

RAMP Community Forum



What is the mandate of the BVCRB and the RAMP?

There have been questions surrounding the Recreational Access Management Plan's mandate and role under the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board. The BVCRB hopes to clear up any misunderstandings about its mandate to complete a summer RAMP.

In the early 1990s, the B.C. government began its land-use planning program. The public was requesting more comprehensive, open and consensus-based land use planning processes. The goal was to create certainty for the public, private sector and First Nations with a framework that would guide decisions about land and resource management. A high level of public involvement was required.

By the late 1990s, the BVCRB had completed the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The board worked independently, assisted by local government and the wider community. With broad community buy-in, the LRMP continues to act as a guide for development decisions.

When the LRMP was approved by the ministries of Forests, Energy and Mines, and Environment, Lands and Parks, the ministers commented that, "The Board has demonstrated that diverse interests can work together to develop consensus on future management of land and resources. Their cooperative approach and commitment to negotiation at the community level are exemplary for other land use planning processes. We encourage the Board to continue to participate in plan monitoring."

The BVCRB continues to monitor Crown land management and provide recommendations to government, with members coming from a broad cross-section of the community—forestry, mining, agriculture, hunting and conservation.

The LRMP also notes the importance of managing recreational access to provide a variety of experiences and minimize impacts on fish, wildlife and other environmental resources. It says, "A strategic Recreational Access Management Plan (RAMP) is required for the Bulkley Plan Area to assist in meeting this objective. Input by various interest groups and lead agencies will assist in developing the RAMP."

The provincial government's 2006 Bulkley LRMP Implementation Plan and Progress Report identifies RAMP completion as "very high" priority. It also identifies the BVCRB as the public body for implementation. In 2007, a report commissioned by the province showed that most of the 33 community members interviewed from a variety of backcountry areas were strongly in favour of completing the RAMP.

In 2009, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands encouraged a community-led process at arms-length from government. Written support for RAMP completion has come from Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Real Estate Foundation of BC, BV Quad Riders Club, Smithers Mountain Bike Association, and the BV Backpackers Society and the Backcountry Horsemen of BC - Bulkley Valley Chapter. Funding and in-kind support comes from the Real Estate Foundation of BC, the Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation,

Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Northwest Community College and the Bulkley Valley Research Centre.

The BVCRB facilitates the RAMP process, which involves a negotiation table involving 12 volunteers: two representatives each from the BV Quad Riders Club, Backcountry Horsemen of BC - Bulkley Valley Chapter, BV Backpackers and the Smithers Mountain Bike Association, plus four members of the public at large. The table has held two public information meetings, many smaller meetings, and carefully considers any letters and emails.

The BVCRB is mandated by government, organizations and community members to negotiate a summer RAMP that creates certainty for residents and visitors who access the backcountry. It is the continuation of a 20-year land management discussion for the region. As this area experiences increasing demands for resource development, a completed summer RAMP puts access in the community's hands, instead of opening the community up to restrictions imposed by government.

This is your recreational access management plan. We encourage you to get involved and provide input.

This is a weekly update from the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board to encourage community involvement in the ongoing summer Recreational Access Management Plan land-use discussions. If you have questions about the process or would like to provide input, please contact the RAMP table committee at www.bvcrb.ca/RAMP.