

## No conflict, eh?

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### Editor:

Yes, I've been called a foreigner, and told that I should have no voice in the management of the backcountry here.

But let's be real, the very idea of only letting those whose families have been in the valley for so-and-so many years is laughable.

No sound democratic process works that way.

This isn't about who was born where, what kind of accent he has, or what her skin colour is.

It's about interests, values, and respect.

It's foolish to say there is no conflict in the backcountry and the RAMP process is unnecessary.

A group of ladies who had booked the Starr Creek cabin a few winters back found that, due to a booking error, it had also been reserved by some snowmobile users.

They introduced themselves by riding up to the ladies and offering their satellite phone so they could call a helicopter and get out.

There *is* conflict, and we have to see it clearly before we can work out a plan to diminish it.

On a more serious note, in April of 2005 three snowmobile users burst into my lodge (I run a remote mountain lodge in the Howson Range), yelled insults, shoved guests and staff and refused to leave.

I appreciated it when the RCMP then posted two officers at the lodge when that group said they planned to return.

But I'm given to understand that I may no longer get that protection.

The kind of talk that pits self-styled oldtimers against newcomers is poisonous and divisive.

The only group that could make an argument like that are the Wet'suwet'en.

They don't.

But they are gracious and generous people.

Those of our neighbours who have come here more recently deserve as much respect as those who have been lucky enough to live here longer.

They have built, and are building, the valley every

bit as much as those mythical old-time miners and loggers.

Every interest on the land needs to be respected.

Trying to discredit the process discredits those that want to shut it down.

I have been vilified, threatened and assaulted by people who are my neighbours over the question whether there should be some areas where non-motorized backcountry users like skiers, splitboarders, snowshoers or cross-country skiers can go without encountering the noise, smell and tracks of snowmachines.

Currently, less than 2 per cent of our land base is designated non-motorized in the winter.

Is that really too much?

It is a well-recognized fact that sharing the land sounds like a good idea, but only works for one side.

If you are a non-smoker, try sharing a room with a smoker.

The smoker will be happy.

You might not be, and you'll be looking for another room.

Backcountry skiing will not happen where there is snowmobiling.

Skiers know that.

We ask snowmobilers to understand and respect it.

Hiking will not happen where there are all terrain vehicle users.

Hikers know that, and ask ATV users to understand and respect it.

If we are serious about respecting each others' interests, we need to listen to each other.

That is fair and reasonable.

If my 26 years in the valley have taught me anything, it is that the majority of people are fair and reasonable and willing to listen to each other.

The RAMP process gives us a chance to do that.

I wish it the best of success.

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