

HUMMINGBIRD FOREST RECREATION AREA CONCEPT PLAN PLANNING DIRECTIONS

Based on Standing Committee input June 12 and 16, 2003

PURPOSE OF CONCEPT PLAN

- To provide long term direction for the re-development and upgrading of recreation facilities at the Hummingbird Forest Recreation Area (FRA), based on direction of the Bighorn Backcountry Access Management Plan.
- To define appropriate boundary of FRA.

UPPER CLEARWATER/RAM FLUZ

Multiple use zone with some trail regulations:

- Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) and Snow Vehicles on Onion Lake, Hummingbird Creek, and Canary Creek Trails from July 1st to April 30th.
- OHVs/ and Snow Vehicles on South Ram River/Ranger Creek Trails from December 1st to April 30th.

TYPES OF USE

Current:

- Overnight camping (campsites);
- Staging area for backcountry use during four seasons (parking lots);
- Day Users during four seasons (parking lots).

Future:

- Commercial users: potential needs for commercial base camps and parking;
- Potential for fixed accommodation outside the FRA boundaries.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Linear valley with physical limitations (slopes, floodplain);
- Traditional pattern of use;
- Existing Commercial Trail Riding Permit disposition sites;
- Fish and wildlife habitat;
- Potential changes at Ram Falls Provincial Recreation Area (PRA) may affect Hummingbird FRA;
- Funding realities;
- Operational simplicity;
- Phasing/sequencing of work;
- Others:
 - Improving facilities may increase demand and use;
 - Facility regulations/legal/environmental (e.g., toilets);
 - Factor in new and future trail regulations and user types.

STAGING AREA FOR BACKCOUNTRY USE

- Require parking lot or lots for vehicles and trailers;
- Overnight parking for 40 (currently 20): consider larger sizes of vehicles and trailers;
- Toilets;
- Possible loading ramps;
- Other facilities:
 - Signage or information kiosk with regulations, maps, and information.

DAY USES

- Require parking lot or lots for single vehicles and vehicles with trailers;
- Daytime parking for 30-40 units during non-snow periods;
- Parking location for snow vehicle winter access may be dependent on snow conditions and road ploughing;
- Toilets;
- Possible loading ramps;
- Other facilities:
 - Do not provide picnic tables or garbage bins.

OVERNIGHT CAMPING

- Currently peaking at 130 camping units;
- Variety of camping equipment;
- Target a minimum of 130 units;
- Group campsites located together to accommodate servicing:
 - Toilets;
 - Potable water (may not be necessary);
 - Fire rings: consider forest protection and fire rings with signs indicating use of the rings;
 - Firewood: considering cost of wood and theft, do not provide firewood. Install signs of “no cutting” as this is not permitted inside the FMA;
 - No garbage bins.
- Develop a series of sites along the valley;
- Campsites will generally be “primitive” in style;
- Provide site types for a variety of different equipment (recreational vehicles, truck and trailer units, and tents);
- Provide multi-use, equestrian only, and non-equestrian sites;
- Design most sites to be suitable for multi-use unless restricted by physical limitations; build sites for large-sized units and for all user types;
- If possible, place equestrian camping near the South Ram River Trail;
- Services for horses:
 - Hardened sites for horses to prevent tree damage. Designated high lines and hitching rails may receive more erosion than horses tied to trailers;
 - Off-stream watering sites are a possibility, designated and hardened;
 - Manure collection site is a possibility.
- Other requirements:
 - Bear poles for food storage at non-motorized sites;
 - Regulation signs.

OTHER IDEAS

- Posted speed limit on main road to reduce noise and dust;
- A gradual change focusing on education and awareness (phase-out random sites as new sites are developed);
- Maintenance and operation of site needs to be addressed: the formation of a stewardship society, voluntary user fees, contract operation, the County and Province roles, corporate sponsorships and donations with possible sign recognition;
- Formalize a parallel continuous trail system along the road;
- Upgrade main road: consider Clearwater County’s role for the initial 10 km from Highway 734;
- Commercial outfitter camps for seasonal use;
- Develop a site specifically for groups: group campsite and outfitters camp site with the site to be reserved and gated/locked;

- Need to balance development in FRA to match capacity of trails for use;
- Focus the facilities near trails.