

SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT PLAN
TERMS OF REFERENCE
Revised September 15, 2002

Background

Due to its high natural resource values, the Southern Rocky Mountain area has attracted much attention. It is felt that additional resource management direction is required to adequately balance social, economic and environmental values.

The area comprises a largely undeveloped and relatively intact ecosystem that links the Canada-USA border through the Flathead, Bull, Wigwam and Elk River watersheds, and supports diverse and abundant wildlife. Other values in the area include: fisheries resources and water quality; tourism development and backcountry recreation activities; sub surface resources including minerals, coal, and petroleum resources; and timber harvesting.

The Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan land use planning process is to ensure economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. The intent is to stimulate the resource based economy; maintain areas of unique habitat and environmental value and consider the needs of local residents.

Purpose

Through a consultation and planning process, provide government with recommendations for resource management of the Provincial Crown land area to be covered by the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan.

The Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan (SRMMP) will take a balanced approach to encourage sustainable economic development and ensure that key conservation values are protected and maintained within the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan area. The plan will provide the basis for consistent decision-making in the area and will guide future tenures and permits in the plan area.

Within this area, the SRMMP is expected to address implementation of the Kootenay Boundary Higher Level Plan Order (“KBHLP”), refine and clarify the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan Implementation Strategy (“KBLUP-IS”), address gaps in the KBHLP and KBLUP-IS, and clarify strategic planning direction arising from the Forest Practices Code (“FPC”).

Plan Area

The area extends from the B.C./Montana border north through the Flathead and Wigwam watersheds and portions of the Elk and Bull River watersheds to the southern boundary of Heights of the Rockies Provincial Park. All federal lands, private lands, and Provincial Parks are excluded.

More specifically, the area covered by the plan includes all non-park provincial Crown land along the eastern slopes of the Bull River drainage, the western slopes of the Elk Valley south of Height of the Rockies Provincial Park, the Sand Creek drainage, and the Canadian portion of the Wigwam River and Flathead River drainages.

Process and Timelines:

The planning process is intended to be technically driven based on available resource inventories, research information, and information gained through public consultation. The information gained from the various public consultation activities will be critical to the success and quality of the planning process and products. The public consultation and planning principles are: to establish constructive dialogue with the public and participants, to conduct an open and transparent process where all interests are considered, and to undertake a credible process with no predetermined outcome.

Much background inventory work has been done already. Colour themed inventory maps for a variety of resources have been prepared. A timber supply review was completed in 2000. Other inventory and research projects are still in progress.

On December 6, 2001 there was an open house and public meeting in Fernie to start the public consultation and planning process. A summary of input from this meeting is found at **LINK**

A background report describing values and resources has been produced and is found at **LINK**.

Technical GIS work will be undertaken to support the planning process.

Focus group sessions will be conducted in March and April 2002. A summary list of issues from the Focus Group sessions is found at **LINK**

From May to December, 2002 the project team will work to produce a draft management plan with recommendations.

In September 2002, an Update meeting will provide a progress report including technical work completed, to participants and others interested in the process.

In October 2002, an open house will be held to review the draft guidelines. These will then be revised based on public and participant input received.

In December 2002, the draft management plan will be submitted to government for consideration and release for public review in 2003.

Roles and Responsibilities

The process of developing a management plan for the area will be led by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. A list of team members is found on the web site.

An interagency liaison group has been established to provide active input to development of the management plan. Participation will be requested from First Nations and various government ministries and agencies.

Deliverables:

The following deliverables will be produced by 2003:

- public input summary report and Focus Group issues list
- background report
- socio-economic analysis
- draft management plan

The Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan will provide direction for multiple resource use and recreation access while maintaining key wildlife and habitat.

Linkages to Other Planning Processes

Kootenay Boundary Higher Level Plan order (KBHLP): The SRMMP will be consistent with the direction contained in the Kootenay Boundary Higher Level Plan order. If the KBHLP is amended, then the SRMMP will be adjusted accordingly to ensure that it remains consistent with the KBHLP order.

Recreation Management Strategy (RMS): The SRMMP will incorporate the direction for recreational access management (public and commercial) that is developed through the Recreation Management Strategy process. Whenever possible, to ensure complete communication of information and integration of results, at least one member of the SRMMP project team will attend public meetings, participant workshops, and individual interviews held as part of the RMS planning process. Concurrent with the RMS process, a pilot project on recreational carrying capacity is being conducted for a portion of the SRMMP area. This pilot project will provide additional information for use in both the RMS and SRMMP planning processes

Phase 1 Landscape Unit Planning (OGMA's and WTR): The SRMMP will include management objectives for old growth management areas (OGMA's) and wildlife tree retention (WTR) based on the phase 1 landscape unit planning work that has been completed to date and the information gained from the consultation process.

Trans Canada Trail: The routing of the Trans-Canada Trail (TCT) is being developed through a separate existing planning process. In preparing the SRMMP, care will be taken to account for any proposed locations for the TCT.

National Park Proposal: The review process for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's national park proposal for a portion of the Flathead Valley is being conducted by Parks Canada.

The Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan (SRMMP) will be developed to indicate the management direction and strategy that will be applied to that portion of the Flathead Valley if it remains within provincial jurisdiction. If a national park is created by political decision between the federal Government of Canada and the provincial Government of British Columbia, then the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan will need to be reviewed in light of this change in land status and amended accordingly as necessary.

Ungulate Winter Range Guidelines (UWR): As revised ungulate winter range guidelines and improved resource inventory information become available from the UWR committee, they will be used either in preparing the SRMMP or in updating/revising the SRMMP dependent upon when the information becomes available.