

Bighorn Backcountry

Access Management Plan

Monitoring: Standing Committee

Meeting Summary
June 16, 2003
Rocky Mountain House

In Attendance

Jack Walker
Deb Schroderous
Dennis Schafer
Bob Haagsma

Doug Ritchie
Derek Durocher
Clarence Stewart

Calvin Rakach
Carson Titford
Jimmy Wildman

Loyal Ma
Philip Lacerte
Jeff Willson

Yvette Choma

Don Livingston

Derry Armstrong

Jim Allen

Chairperson

Butch Shenfield

Regrets

James Brady
Bob Long
Nathan Moore
Ken Schroderous

Mike Adolph
Keith Pettyjohn
Cheri Adolph
Rob Hunter

Greg Mallo
Lorne Hindbo
Bonnie Brewer
R.W. (Bobby) Turner

Richard Smith
Rick Artzen
Christie Blake

Introductions:

Butch Shenfield thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Round-table introductions were completed, with individuals identifying their user group and their position of representative or alternate. All members were encouraged to step into the shoes of other users, and to represent the user community as a whole and not only the individual organization to which they belong.

The updated Standing Committee contact list was distributed. It was noted that the confidential information, including personal addresses and phone numbers, will not be published or available on the website. Sustainable Resource Development will forward an inquirer's name and phone number to the committee member upon query.

Activity Updates

Compliance Status

User compliance has been generally good, and individuals/organizations/retailers are distributing the Bighorn Backcountry brochures to the public. Compliance at the Fish & Game Chambers Creek Poker Rally was nearly 100%. It appears that the off-highway vehicle (OHV) compliance is improving each year.

During the May long weekend, compliance was generally good with garbage bags, Bighorn Backcountry brochures and Random Camping User Guides distributed to the public.

May Long Weekend Enforcement Statistics

Total people checked in the Clearwater Forest Area	5666
Total Off-Highway Vehicles checked	1329
Total On-Highway Vehicles (four-wheel drive) checked	19
Horses checked	78
Total tickets written	105
Total warnings	22

Signs and Interpretative/Education Needs

One difficult area for compliance is the Kiska/Willson Forest Land Use Zone (FLUZ), Crescent Falls area. Previous winter and spring users have driven beyond the FLUZ sign with on-highway vehicles. In the future, rocks or posts will be put in place to prevent on-highway vehicle traffic beyond the FLUZ sign.

Random camping usage signs for Highway 734 are being completed, and vinyl signs for kiosks are being printed. Alberta Trapper Association trapper trail signs and posts from Sunpine Forest Products are being completed. The sign at Hummingbird Forest Recreation Area (FRA) has been moved since the recent road wash-out.

Random Camping User Guides were recently published and are being distributed to the public.

Seasonal Changes

Four equestrian trails closed June 1st in Job/Cline FLUZ; these will re-open October 1st. Some OHV trails in Job/Cline FLUZ, Upper Clearwater/Ram FLUZ, and Kiska/Willson FLUZ re-open July 1st.

Brochures

The Bighorn Backcountry brochure was reprinted and distribution began on the May long-weekend. These brochures were made available to committee members for distribution to club members and to the public.

Website Information

On the Bighorn Backcountry website, the Monitoring button is active and contains the following information: Terms of Reference;

Monitoring Plan;

Summary Notes from meetings;

Standing and Steering Committee member lists;

Before and After photographs of trail reconstruction/maintenance.

Student Application

The student application process has begun at Will Sinclair High School through posters, computer screen images, and announcements. This information will be passed to the surrounding high schools for their involvement.

There has been some difficulty finding student involvement as it is the end of the school year. At the September new-year meeting with the students, this application and process will be re-announced.

If any committee members have a youth in mind for the application, please bring the name forward.

Hummingbird Forest Recreation Area (FRA) Concept Plan

Derry Armstrong was introduced to the committee members. As a former planner from Community Development, Parks and Protected Areas, he will work with the Standing Committee to develop the plan for the Hummingbird FRA.

Derry mentioned the Hummingbird FRA is small in size, but the process to develop it will be used for other FRAs in the Bighorn Backcountry. The concept plan for the FRA will be used for the blueprint and long-term planning, with direction from the existing Bighorn Backcountry Access Management Plan. The concept plan will give general direction and detailed planning will occur on the ground.

Some committee members met the previous week at the FRA, walked through the area, and brought forward suggestions and concerns for the FRA plan. The attached *Hummingbird Forest Recreation Area Concept Plan Planning Directions* outlines the results of the on-site meeting (June 12th) and additional discussion at the Standing Committee meeting (June 16th). Below are comments from the June 16th meeting:

- Commercial users may be concerned with their base camp, potential vandalism with vehicles and equipment in the FRA, and not creating conflict with other users. Permits for on-highway vehicles on trails will not be issued. Consider allowing commercial base camps to set-up seasonally in the FRA.

- The current boundaries of the FRA may be expanded to the east towards the gravel pit and to the north of the current west boundary, with the signing of Order in Council. It was questioned how far the boundaries should be expanded.
- Equestrian: Brought forward was a letter and map from the Cooking Lake Saddle Club and Alberta Trail Riders Association (ATRA) members requesting segregation of users within the FRA as members do not want a blended FRA. Members also expressed concern about noise, safety, and liability of OHVs near horses.

Brought forward were recommendations from Bowden and Lacombe Light Horse Associations recommending multi-use trails and a multi-use FRA. Members feel all users should be encouraged to get along with each other inside the FRA and on the trails.

Sundre Light Horse Association has concerns about a potentially noisy campground and some equestrians not being used to the noise. They also suggest one site for equestrian only and one site for non-equestrian (due to manure issues).

- OHV users commented that respectable OHV users do not tolerate abusive OHV users.

The next step in preparing a Concept Plan for the Hummingbird FRA is to take all recommendations brought forward, and walk the area, and then develop alternatives for discussion at the fall Standing Committee meeting (September 2003).

New business

The meadow-area prior to the dry wash was washed-out and a rut is the result. It was asked if anything can be done to repair this situation. Don Livingston will look into this.

Grizzly bear studies are currently being conducted in Blackstone/Wapiabi area and as far south as the Ya Ha Tinda area. These bears are being collared and tracked through the research of Gord Stenhouse.

Elk-wolf studies will be conducted in the Ya Ha Tinda area. Wolves will be collared and tracked.

Monitoring Plan: It was asked if there are any other items the members thought should be monitored, aside from the Bighorn Access Management Plan Recreational Trail monitoring. Please advise any other ideas to the committee.

On the east side of Eagle Creek FRA: it was asked if this could be developed to take some pressure off the Bighorn Campground. Possibly some minor work could be completed, with careful consideration to future development.

Next meeting: September 8th, 2003 from 0900-1330hrs, with the venue to be announced.