
BACKGROUND

2004SRM0026-000591
July 22, 2004

Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

CONSENSUS MOVES MORICE LAND USE PLANS TO NEXT STAGE

MORICE AREA

- 15,000 square km lying north of Tweedsmuir Park, including the communities of Houston and Granisle
- Population approximately 5,200
- Heavily dependent on forestry (almost 60 per cent of employment base), followed by mining, tourism and agriculture

Planning Process

- Land and resource management planning began in September 2001.
- Fifteen sectors and two First Nations made up the planning table.
- Interim agreement signed in April 2001 by previous government and some table participants; not endorsed by some sectors.
- Planning consensus reached in March 2004.
- Cabinet has approved moving forward with the next stage of the planning process.

First Nations Involvement

- First Nations with an interest in the area include the Office of the Wet'suwet'en and the Lake Babine, Carrier Sekani, Cheslatta and Yekooche First Nations.
 - The Office of the Wet'suwet'en and the Lake Babine Nation, in combination, claim the entire plan area as traditional territories.
- The Office of the Wet'suwet'en and Lake Babine Nation participated directly at the planning table (Lake Babine withdrew in June 2003 after a change in leadership).
- The other three First Nations decided not to participate.
- The office of the Wet'suwet'en prepared a Territorial Stewardship Plan; many of its key elements are part of the consensus recommendations from the table.
- Government is negotiating a protocol with the Lake Babine First Nation for government to government discussions on the proposals.

Next Steps

- Government to government discussions with the office of the Wet'suwet'en and Lake Babine Nation to develop final draft land use designations and zoning.
- Cabinet reviews plan and makes final land use decisions in Open Cabinet.
- Government designates final protected areas.

Land Use Designations Recommended by Planning Table

Table 1. Proposed land use designations for the Morice area

Zones/Areas (see map for detail)	Allowed Uses	Hectares
Current Parks and Protected Areas	Red Bluff, Topley Landing (Babine Lake Marine) Park, Little Andrews Bay Marine Park, Morice River Ecological Reserve	563 .04% of region
Proposed Parks/ Conservancy	No mining or forestry, emphasis on tourism, recreation, conservation, and First Nations traditional activities	96,246 6.4% of region
Proposed Tourism/Mining Permitted: No commercial forestry or hydro	Mining and tourism permitted; no commercial forestry or hydro	306,916 20.5% of region
Proposed All Resource Uses Permitted	All uses - including tourism, forestry, mining, hydro	960,699 64.1% of region
All Resource Uses Permitted – Specific Values Identified	As above, except limitations on some activities (e.g. motorized recreation use, settlement)	135,582 9.0% of region

Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts of Recommendations

- In the long term, harvestable timber supply reduced by 7.4 per cent - no immediate impact on allowable annual cut and forest employment.
- Innovative forest management practices may reduce long-term economic impacts on forestry.
- Significant benefit to guide outfitting, guided angling, other commercial tourism and non-commercial recreation.
- Maintains access for 95 per cent of high-potential mineral exploration and development areas.
- Reduces environmental risk for all key wildlife species, including grizzly bears, caribou and mountain goat.
- Improves protection for rare ecosystems, freshwater shorelines and fish habitat.
- Brings forest age structure and species range closer to natural levels.

Media contact: Robert McConnell
Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
250 387-4962

Visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca for online information and services.