

**Southern Rocky Mountain Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting #1**  
**November 19, 2003, 6:30 – 9:30 pm**  
**Fernie Mountain Lodge, Fernie, BC**

Committee attendance:

Bob Marcer, Agriculture  
Peter Cunningham, Public motorized summer recreation  
David Wilks, District of Sparwood  
Cindy Corrigan, City of Fernie  
Craig Robinson, District of Elkford  
Ken Streloff, Tembec  
Randy Byford, Galloway Lumber  
Roger Berdusco, Elk Valley Coal  
Ross Stanfield, Mineral exploration and mining  
Mario Rocca, Recreational fishing  
Jim Thorner, Public motorized winter recreation  
Pat Gilmar, Public non-motorized winter recreation  
Dave McRitchie, Public non-motorized summer recreation  
John Birrell, Front-country tourism  
Mike Sosnowski, Motorized back-country tourism  
Kevin Podrasky, Recreational hunting  
Bill Hanlon, Wildlands and wilderness  
Allan Freeze, Regional District of East Kootenay  
Bill Dolan, Parks Canada  
Dave Beranek, Guide-outfitters  
John Bergenske, Ecosystems  
Rieva Rosentreter, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
Dave Hillary, Nature Conservancy Canada  
Tom Volkers, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management  
Pam Cowtan, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (recorder)  
Dave Grieve, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (chair)

Observers signed in: Glen French, Mike Takkinen, Raymond Myles, Casey Brennan, Tammy Monsell, Douglas Dean, Gordon Galloway, Kim Sedrovic, Wayne Stetski, Greg Yelland, John Kinnear, Paul Kramer, John McManus

Hand-outs: current list of representatives and alternates to the committee; draft terms of reference of the committee; and the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan (SRMMP) approval letter.

## 1) Welcome and introductions

Dave G. welcomed everyone on behalf of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM) to the first meeting of the Southern Rocky Mountain Advisory Committee (SRMAC).

People at the table introduced themselves and identified which sector they represent. Any alternates among the observers were also identified.

## 2) SRMAC Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) – Review, Part 1

Sections A (objectives), B (membership) and C (meetings and communications) were reviewed. **Action:** Sections D, E, F and G will be reviewed at a later meeting.

### a) Objectives of the SRMAC

The objectives were summarized.

Clarification was requested on “assisting in securing funding for implementation and monitoring requirements...” There was concern expressed that committee members might be asked to help fund or seek out funding sources for various activities. Suggestions were made that this objective could be interpreted as providing in-kind resources (e.g. assistance in placing signs). **Action:** A suggestion was made to change the wording to “assisting in securing resources for implementation and monitoring requirements”. Potential outside funding sources were mentioned (e.g. Columbia Basin Trust).

Committee members asked about budgets and staff time for the SRMAC. Tom Volkers explained that there is a budget for SRMAC for this fiscal (about \$20k) but there may not be one next year. Consequently, the SRMAC should identify where budget needs are for this year. Tom also indicated that, at this time and as a rough estimate, about 10% of his time has been allocated to SRMAC, while about 30% of Dave Grieve’s time and 5% of Pam Cowtan’s time have been allocated. That can change subject to emerging priorities and management direction. At this time, it is a high MSRM priority to get the SRMAC underway.

It was asked if there is the ability to shelter funding with an NGO, in order to carry it over from one fiscal year to the next. **Action:** Tom indicated that MSRM will look into this.

There was a fear expressed that, because of a lack of funding, conservation objectives in the SRMMP will be unevenly applied; in particular, the public will not be required to abide by the objectives, while industrial or commercial tenure holders will have to observe them through enforcement of their permits. Tom indicated that the intent of having the SRMAC is to try to ensure full and fair implementation, and also that having an implementation process can help in securing funding for implementation.

## **b) SRMAC membership**

There were no comments on the current make-up and structure of the committee. The committee is not complete, with some agencies or groups needing more time to decide whether or not to participate and to make their appointments. The importance of having the Ministry of Forests and BC Timber Sales at the table was pointed out. Ministry of Forests have confirmed that Tony Wideski will be the representative, with Greg Anderson as the alternate. The indication also is that BC Timber Sales will be participating, but this is not confirmed.

Some groups have declined to participate, including the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Land and Water BC and the Alberta Department of Sustainable Resource Development. The last want to be provided with minutes of meetings.

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP) has not named a representative, and it is possible they will not participate directly. Wayne Stetski, Regional Manager, Resource Stewardship for MWLAP in Cranbrook was in attendance, in part to determine if there is a need for MWLAP participation (see Wayne's comments later in the minutes).

Representation of the horseback riders was queried. Dave McRitchie will be looking into this, as this is a type of non-motorized recreation.

### **Requests for additional seats:**

Requests for additional seats can be made through the Chair. There were three such requests to deal with at this meeting. MSRMC staff noted all the SRMAC discussion concerning these three requests to help in making a recommendation to the Regional Director. **Action:** SRMAC will be informed of the Regional Director's decision.

The first request for an additional seat was made on behalf of the Corbin Wildlife Society (CWS), specifically to represent heritage interests. The CWS have contacted the Natal-Michel Historical Society and the Fernie District Historical Society, and have received support from both groups in this regard. The CWS indicate they will maintain contact with these and other heritage groups in order to represent heritage interests. CWS is in the process of refining its constitution to reflect its commitment to managing heritage values and activities. There was general committee agreement that this request should be approved.

The second request for a seat on SRMAC was made by Mike Sosnowski on behalf of the East Kootenay Residents Land Use Coalition (EKRLUC). The Coalition has a broad cross-section of people that may not belong to recreation clubs and may not currently be represented on the Committee. They formed initially to provide input to the Southern Rocky Mountain Conservation Area process. Both positive and negative responses to this request were noted. Lack of support was related to possible duplication of certain

sector interests (e.g. motorized recreation), while support was related to the perceived lack of representation of many members of the general public, and to the EKRLUC's history with this process. Mike made it clear that he will maintain his motorized tourism seat regardless of the decision.

The third request was made by Tammy Monsell, President of the Fernie Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the Chamber. Her group represents 210 diverse businesses in the Elk Valley, and members are interested in land use issues. Chamber-operated visitor centres and information outlets are first points of contact for the public, and the Chamber has the ability to communicate broadly.

There was general support for one seat to be created for chamber of commerce interests. Discussion focused on ensuring that all three communities' chambers are considered without creating three seats. Tammy felt it is feasible to coordinate the respective interests. The committee generally agreed that if this coordination can be arranged, and support from other chambers confirmed, then a seat should be granted.

**Action:** In follow-up discussion it was suggested that MSRM submit an article or advertisement to the local newspapers, to raise public awareness about SRMMP implementation and to let people know who are the various sector representatives on the SRMAC.

### **c) Meetings and Communications**

Timing of meetings was discussed. The preferred time for meetings appears to be mid-week evenings. Day-time and weekend meetings are generally not desirable, and individual members have specific day or time conflicts (noted in the detailed record). The option of starting at 4:00 p.m. for some meetings has some merit and support.

Meeting frequency will be as needed and at least once per year. For now we will think in terms of roughly quarterly meetings. Working groups will meet more frequently, as required.

SRMAC meeting locations could vary. Alternating between Fernie and Sparwood appeared to be generally acceptable.

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 25, 2004 in Sparwood. Starting time to be determined, but a 4:00 p.m. start is likely. Meeting location to be determined (David Wilks to help coordinate).

### 3) SRMMP Implementation

#### Approval Letter:

Tom Volkers reviewed the Approval letter for the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan, as signed by the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management, Stan Hagen.

First Nations have been asked to participate on SRMAC but have not indicated if they will. SRMMP requires consultation with the Ktunaxa and the plan is approved subject to continued work to accommodate Ktunaxa interests and concerns in the planning area.

The new Land Amendment Act provides the ability to establish legal resource objectives – there are no associated regulations yet.

There are currently no timelines to accomplish the four initiatives listed in the approval letter. Expanding into the rest of the Bull River and Elk River drainages requires buy-in from sectors (the SRMMP does not include the east side of the Elk or the west side of the Bull).

The Recreation Management Strategy (RMS) for the east side of the old Cranbrook Forest District was done on the entire Elk and Bull River watersheds. Steve Flett and Gord McAdams are still working on finalizing the RMS maps for the areas outside of the SRMMP. **Action:** When this has been completed, they will pass their recommendations to the SRMMP Planning Team and these would become the recreation access component of the expanded area (assuming the SRMMP area is expanded).

#### Issues:

In order to initiate and stimulate discussion on priority implementation issues and actions, we did a round-the-table survey of what are the biggest issues for the various sectors. Responses were noted and compiled, and are summarized below.

Requirements for implementation of the entire plan (generally multiple responses):

- Government resources and commitment for implementation
- Education and information-sharing
- Buy-in from various sectors and individuals
- Filling of knowledge and information gaps
- Ability to adapt when things are not working
- Enforcement of key components (e.g. recreation access)

Requirements for implementation of the recreation access portion of the plan (generally multiple responses):

- Enforcement
- Legal mechanisms to drive enforcement

- Government resources and commitment for implementation
- Education and information-sharing
- Buy-in from various sectors and individuals
- Ability to deal with people that are from outside BC using the area for recreation
- Review of recreation access maps
- Filling of knowledge and information gaps
- Ability to adapt when things are not working

Committee and sector requirements (not in any particular order):

- Maps and copies of plan (to SRMAC members)
- Clarity concerning specific resource sector needs (e.g. mining and agriculture)
- Clarity regarding the Coal Enhanced Resource Development Zone designation
- Information sharing and other interaction between sectors
- Good communication with sector constituents
- Ability to represent the public at large
- More expertise in regard to some technical issues
- Knowledge beyond the recreation access component of the SRMMP
- Willingness to participate where needed
- Clarity around “compliance with higher level plan order”
- Focus on recommendations not actions
- Demonstration of real progress on implementation actions and monitoring

General discussion around issues followed. There was the option to break into smaller groups, but it was felt that it was valuable to share thoughts with the whole group.

By a show of hands, only about half of the SRMAC actually has a copy of the plan, and not many have read all of it. **Action:** It was restated that a copy of the plan should be provided for everyone. It was pointed out an entire plan (i.e. with all the appendices) will probably never be fully assembled. **Action:** It was suggested that copies of all appendices should at least be brought to meetings. The SRMMP and all its maps and appendices (links in some cases) may be found on the SRMMP website at: <http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/kor/srmmp/srmmp.htm>.

It was stated that if SRMAC can deal with implementation of the recreation access chapter, then a lot will have been accomplished. This should be the focus, including signs, brochures and enforcement. The Committee would like to reach consensus around the message to government that there needs to be a commitment to enforcement.

Tom Volkers stated that it is very clear that for many on SRMAC the recreational access is the issue of greatest concern. He reminded the group that SRMAC is responsible for the whole plan and SRMAC is the place where problems with the plan can be discussed and recommendations can be made to government. What are the priorities? There can be “working groups” assigned to work on specific issues and bring back information and

recommendations to the committee as a whole. Concern was expressed again that SRMAC does not possess the technical expertise to deal with all aspects of the plan.

The need to take care of the recreation mapping was identified as a high priority, in order to provide clarity. There is a need to have maps available at a scale that can be worked with. This is also important for front and backcountry tourism.

**Perspective of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP):**

At this point Wayne Stetski, Regional Manager, Environmental Stewardship with WLAP, provided his perspective on the SRMAC. He was in attendance to determine if SRMAC participation should be a priority for his staff.

WLAP and MSRM split apart two and a half years ago. A regional biologist (Rob Neil) went to MSRM to support the habitat component of planning. WLAP feels that this staff resource was there for the planning process to date and believes that MSRM should continue to be providing biological support to planning processes in the Kootenays. In the meantime, Wayne's remaining staff size is decreasing. Wayne is committed to supporting the table from a technical perspective and providing best science/information for decision making. At the call of the Chair, he could try to provide a person to attend a specific meeting, where needed. Given his limitations in staff resources and his belief that MSRM should be providing their own biological expertise to planning tables, he indicated that WLAP will probably not take a seat on the SRMAC but will advise of his final decision. (He later confirmed his decision to MSRM.)

During ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that Rob Neil has taken early retirement and is now working for The Nature Trust. In effect, the MSRM biologist for this area is now located in Kamloops. Concern was expressed that a biologist in Kamloops would not be knowledgeable about this area. The enforcement arm of WLAP was not invited to participate on SRMAC and are not part of the Environmental Stewardship Division; any involvement that the Conservation Officers might have would have to come through the Planning, Innovation and Enforcement Division of WLAP.

Other WLAP staff who have taken an early retirement option include Bob Forbes, Peter Davidson, Bill Westover and Gary Tipper. Not all retirees will be replaced.

Dave Grieve pointed out that some other agencies have an approach to involvement on land use committees that is similar to WLAP's – they don't feel inclined to provide expertise which they feel has already been provided to MSRM through staff transfers.

The question was asked if *Wildlife Act* legislation could be used to implement the (recreation access) plan. Wayne said yes, when appropriate, but the Act only allows access restrictions to protect wildlife.

### **Priority projects and actions:**

The recreation access maps (E.7.1.1 and E.7.1.2) were generally felt to be a high priority for follow-up action. Several participants indicated they would like to see a working group or subcommittee struck to deal with these maps. In particular the need for better scale and greater detail, especially road detail, was identified, along with a need to deal with some perceived errors and omissions. There was also a call for better descriptions, e.g., definition of “hard surfaces” and the rationale for the RA1 category. The status of new roads and illegal trails was questioned, along with the observation that they should not automatically be open. It was pointed out that government made last-minute changes to the maps, despite the amount of work invested by stakeholders.

Some felt that government help will be needed with this working group, including specifically someone with biological expertise. Wayne Stetski indicated there are some inventory maps available, but didn't commit a staff person to the working group. Others felt that the working group doesn't need a biologist initially; the first requirement is to gather local knowledge (local trails, etc) before bringing in a biologist.

The Chair suggested that, as a first step, the working group could be tasked with dealing with the interim motorized areas on the summer recreation access map (E.7.1.1). This would allow the group to develop a methodology for refining the maps, while giving it a well-defined issue to resolve. It was stated that the reason these are interim areas is because there are so many old roads in these areas. This was confirmed, and identified as creating the need to inventory and discuss all the roads in this area and provide direction that is enforceable and can be clearly communicated to the public. It was also pointed out that fires in the summer of 2003 have had an impact on some of the interim areas.

The Chair asked if there was support for establishing a working group to deal initially with the interim motorized areas on the summer map and to make recommendations to the SRMAC. There was general agreement.

There was follow-up discussion on process. There was some confusion expressed about SRMAC's role – is it to provide advice or to be the actual “doers”? It was suggested that the interim areas should be fixed by the RMS stakeholder table, not the SRMAC. Tom Volkens pointed out that the working group approach is the most viable. The RMS structure will not be resurrected for the SRMMP area, and, in principle, government could impose a plan but local groups would not be satisfied. There was significant agreement that the working group approach can be successful.

Also in regard to process, there was a query as to the status of the interim areas once they are resolved. In response, it was pointed out that the recreation access maps represent government policy at this time; these maps and objectives are not legal, and the interim areas, once resolved, will also be policy. Government's responsibility to legalize and enforce the plan direction was pointed out. Tom explained that, at the time

the SRMMP process was initiated, government was intending to have a Sustainable Resource Management Act to facilitate the legalizing of land-use objectives. This did not happen, but now government has, instead, made changes to the Land Act to allow the establishment of legal objectives by order of the Minister of MSRM or Cabinet. These can be objectives contained in a land use plan.

This led to further discussion of enforcement of recreation access. Lack of enforcement could undermine the efforts to create a recreation access management system. There is a need to have the correct information and the proper direction, if we want to have an enforceable plan. It might be necessary to lobby for a mechanism to enforce later, but the important first step needs to be taken (i.e. having the plan in place). A 1:50,000-scale review wasn't accomplished in the RMS process and this is part of what is being proposed and considered as the task for the working group.

The following indicated by a show of hands that they would be interested in being on the recreation access map working group: John Bergenske, Bill Hanlon, Dave Beranek, Kevin Pedrasky, Dave McRitchie, Pat Gilmar, Mario Rocca, Mike Sosnowski and Peter Cunningham.

**Action:** MSRM will coordinate creation of the working group and provide base mapping and other materials.

**Action:** It was suggested that MSRM list and provide information on legislative and other tools that can be used to implement recreation access. Staff will endeavour to do this for the next meeting. Tom Volkers indicated that legislation is changing and there is a need for new legislation (e.g., registration of ATVs).

Tom Volkers presented a proposal for another potential implementation project – riparian habitat mapping for the Elk, Bull and Wigwam rivers. So-called “enhanced riparian zone” mapping was completed for the Flathead and major tributaries some years ago, and this mapping was utilized in the SRMMP. Extension of this style of mapping to the other major drainages is identified as a high-priority implementation project in Appendix 3.0 of the SRMMP. MSRM has the funds (roughly \$20k) to carry out this mapping in this fiscal year under contract.

Ensuing discussion indicated that SRMAC members generally feel that there are other critical priorities (education, signage, map refinement as examples) and that it is too early to make a decision on making an expenditure like this. The suggestion was made to shelter the funds to carry them over to the next fiscal year, as discussed earlier in the meeting. It was also suggested that SRMAC should merely indicate to government that this mapping is needed, and then leave it up to government. The priority need to educate the public about what is going on at the SRMAC; in particular who represents them and is speaking on their behalf, was brought up again.

**4) Adjournment** MSRM staff thanked all those in attendance for their time and constructive participation.