



April 2, 2012

Ref: 187245

Mr. Jeff Anderson, Chair
Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board
PO Box 985
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Dear Jeff:

Various Bulkley Valley community members have expressed concerns about a potential conflict of interest due to Ben Heemskerk's leadership role with the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB) and its role in the Summer RAMP process, together with his employment as a Recreation Technician with the Nadina/Skeena-Stikine Recreation District.

Based on a thorough review of the Province's guidelines and standards of conduct for public service employees, Ben has not acted with any conflict of interest. His role as a Recreation Technician does not include any statutory or delegated authority, nor does it provide for any statutory or delegated decision-making. At this time, the Province has not made or accepted any decisions with respect to outcomes of the current RAMP process, and any recommendations put forward at the conclusion of the process will be reviewed and considered according to established policy and statutory authorities. Any representation to the RAMP process by the Ministry has been made by the District Recreation Officer (DRO) and the DRO will continue to be the sole liaison with the RAMP Table to provide support and resources when called upon (e.g., advice, funding).

The Province supports the current Summer RAMP process and fully supports the mandate of the BVCRB to complete the process initiated by the Province and now being led by the community. The current RAMP process is aligned with a key goal of the BC Trails Strategy – to collaboratively develop regional trail plans to contribute to a sustainable and world-renowned network of trails that provides opportunities for all user groups.

While the Ministry is confident that Ben has not acted with any conflict of interest, it is also evident that perceptions of conflict persist and continue to detract from the process. To ensure the greatest chance of success for the RAMP process, the Ministry has recommended that Ben:

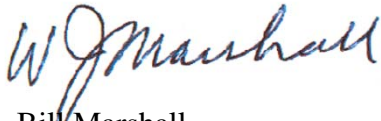
- Resign from the BVCRB Recreation Sub-committee;
- Step down as Vice Chair of the BVCRB; and
- Remain as a BVCRB member, but abstain from voting on recreation issues.

Ben has voluntarily accepted these recommendations effective immediately.

I want to emphasize again that this request was made due to the “perception” of a conflict of interest by some groups so that the Summer RAMP process can continue to move forward to a successful conclusion. In this case, we felt that the success of the project needed to be placed first even though it involved some personal sacrifice on Ben’s part.

The leadership Ben has demonstrated by taking on this “volunteer” role for recreation users and his community is exemplary. Unfortunately, the present circumstances make it difficult for him to continue in this role. Nevertheless, the Ministry acknowledges and respects Ben’s integrity, appreciates the significant work he has accomplished, and is grateful that he is a member of the Recreation Sites and Trails BC team.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Bill Marshall
Director, Recreation Sites and Trails Branch

pc: Mr. Jim Ladds, Regional Manager
Northern Interior Recreation Region

Mr. Kevin Eskelin, Recreation Officer
Nadina/Skeena-Stikine Recreation District

Mr. Ben Heemskerk, Recreation Technician
Nadina/Skeena-Stikine Recreation District