

**Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
B.C.'s first community-driven RAMP process underway**

A volunteer committee began working last month on a summer Recreational Access Management Plan (RAMP) for the Bulkley Valley that will be the first community-driven process of its kind in the province.

The RAMP table brings together a diversity of recreational perspectives by involving two representatives each from the Bulkley Valley Quad Riders, Backcountry Horsemen, Smithers Mountain Bike Association and Bulkley Valley Backpackers. Four community representatives from the public are also at the table.

"Public input is not only important, it's necessary. Unless the community's views are seen to be represented in the plan, there's no buy-in," said facilitator Tom Chamberlin, a Smithers-based mediation specialist.

The committee began meeting bi-weekly in October and hopes to have a draft management plan available for public review early in the new year. At that time, a public open house will be held to gather feedback. Community members wishing to provide input prior to the open house can contact table members via email, through the Community Resources Board website at www.bvcrb.ca/ramp/table_members.

The plan is expected to promote recreation in the valley and reduce conflicts between user groups by better defining recreational areas. It will also allow for long-term maintenance of local recreation areas.

"I am hoping this approach results in greater certainty, increased recreation opportunity, and reduced conflict — ideally improving the overall sustainability of recreation in the Bulkley Valley," said Kevin Eskelin with Recreational Sites and Trails B.C. He added that the process is being treated as a pilot project for the Provincial Trail Strategy. "The province has a role to play in the review and implementation of the plan, but the process itself is driven by the community."

Although government-driven plans have been undertaken for the Kootenay and Vanderhoof areas, this is the province's first community-led RAMP. Once completed, the plan will be presented to the provincial government as recommendations. The process is funded by Recreational Sites and Trails B.C., Wetzin'Kwa Community Forest and the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. A winter access management plan to follow the summer RAMP will be dependent on funding.

The Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board was established in 1991 to complete the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). Its purpose is to guide land-use planning decisions through a diversity of perspectives and public input. For more information, contact BVCRB Recreation Sub-Committee chair Ben Heemskerk at ChairRec@bvcrb.ca.