

SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting #7 Minutes

February 16, 2006

Senior's Hall, Sparwood

In Attendance:

Pam Cowtan, ILMB	Gordon Galloway, Summer motorized
Bill Adair, ILMB (chair)	Douglas Dean, Winter motorized
Sangita Sudan, ILMB	John Bergenske, Ecosystems
Kelly Lode, MOE	Steve Kuijt, Front-country tourism
Doug Martin, MOE	Ken Streloff, Tembec
Dave Grieve, MEM	Kent Petovello, Recreational hunting
Bill Hanlon, Wildlands	Pat Gilmar, Non-motorized winter
Craig Robinson, Dist of Elkford	Peter Cunningham, EKRLUC
David Beranek, Guide Outfitters	Randall Macnair, City of Fernie
Dave Grieve, MEM	Randy Byford, Galloway Lumber
Hungry Baytaluke, Dist of Sparwood	Roger Berdusco, EVCC
Mike Sosnowski, Motorized back-country tourism	Ross Stanfield, Exploration/Mining
Bernie Palmer, Non-motorized summer	

Alternates:

Casey Brennan, Ecosystems	Rex Holley, EKRLUC
Kevin Podrasky, Recreational Hunting	

Observers:

Larry Hall, CODA

1) Welcome and Introductions

Bill Adair is now the Chair of the SRMAC and will be responsible for all correspondence of the meetings. Table introductions were made.

Changes to agenda:

- o request from Larry Hall to be moved earlier on the agenda – after approval of minutes.
- o request from Casey to discuss SRMMP in regional context at end of agenda.

a) Changes to Provincial Government Ministry Structure

MSRM no longer exists. Most of the functions of MSRM and LWBC have now gone to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL). Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) is a division of MAL which includes planning, Crown land and Front Counter BC. Mike Lambert is the Associate Deputy Minister. Front Counter BC will be a one-stop-shop for things such as tenure and land allocations where all permits can be obtained at one place. This should streamline the permit process. Front Counter BC is basically equal to what Land & Water BC were providing. This is scheduled to open in Cranbrook in 2007.

Species at Risk now falls under the ILMB. How will that responsibility be split with MOE? SAR has been identified as a priority issue from government. ILMB Species at Risk Web Site:

<http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/ilmb/sarco/sarco.html>

Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Arts (MoTSA) is now the ministry responsible for Commercial Recreation – Robin Fawcett.

MoTSA Tourism and Recreation Web Site: http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/resorts_rec/

The SRMAC will still be notified of CR applications that fall within the SRMMP. MoTSA is also responsible for Rec sites/trails and vehicle restrictions. There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being developed between Ministry of Forests and Range (MOF&R) and MoTSA.

Action: Pam will find out if the client needs to deal with the individual ministries after the permits have been issued.

2) Approval of Meeting #6 minutes, June 7, 2005

- o approved

3) Business arising out of June 7th meeting

a) Signs and Brochures Working Group: review signage locations and effectiveness

Sangita brought a summer map along with all the UTMs plotted. There appears to be some anomalies. If anyone has more UTMs, please forward these to Sangita. The winter map is to be completed.

Action: Sangita will email pdf version to the committee members.

Mike S knows there are people ignoring the closed signs. He would like to have stickers made up saying, “this closure is endorsed by the Fernie Snowmobile Club...”. The table agrees that people would be less likely to drive by the signs if they saw this message.

Action: Mike will look after having these stickers produced and placing them on the signs.

b) Recreation Chapter Implementation Working Group

c) Plan Amendments

- o Fairy Creek winter use was to be take to Fernie City Council – Randall reports this has not been ratified yet.

Action: Randall to take this to Fernie City Council for ratification

- o Helicopter/Fairy Ck – the committee feels it would be beneficial for an ‘official’ letter to be sent out to helicopter companies so they fully understand the Plan recommendations where helicopter access is concerned.

Action: copy of letter to be sent to SRMAC members so they can see the content of the letter.

d) SRMMP Expansion

discussed at last meeting.

e) Big Weary Ridge

Was dealt with at last meeting. No update yet - no decision made.

f) Wigwam Access

Update later in agenda.

g) Mineral Exploration

Action items carried out - emails were sent by Dave G.

- Bingay Creek coal property – Hillsborough Resources; project on the back-burner.
- Lodgepole coal property – Cline Mining; project expected to enter the Environmental Assessment process soon. First inter-agency meeting scheduled for March.

- Howell Creek/29 Mile Creek gold project – Eastfield Resources did not carry out their approved 2005 drilling program. They have since optioned the property to La Quinta Resources who have indicated in a press release that they intend to drill in 2006 (no application received yet by MEMPR).
- Lillyburt coal property (Flathead townsite) – Western Canadian Coal; MEMPR has received a notice of work application for an exploration drilling program. The program will use existing roads for access and is expected to be low-impact exploration. Referrals are underway.

h) Cranbrook West RMS

Pam had sent an email out asking if there was interest in forming a joint implementation group between the Cranbrook West RMS and the SRMAC to deal with trans-boundary concerns. She only had one respondent from both sides that were interested. Rex feels there is more interest from the West table and the BCWF is also interested. The BCWF would also like to see a Trench plan done.

Action: Pam will send out a second email to see if there is more interest.

i) Trans Mountain bike race Aug 7-9

Pat G reported that the race will be held again next year but the venue has not yet been decided. The biggest issue is the motorcycles but they are needed for first aide reasons to run the race. The race will still go through Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford though.

4) New Business

a) Membership

- **Review membership list**

A spreadsheet with names and contact information was handed out to review and make corrections.

- **Confirm alternates and contact information**

Bill A made corrections and notes to the spreadsheet. He will update and make phone calls as necessary.

- **Subcommittees – Existing - New**

More working group meetings are needed. We need to decide if we have sufficient sub-committees for the business at hand. We currently have 2 sub committees: 1) Signs & brochures working group, and 2) Implementation working group. The SRMAC meets quarterly and sub-committee meetings should be scheduled in between as needed.

Bill would like to see an Education and Information component committee assembled. Perhaps the brochure working group could work on this?

Action: Bill will send out an email showing existing committee members and asking if there is interest from others to participate.

Action: a meeting for the Implementation Working group will be scheduled for March or April.

The table feels it is necessary to have extra bodies out on the ground getting the information out to the public. Last summer the BC Conservation Core group hung signs for us. It would be more effective for those people to give out brochures as well as being available to answer questions of those recreating on our land. The BC Conservation Core group was hired by MOE but an agreement was made for them to hang signs for the SRMMP if they were already working in certain areas. The SRMAC feels a .5 position is needed with weekend work involved.

Action: Pam will look into this and she is open to any outreach funding that is available for this type of work.

It was also suggested that these field workers be easily identified so the public knows who they are.

Mike S put forth a formal request to government to supply a .5 FTE for this position – all in agreement.

Bill has spoken with staff in Alberta about getting a map out that blends the two plans – they seem supportive.

- **Larry Hall – CODA (Canadian Outdoor Disabled Alliance)**

Larry gave a brief explanation of his disability and why this group was created. CODA was recently formed for disabled people that enjoy the outdoors. He feels that the interests of the disabled have been missed and is requesting a seat at the SRMAC table. Larry read many bullets from the ToR of the SRMAC to make the point that his group should be permitted a seat. CODA has just received their registration as a Society and wish to voice their concerns and interests.

Question and Comments:

Q – Is the intent of your group to change what stakeholders have already agreed on, or to move forward from today and be included in future decisions? A – Sees it as an opportunity to do both. There are huge areas that are excluded of motorized recreation and that is what the disabled need. We are looking for some variances to be able to go places that are now locked up but we are not looking to make huge changes. Larry pointed out that he has never seen a rec site that would be accessible to a person in a wheelchair.

Q – is this about allowing for motorized access for disabled? A – looking for access for disabled people to use the land (variances for more access).

Q – You mentioned perception vs science – can you explain what you mean? A – people have the perception that the disabled will ruin the land that science says should be closed. Our group respects decisions based on science. Comment – there is plenty of representation from people who want motorized use and the only areas in the plan that are closed, are areas closed due to scientific reasons. Doesn't see why Larry's group feels they need representation.

Q – How many members are in your group? A – currently about 30.

Q – is there a shortage of rec opportunities (access) for the disabled at the present time? A – people are closing off the choice areas for people to enjoy. It takes away the opportunity for the disabled to have that 'wilderness' experience. Larry would like to see something that says "disabled people can go here".

Q – if an allowance is made for disabled people to drive in a non-motorized area, it would no longer be a 'wilderness experience' for non-disabled. There are numerous places to go right now. This committee has looked at everyone's interests and feels we have a balanced plan. The needs of the disabled have been considered through the motorized group and doesn't feel they need another 'motorized' member at the table. How do you define disabled? A – if you have a handicap tag hanging in your window, you are disabled. These can only be approved through a doctor.

Q – in 4 ½ years we haven't defined 'wilderness'. This needs to go on the agenda.

Q – There are some areas in the plan that aren't closed because of science. Mike S would welcome CODA and feels this group needs to be represented.

Q – Another point of view is always welcome. Does not want to revisit old issues but agrees that CODA should be welcomed.

Bill A suggested that table reps take this request back to their constituents for discussion. Email comments back to Bill and we could put it on the agenda for the next meeting. Some feel it would be better to make a decision before the next meeting so CODA could participate at the next meeting if accepted.

Those in favour of CODA joining the SRMAC are: Craig Robinson, Hungry Baytaluke, Ross Stanfield, Roger Berdusco, Pat Gilmar and Kent Petovello. By a show of hands, 13 are in favour and 3 are not.

Randall cautions the group about allowing National organizations at this table. Make sure we are not opening the door for everyone that says they have an interest.

Action: Bill A would like comments back to him by March 13th, after reps have had the opportunity to speak with their groups/clubs. Bill will get back to Larry and the SRMAC.

b) Update from implementation working group meeting of Oct 18th

At the last meeting of the Implementation Working group, legalization and ministry roles were discussed. MOE is willing to use the *Wildlife Act* to enforce vehicle restriction if warranted in the case of wildlife need. MOF's *FRPA* allows for enforcement for recreational purposes. This enforcement is now being transferred to MoTSA. The COS have the capability to enforce *FRPA*. Enforcement responsibility could also fall to the RCMP –

Action: Bill A to look into that to see exactly what enforcement the RCMP would offer. Off Road Vehicle Coalition (ORVC) has submitted a report to government for consideration. This report mainly addresses registration and licensing off off-road vehicles. Government has formed a committee to review that report.

At the last RMS West meeting in Cranbrook, Bill Bennett announced that government will be pushing ahead with licensing of off-road vehicles but that it would be at least another year before it would reach the legislative agenda.

Because the transfer of *FRPA* went to MoTSA when the realignment of ministries was done, it's possible that this plan could be implemented through MoTSA.

There were a number of areas we flagged as priority areas. We moved ahead with Middle Pass.

Action: in future Bill will try to post maps on our website and also put them on a PDF site.

Expansion of the Fernie Ski Hill was also discussed.

Action: Pam to look into update on that.

c) Implementation and Monitoring

- **Advertisement in Hunting and Fishing Regulations**

The new fishing and hunting regulations will have an ad in them about the SRMMP. A website will be listed that will direct people to the three Rec Plans (Golden/RMS/SRMMP). This will show where they can and can't go. It was suggested that this information also be placed in the BC Rec Atlas. Another idea was to have brochures available at all outlets that sell hunting/fishing licenses and wherever regulations are available for pick-up. Sellers should promote this plan when public comes in to purchase licenses. Sangita asked that members drop off brochures wherever they feel would be useful.

- **New website for Recreation Plans (www.recplans.gov.bc.ca)**

- **Communication Strategy**

Bill is planning to hire a consultant to build a basic communication strategy for this plan. By having a strategy to follow, we will have a better ability to access more money from government. It will help us as a committee to see if we are reaching goals. It is hoped that this consultant will have the expertise to help us know the best ways in which to engage the public and increase awareness of the plan. A consultant will cost approximately \$3500 and that must be spent before the end of fiscal (March 31).

Not everyone supports the idea of spending this money on a consultant. They feel the money could be better spent on other things. They feel the best consultants are sitting at this table. Bill pointed out that this is internal government funding – not for outside use.

The consultant will have some interaction with this group, probably through Bill. It will be done within the next 6 weeks and will give us the framework of how to move forward.

It was proposed that non-government groups take certain ideas that are identified by the consultant to make an application to Columbia Basin Trust. This could get us additional funding.

The group was reminded that the Rec plan is only one chapter of the SRMMP and there are other huge issues to discuss (i.e. Mountain Pine beetle). Communication/map issues should be dealt with through the Implementation Working Group.

- **Review of Appendix 2.0 regarding Plan monitoring**

Action: members to review Appendix 2 for next meeting.

- **Snow mobiles in Closed Access Management Areas**

Chauncy/Todd Hunter. There have been snowmobilers recreating in this closed area and Irene Teske (MOE) asked that this committee be notified of this. This is outside of our plan area so if there are SRMMP signs posted, they need to be taken down. Tembec is doing 'beetle' work there. Believe this issue has been resolved.

d) Middle Pass

- **Regulations under the Wildlife Act**

Submission by MOE has been made for a legal closure. Proposed that the road be closed to all motorized use during the snowfree period. Snowmobiles are exempt. Doug explained that this area was originally a VAHC (Vehicle Access Hunting Closure) but only because the AMA tool wasn't available at that time, otherwise it would have been an AMA originally. This proposal is in Victoria right now and hopefully will be approved soon.

Rex asked if this closure was due to scientific or social reasons. Doug replied that there are biological reasons to support this closure predominantly with Grizzly Bears in the narrow valley.

e) Wigwam

○ **Regulations under the Wildlife Act**

The proposal has been made by MOE to close the road to all motorized use during the entire year except for the two roads shown on the map that are currently open. Industrial users may apply for a permit for access. The permit will restrict these users to industrial activities only and not allow hunting or fishing. Phillips Creek road is now open over the top. This closure is put in place for scientific reasons – high value for many wildlife species and also supports high value populations of Bull trout. The Guide Outfitter is currently exempt from the Section 58 closure, however will be restricted to traditional access on the east side under the planned Section 58 closure under the Wildlife Act.

○ **Trappers Cabin proposal**

Need to access trapline/Non winter access (timing)/permit from MOE

Trapper would use snowmobile access through the winter. He will be issued a 'one-time only' permit allowing him to use the Westside road to haul building materials in to build his cabin. MOE turned down the trapper's application for a cabin at Snowshoe Lake. The trapper's cabin will have to conform to MOE's regulations meaning it can only be used for the purpose of trapping and the size of the cabin will be restricted. The table seems in agreement to the one-time only permit but stresses that he needs to use the same east side access as everyone else.

Ken S (Tembec) alerted the group that the east side road has temporary bridges put in. Once Tembec's work is complete the bridges will be removed and it will be back to fords. Some streams may not have access during certain times of the year. Ken estimates this will happen within the next 5 years.

An amendment was made to Weigert creek that it is restricted to ATVs only in the summer. It was recommended by the SRMAC that a gate be installed and that the back end be signed better so ATVs wouldn't go beyond the end of the existing road. Doug told everyone that MOE does not have the money to put a gate in.

f) Amendments

○ **Interim areas**

A spreadsheet and map were handed out and Bill asks that the members take them home to look over. The intent is to move forward on these after hearing responses.

Peter questions Zone 9 (29 mile). He would like to understand the science behind protecting moose – what's killing moose? John said that populations are lost when their habitat is restrained – it increases vulnerability.

Mike S voiced that he has a problem with amendments being approved before we have legislation to enforce them. It is only to the detriment of tenured operators and he objects to these going forward. Most of these are for motorized use.

○ **Tail Frog Wildlife Habitat Areas**

Ted Antifeau (Biologist with MOE) says that there are a number of roads in the frog habitat in the southern end of the plan. Special precaution needs to be taken around creeks, they need to be treated like fish. Crossings can't cause sediment. Tailed Frogs are a species at risk.

Individual roads need to be looked at to see if the crossings are satisfactory and decide what to do with them.

One of the suggestions on the last field trip was to put steel grating in the bottom of the creek to help with sedimentation. Another idea was concrete riprap just large enough for ATVs.

5) Feedback and issues from Sectors

John B reminded the group about the Jumbo issue and urges everyone to speak to Regional directors. He believes this is a decision that needs to be made by local people and not by those down in Victoria. We need to have input into the decision making.

Kent thanked Bill, Pam, Sangita, Dave G for their continued work with the SRMMP. He said that if legislation is not reached within the next year, he will likely step down from the table. Legislation is needed to stop the abuse. His sector will not respect the SRMMP signs if there is no legislation.

Ken S agrees that we need enforcement as well. Industry needs to see enforcement – signs alone won't do it. This is the 3rd land use process Ken has been through and they all have the same theme, "enforcement".

John agrees. People feel like fools when they abide by the signs and others speed by not obeying them.

Randall also agrees with Kent and feels that the majority of this table feels the same. After 5 years a lot of us will walk away.

Pam noted that the two ministries (MOF and MoTSA) that hold the legislation, don't come to these meetings.

Larry told the group that progress comes from the people that want it stopped – others will follow. People have to know the rules in order to follow them.

6) Next meeting – sometime in June