

Fwd: [Stewards] WHMA Cancellations

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From: Jay Gilden <>

Date: Mon, 20 Jun 2022 at 11:11

Subject: [Stewards] WHMA Cancellations

To: BVSC List <stewards@bvsc.ca>

Hi Everyone:

> The Bulkley Valley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), along with the Bulkley Valley Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP) have been in effect in this area since 1998 & 2005 respectively. One of the objectives was to create a detailed community based consensus for protecting remaining public lands deemed important for wildlife habitat and sensitive environmental areas in the Valley. Public oversight of LRMP/SRMP implementation is conducted by the Community Resources Board (CRB). The CRB reviews projects to determine if they are consistent with the LRMP/SRMP directions. The Bulkley Valley LRMP/CRB is a well known province-wide land management model and has functioned relatively smoothly for decades.

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> One of the main features of the LRMP/SRMP is to conserve and protect wildlife habitat through designation as Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHMAs). The WHMAs provide guidance to ensure that resource extraction/grazing complement the protection and conservation of WHMA values such as migratory bird habitat, ungulate winter range, riparian areas, watershed integrity, habitat connectivity, recreational and spiritual values.

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> Sometime between 2018 to 2020, without notice to government conservation land personnel, the CRB, the Wet'suwet'en or the public in general, the Province's Land's Office decided to cancel these WHMAs along with existing Fish & Wildlife Reserves, eliminating interim protection measures until such time that these land parcels become a Wildlife Management Area under the Wildlife Act, thus making them "administered" conservation lands eligible for provincial funding.

> Given the cancellations, no longer are there maps of these areas' locations readily accessible to government agencies or resource/land developers, and thus we are now seeing development taking place in these land parcels that are contrary to their management direction established by the LRMP/SRMP and subsequent management protocol/direction.

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> Based on public pressure to date, there is currently an effort by the Skeena Region Conservation biologist to reinstate some of the WHMAs and F&W Reserves under the Land Act, however there is no assurance that they will not be cancelled in the future. In the course of this effort, we are recommending that these "non-administered" conservation land parcels be collectively upgraded to a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) under the Wildlife Act like Todagin Plateau. In fact, this process was under way at the time that B.C. Lands (Authorizations) cancelled their interim S. 16 & S.17 Land Act designations. A Wildlife Act WMA designation would provide statutory protection, afford management planning and on-the-ground operational budget to administer these lands, and would prevent cancellation of these hard fought land parcels for conservation purposes.

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> The Provincial Government's stated policy is to encourage, not undermine, the kind of local planning effort represented by our LRMP/SRMP. Reinstating and strengthening the pre-existing protections for these areas will serve to further these goals. So, to help support the ongoing effort to reverse the damage done by the ill advised effort to circumvent the LRMP/SRMP directions, please contact Nathan Cullen at nathan.cullen.MLA@leg.bc.ca to state your support for the LRMP/SRMP and the conservation objectives it stands for by calling for immediate interim protection of the WHMAs and former F&W Reserves through a Land Use Objective Regulation or Environment & Land Use Act Order until such time that a Wildlife Management Area designation is established for the collective set of WHMAs & F&W Reserves. You may wish to also copy the CRB: jeffmckay8@gmail.com.

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> Thanks to everyone for your support on this. We need to protect our LRMP.

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> Jay Gilden for the BVSC

Stewards mailing list

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<http://bvsc.ca/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/stewards>

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