

# Telkwa Mountains Recreation Access Management Advisory Group

Meeting minutes, April 20, 2016. Meeting convened at 5:30 PM, Nora Building, Smithers, B. C.

## Attendance/Representation:

ATVers - Dave Tolton, Ed Hinchliffe  
Conservation - Jim Easterday, Daphne Hart  
Hikers/backpackers - Dina Hanson, Jonathan Van Barneveld  
Backcountry horsemen – Eric Becker  
Mineral exploration (hobby) - Daryl Hanson  
Bulkley Valley Stewardship Coalition - Jay Gilden  
Skiers - Mike Dunbar  
Snowmobilers – Wade Lubbers, Les Auston  
Absent: Angling and hunting - Igor Steciw, Skiers - Dave Pellow

## Guests/Speakers:

Jocelyn Campbell, Ecosystems Section Head, Skeena Region, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations  
Paddy Hirshfield, Acting Chair, Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board  
Tony Pesklevits, Director, Resource Management, FLNR, Skeena

**Facilitated by:** Pam Penner

**Recorder:** Jill Dunbar

## Agenda (For April 20 and 21 meetings)

- **Presentation by Paddy Hirshfield, Acting Chair, Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board**
- **Revision of Jocelyn's role and introduction of Tony Pesklevits**
- **Scheduling**
- **Terms of Reference – revision request re: decision making protocol**
- **Results of request for summary of documentation from January meetings with individual value groups**
- **BVCRB website documents (Jill)**
- **Telemetry data (Jocelyn)**
- **Grizzly Plateau (summer): Number of rides**
- **Access to Meat Cache**
- **Core Recovery Area**
- **Starr Basin – should it be divided? (i.e., east, west and northwest of Mooseskin Johnny)**

## **Presentation by Paddy Hirshfield, Acting Chair, Bulkeley Valley Community Resources Board**

The BVCRB has 25 years of experience with providing advice to government. A wide range of values is represented. The Board has recently looked at issues such as pipelines, Summer RAMP, and forest development. There are parallels between the work of this TRAM group and the BVCRB. The BVCRB recognizes that recreation is a key value therefore it supports and thanks the volunteers working on the TRAM. The BVCRB currently has 3 vacancies and would encourage anyone interested to check the website, [bvcrb.ca](http://bvcrb.ca), or contact Paddy for information.

## **Revision of role of government representatives**

Jocelyn Campbell will now be responsible for advising the TRAM group on issues related to caribou biology. Tony Pesklevits, Director, Resource Management, FLNR, Skeena, will provide information on government procedures and policies.

Comment from group member: Government reps do not need to be present throughout meetings. Too many questions are being directed to them rather than discussed within the group.

Tony Pesklevits: The new roles will help with this. We are here as resource people. If the group wants privacy that can be arranged.

ACTION: Tony will prepare a statement clarifying new roles.

TP: In his experience, a better, more lasting result comes from having a group such as this come up with a solution, rather than having government proposing a solution and having it reviewed by the public. This group needs to make the rules very clear so that all users know what they are.

## **Scheduling**

Pam: There are two meetings scheduled for May and then June meetings will be for reviewing feedback from government. Do we need a time limit for discussions?

Group member: We'll make discussions fit the time available.

Pam: Next meetings: May 10 and 11, evenings

## **Terms of Reference**

Discussion: The decision-making process is confirmed as follows:

- An area is discussed
- A tentative vote is taken – non-binding, in order to take the pulse of the issue.
- If needed as a result of non-consensus, persuasive papers are prepared and distributed prior to next meeting for review of group members. These are sent to Pam to distribute to members by email. All team members are expected to read them prior to the next meeting and come prepared to vote on the issue.
- No further discussion.
- A final vote is taken. The results of the vote, and associated positions (either the same as or slightly modified from the persuasion papers) are collated and included in the package for government.
- Once all issues and areas are discussed, the package on the whole of the Telkwas is put together and the team has an opportunity to discuss package in its entirety, vote and

attempt to come to consensus. The results of those discussions are included in the recommendation package for government.

**Vote:** All are in favour of this process.

TP: The TRAM group role is to advise government. Objective is to come close to consensus. The final package will be presented to a government team for review. Government reps will be interested in background behind perspectives and will likely request clarification from this group. The government team will be interested in the rationale behind recommendations for each area as well as for the area as a whole. If there are abstentions from voting, the government team will want to know why.

Options for contents of the final package will be presented to this group, for example, whether persuasive papers need to be included.

The final package will go to the public and First Nations for consultation.

Group member: Will First Nations change anything that this TRAM group has recommended?

TP: If they state that aboriginal rights could be infringed upon, government will come back to the table. There is a legal obligation to carry out First Nations consultation. The public at large also needs to know what decisions government is considering.

Group member: What are our options if we disagree with what government does?

TP: It is hoped that you will support government. If you are planning to take a different run at it you should let us know right away.

**ACTION:** Tony will summarize the process and circulate prior to May 10 TRAM meeting.

## **Telemetry data & history of boundaries**

Jocelyn Campbell presented new maps with telemetry data showing likelihood of caribou locations at 95%, 75% and 50% probability levels – probability of a caribou being within a polygon during a season. Data has been accumulated since 2002.

Group member: Could this be automated and posted on the web daily, like fire weather?

JC: It is not always good to let people know exactly where the animals are, but will talk to Conrad.

Group member: Could the winter and summer data be combined at the 75% level and mapped, to make it easier for Conservation Officers?

JC: We still need a buffer around these areas.

JC: Research from other areas shows that elevation of 1000 to 1800m is used for calving, higher than that which is used the rest of the year.

Group member: The Core Recovery area is closed until August – but that may not apply, since nobody goes in there during calving season. The elevation outside of calving season is the issue.

JC: Collared animals are at higher elevations but we don't know if some uncollared caribou live at lower elevations and don't show up in data.

Origin of zone boundaries: Jocelyn presented slides showing zones and corresponding rationale from 1997 Telkwa caribou recreational access map. The 2003 and 2011 access agreements revised the recreational use parameters. Zone boundaries can be changed.

Group member: Do caribou need cover from predators?

JC: They need separation and distance from predators. They pick habitat based on safety (vs. food supply). Original Core Area does not cover enough of critical caribou habitat.

Group member: Boundaries should reflect telemetry data. We should talk about where Core Area boundaries need to be.

Group member: There were fewer animals in Starr when Morice LRMP was written than there are now. Agreement was that we wouldn't go there if animals were present.

Group member: Concern is with recreational users who don't respect this agreement.

Group member: Let's put a buffer around kernels shown by telemetry data and then come up with some exemptions for recreation. We agreed to recommend that snowmobilers have access to Grizzly Plateau so we need to find some areas for quadders, hikers, and skiers. There are limited opportunities in the area if we want to give caribou the best chance.

Group member: Caribou need room, and conditions change from year to year.

### **Grizzly Plateau (summer): Number of rides**

The group voted on number of motorized rides that would be recommended for Grizzly Plateau, however, upon further discussion, decided to place final votes after the persuasive papers have been circulated by email. There will be no presentations by authors of papers, in keeping with agreed-on process.

Grizzly Plateau	Preliminary results March 14	Final results April 20
In favour of not restricting rides to "one" (i.e., multiple rides)	7	5
In favour of keeping number of rides to one	4	5
In favour of zero rides	2	2
Members present	13	12

### **Core Recovery Area**

For discussion: Boundaries and impact of horses

Group member: Also wants to see discussion of extra enforcement of the closure. The users from rural Telkwa, Coalmine Road area need targeted education/increased awareness. The government must decide how to educate/enforce. It is not up to this group.

Pam: What does the group think about Core Area boundaries?

Group member: We need to discuss Starr Basin – all areas west of Mooseskin Johnny.

Pam: At the next meeting there will be a vote on the Core Area.

Jocelyn: Impact of horses and bikes: No data could be found. But risk to caribou is a function of likelihood of disturbance against magnitude of disturbance. And recreation that covers more area would be more likely to cause disturbance. As more people are in an area, and/or are in areas where there are caribou, especially in calving season, there is more risk of disturbance. Therefore bikes are probably a source of disturbance; horses not as much.

Group members: The Core Area is not very accessible for bikes and horses. The rules for non-motorized access apply. Horses – allowed to go wherever hikers do. Bikes – allowed to go on hard surfaces/trails only.

**Vote:**

In favour of leaving access to the Core Area as non-motorized: **10**. Against: **0**. Abstaining: **2** (abstainers conceded to majority). Absent: **2** members.

ACTION: Dina Hanson will write up rationale for decision to be included in recommendations.

ACTION: Dina Hanson will prepare a statement supporting the recommendation for a date change for closure of the area.

**Starr Basin – should it be divided? (i.e., east, west and northwest of Mooseskin Johnny)**

Group member: The snowmobilers value the area west of Mooseskin Johnny and want it to remain open. Access is being controlled. Club membership is required in order for someone to go there; updates on caribou locations are checked weekly; riders not in compliance are ticketed.

Group member: Through some undiscussed process this area went from non-motorized to motorized. Proposes that skiers and snowmobilers split the available use by timing, for example 4 days for each group. This could be was equal to 2 weekends, but the intent is not to limit this to weekends.

Group member: The south part of the Burnie Shea Park is motorized. There is no skiing there.

Jocelyn Campbell: It is summer and winter habitat – increasingly important for caribou.

Group member: Starr Basin is in Morice LRMP. A stated goal is for high quality motorized/non-motorized use.

Group member: The LRMP also has caribou conservation goals.

Group member: Activities shouldn't be restricted in spring when snowpack goes rock hard and wolves can go anywhere. There should also be some limited activity before then.

Tony Pesklevits: Tools to resolve land use planning conflicts include:

- Separate use in space (area/zones)
- Separate use in time (timeframe)
- Separate use by imposing conditions (environmental or conditions of use)

Consider which of these tools addresses conflicts that are 1) human/caribou, and 2) motorized/non-motorized. Government will be looking for these types of solutions.

Group member: There is space for 150 animals. Skiers are welcome in all snowmobiling areas. The high value snowmobiling ground is limited. Starr is safe and high value.

Group member: Would sanctioned rides be considered a conditional separation?

TP: There must be rules and enforcement. Club members have set a high bar.

JC: Doesn't agree that there is lots of space. There's precedence in the province about area closures for caribou.

Group member: How much time could be available for winter use?

JC: This requires analysis but it is possible.

Group member: Quadders only get one day – why the difference?

Group member: Snowmobiles and caribou use same terrain. Snowmobiles make it hard for caribou to paw through to lichen. Timing of activities should be separated by years – i.e. close the area for 3 years and then have staged reopening.

TP: We need to get a wide range of perspectives on the table.

Group member: There has been no hunting since 1973. What happened to caribou that were brought in?

Group member: We don't see wolves on these trails. But we get rid of people because they are easier to manage.

JC: We know that wolves killed caribou.

Group member: We should concentrate on conditions that could be applied to come up with a solution. Intent is to have some access. In absence of a consensus, government has stated that it is prepared to establish a motor vehicle prohibition and sanctioned access.

TP: Public input is important when making decisions for the proper management of wildlife. This is an opportunity for this group to come up with a balance and conditions for success.

**Meeting adjourned 9:40 PM**