



To: Adrian DeGroot
Chairperson
BV Community Resource Board

March 10, 2008

Re: RAMP funding terminated

In November of 2007, the Smithers office of the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) proposed to fund the re-opening of the Bulkley Valley Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) in the amount of \$40,000. That amount was subsequently reduced by the ILMB to \$26,000 and on or about February 18, 2008, the ILMB regional manager terminated the proposal completely.

In an email from Eamon O'Donoghue, regional manager of the Skeena region of the ILMB, to Adrian DeGroot, chair of the Community Resource Board (CRB) dated February 18, 2008, O'Donoghue explains three reasons that the ILMB funding proposal was withdrawn.

To paraphrase, the first reason was that the CRB should have accepted the initial proposal for \$40,000 in November. We see the situation differently. A director of the BV Outdoor Recreation Society attended the November CRB meeting and observed that the ILMB was not able to make a firm proposal at that time. The amount of funding was the only firm fact presented by the attending representative of the ILMB. The lack of a substantial proposal by the ILMB raised questions from the CRB directors about the terms of reference, choice of a mediator, buy-in from all relevant government agencies, timing and other issues. The result of the meeting was that the ILMB representative promised to find answers to the concerns of the CRB directors and get back to the CRB. Simply put, there was no ILMB proposal for the CRB to accept.

The second reason offered in O'Donoghue's email is that budget restraints forced the withdrawal of the proposal.

The third stated reason for the termination of the proposal is that "...ILMB considered supporting the project with the understanding that the CRB would undertake the project with little support from government (other than financial). The CRB was looking for more government commitment around the process and decision making than we were able to make"

In our opinion, this assertion is unworkable. The CRB is a volunteer board that relays public concerns to government regarding issues related to the BV Land and Resource Management Plan (BV LRMP). The directors are not compensated and serve the

community on a part-time basis. They may not be able to take time out from busy lives to organize a RAMP table and it is unreasonable to ask them.

The RAMP process must actively involve government. Local agencies must buy into the process and give technical advice and support. The result of the RAMP process is a set of land use designations that must be acceptable to government and becomes part of government. The CRB directors are interested and concerned citizens but to assume that they have enough technical knowledge about the requirements of government to organize a RAMP table shifts the responsibility of government to citizens and trivializes the RAMP process.

To keep the RAMP process fair, any decisions that may be seen as biased such as the choice of table representatives or the terms of reference must come from either a mediator and/or government staff who act impartially in an official capacity. If no consensus is easily reached by representatives of recreation user groups at the RAMP table, government staff must be willing to step in and make the decision for the table or pressure the table to reach consensus. The community will not buy in to RAMP decisions made without the active participation of local government agencies. The suggestion from ILMB that government commitment is not necessary makes one think that the proposal was flawed from the beginning.

The RAMP table will operate well on its own once the table is set up if the groundwork leading up to the table is seen to be impartial. Government agencies will not have to spend a great deal of staff time or resources to set the stage for success but only government staff can act with enough impartiality and credibility.

We look forward to the next proposal from the ILMB.

Jim Easterday
Spokesperson, BVORS

CC Eamon O'Donoghue, Regional Manager, ILMB