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Get on board with RAMP

By Cameron Orr
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The Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB) has secured funding to move ahead on developing a Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) for the area.

The BVCRB, formed in 1991 to facilitate a resource management plan for the Bulkley Timber Supply Area, have received funding from the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (a branch of the government), the Northwest Community College, and the Bulkley Valley Research Centre.

The RAMP, once completed, will contribute to a pilot project in the implementation of the B.C. government's Provincial Trails Strategy.

"The importance of the plan is that it provides certainty on the land base for recreational users which reduces public conflict, increases the amenities in our community," ex-

plained BVCRB member Ben Heemskerck. "That's partially what attracted me here, recreational amenities."

He's confident that there is plenty of space in the valley for all users to get value from the land.

"It's a huge backyard that we have here and there's opportunities for all user groups to have a high value experience. So we just want to make sure all user groups ... that a high value opportunity exists for you here," he said.

He said historically there have been some incidents of conflict with recreation users, but he added that mostly it's from a lack of information sharing between motorized and non-motorized recreation users.

What is most important for the group is that the process is done well.

"When people look back 50 years from now, it would be great if they said we got it right," said Heemskerck.

Having the plan will

help with tourism, a major backbone of the area economy. He cited a 2010 tourism study which found that the Bulkley Valley economy receives over \$21 million annually from tourism.

"Not only does backcountry recreation play an important role in our tourism economy, it also attracts and retains new residents."

There are two ways people can become involved. On June 30 at 7 p.m., at the Northwest Community College, the group is hosting a public information session.

People can also apply to join the RAMP committee. A selection committee is currently looking for applications for six representatives from outdoor recreation clubs and six members of the public at large who wish to participate in the RAMP process.

To get more information on the process or to find out more about applying, you can e-mail ramp@bvcrb.ca or visit their website at bvcrb.ca.