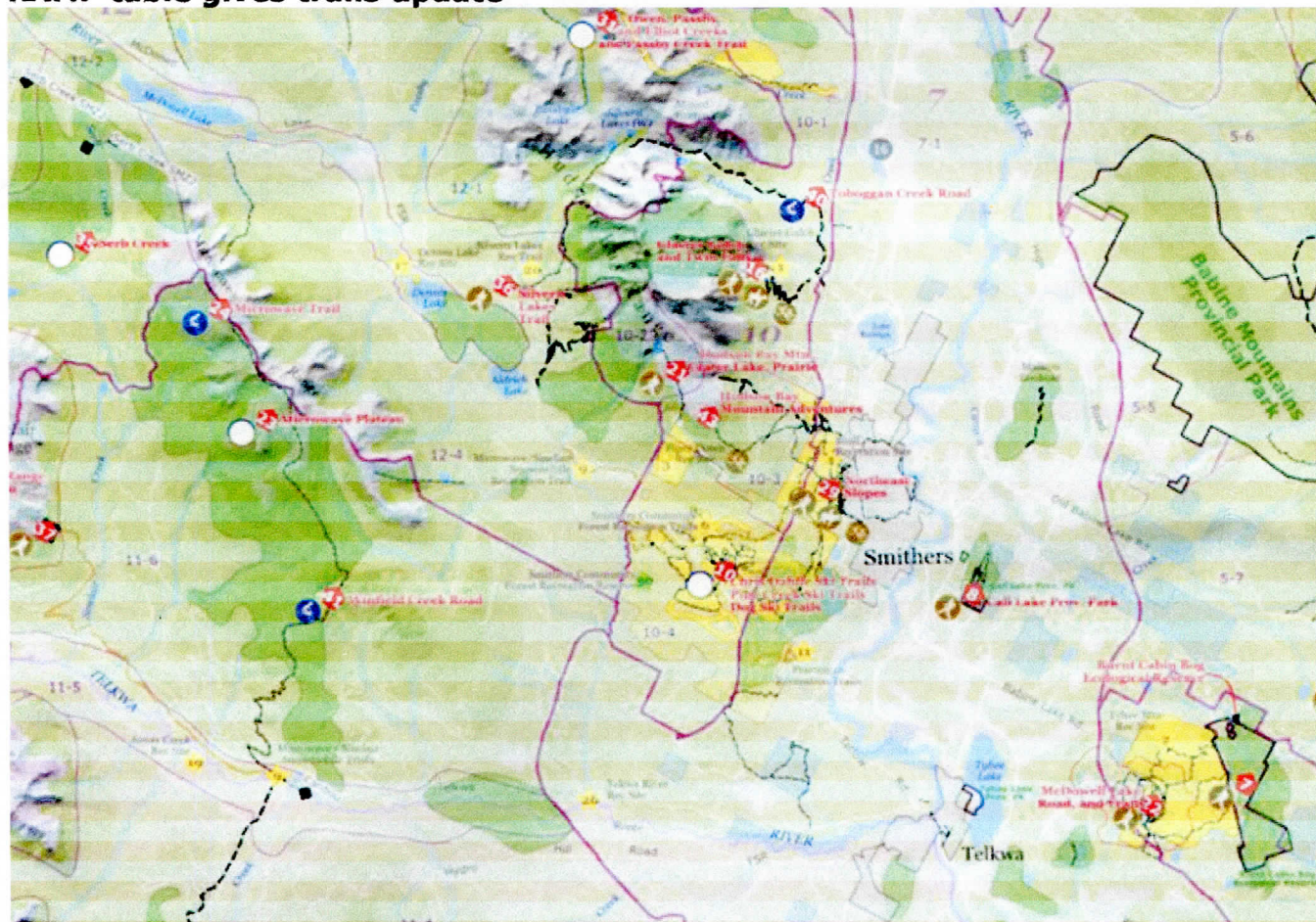


RAMP table gives trails update



By Smithers Interior News

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Residents who hike, ride or motor on Bulkley backcountry trails are being asked to comment on a summer trails plan.

Led by local recreation groups and community volunteers, the Recreation Access Management Plan is expected to resolve five areas of outstanding conflict between motorized and non-motorized users.

But the RAMP table also has two new initiatives.

One is to open up more non-motorized trails to people with limited mobility, says Ben Heemskerk, co-chair of the B.V. Community Resources Board that raised money and selected eight volunteers to run the RAMP.

"Baby boomers are ageing, and mobility is going to become a bigger issue for us," Heemskerk said. "It plays a big part in quality of life to get out and enjoy some of these places."

Helicopter, ski lift and special ATV access are some of the options that the RAMP table is looking at, he said, but they are hoping to get more advice directly from people with limited mobility.

A second initiative of the RAMP table is to create an intensive motorized use area—roughly 800 hectares of sub-alpine land where ATV riders and other off-roaders can go mud-bogging or climb steep hills.

Heemskerk said Hydro Hill and the lower Dome are two areas the RAMP table has put forward so far, but they are open

to other ideas. If the province approves it, he said it would be the first intensive motorized use area in B.C.

But a March 6 update from the summer RAMP table says its members are still mainly focused on completing unfinished trail use plans for these five areas:

—Dome trail and cabin

An area that includes Dome Mountain and nearby Deception Lake, the RAMP table has suggested that the Dome trail be designated for motorized use along hard-packed trails and structures built by the B.V. Quad Riders.

—Canyon Creek Ski Trails

A winter ski area that tends to be boggy in summer, the RAMP table has suggested Canyon Creek be non-motorized in summer but reviewed for snowmobile access during a future winter plan.

—Microwave trail and plateau

While the RAMP table suggested that Microwave trail be designated motorized in the summer, more work is needed to identify environmentally sensitive areas on the surrounding plateau.

—Owen, Passby and Elliot creeks

Trails in these three areas are being looked at separately and are still under discussion. Some stretches are being recommended for motorized use and others for non-motorized.

—Ashman Ridge

Ashman will be discussed in future RAMP meetings.

A map showing these and other backcountry trails in the Bulkley area is now online at www.bvcrb.ca/RAMP. Once finished, the final map will be available in print and as a Google Earth file.

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