

Executive Summary

Project Vision – The Murray Ridge Ski Area was established in 1975 to provide affordable skiing opportunities for the residents of Fort St. James and surrounding area. This vision continues.

General Overview of Business

- The Murray Ridge Ski Area is located approximately 10 km northeast of Fort St. James.
- There are 23 ski and snowboard runs, ranging from beginner to expert. The hill has a vertical drop of 520 metres. There is a small handle tow for the Bunny Hill and the longest T-Bar in North America (over 2 kilometres) to access the rest of the runs. The ski lodge was built in 1986, and is ~10,000 square feet; it has lockers, a first aid room, a cafeteria, a bar, offices, washrooms, and a large deck looking onto the hill.
- The Murray Ridge Ski Hill has been in business since 1976, and the Fort St. James Ski Club has existed since 1975.

Key Areas of Concern

- There have been no documented issues received from local First Nations. On this application, initial contact with the Nak'azdli First Nation has confirmed that there are not interests or concerns with the MRSA. We are still receptive to follow up. We are committed to working closely with the Band to resolve and mitigate any concerns that are identified in the future.
- A blue listed plant species may exist on the MRSA. We are in communication with the local MOE, who have advised us that they are not concerned that our current operation has a negative impact. We are committed to working with the local MOE if the plant is found to exist on the hill.
- There are no conflicts with other tenures on the MRSA.

Section 1: Description of Existing Operation

1.0 General Description of Existing Ski Resort

- The Murray Ridge Ski Area offers affordable skiing and snowboarding on a south-facing slope with a panoramic view of Fort St. James and Stuart Lake. The runs range from gentle of extreme and our hill is viewed by many of our out of town guests as being the best ski hill in the north. It is generally open for 3-4 months a year, from December/January to the end of March.

1.1 Description of Experience/Activities Being Offered – see Appendix 1 and 2 for Site Plan and Overview maps

- See above for experience offered.
- Site Plan Reference – see sections 1.2 – 1.4.
- Activity/Activities – the MRSA offers skiing and snowboarding on all runs. A cross-country ski club operates on its own tenured area south of the MRSA.
- Specific References on Map – none
- Period of Use - generally open for 3-4 months a year, from December/January to the end of March.

1.2 Base Operation and Improvements

- MRSA is situated on Crown Land under a tenured land use permit
- The existing facilities include:
 - 23 ski/snowboard runs
 - Lodge
 - T-Bar with electrical building at the base and Lookout Shack at the top
 - Tow Bar with Electrical Shack at the base
 - Unoccupied cabin between Tow Bar and Lodge
 - Groomer Building located 100 metres NE of Lodge
 - Lift Lookout
 - Parking Lot on south and east side of the Lodge
 - There is a ~3 km access road from the public road to the MRSA. This road also accesses a rifle range and cross-country ski trails, which are both run by different clubs.

1.3 Mountain Operation and Improvements

- Refer to attached Murray Ridge Brochure (Appendix 3) for a list of the 23 ski/board runs. Please note that the brochure is dated:
 - The Legend lists 22 runs; however the cross-country runs are not part of the MRSA and I've indicated 2 additional runs on the picture.
 - There is no Triple Chair.
- T-Bar with electrical building at the base and Lookout Shack at the top
- Tow Bar with Electrical Shack at the base

1.4 Access

- There is a ~3 km access road from the public road to the MRSA. This road also accesses a rifle range and cross-country ski trails, which are both run by different clubs.
- The road supports vehicular traffic

1.5 Servicing

- Water – contained close surface well located ~ 25 metres NE of the Lodge
- Sewer – open pit lagoon located south of the Groomer Building
- Power – 3 phase power system for lift

1.6 Resort Capacity and Skier Visits

- Over the past 3 years we have averaged ~ 8,000 skier visits per year
- The lift capacity is ~420 skiers/boarders per hour

Section 2: Overview of Proposed Expansion

- The MRSA plans to replace the Lookout Shack at the top of the T-Bar with a larger structure that can be used by our clients. There will be no timber removal as part of this improvement.
- **Not part of application / For information only:** The MRSA does have plans to develop the north side of the mountain and purchase a chair lift. This expansion is on a Community Forest tenure; the expansion would require removal of timber and would be done through the Community Forest License. Because this expansion is only at the concept stage and would require significant consultation, it is not included in our application. The MRSA will apply for an amendment to the Master Agreement when we have definitive timelines and designs.

Section 3: Overlap with Environmental & Cultural Values

3.1 Fish Values

- Reviewed with local MOE Ecosystem Specialist, Sandra Sulyma on April 17, 2009. There are no fish values associated with any water courses on the MRSA

3.2 Wildlife Values

- Reviewed with local Sandra Sulyma on April 17. With the possible exception of the blue listed Alpine Cliff Fern, there are no sensitive environmental values associated with the MRSA. She indicated that if this plant species does exist on the MRSA, there should be no impact from the current activities on the site. We agreed that if work or improvements are done during snow free conditions, workers will be advised to be aware of the fern; we will get advise from the local MOE office on how to mitigate or avoid.

3.3 Water Values

- There are no water licenses on or near the MRSA.

3.4 First Nations

- The Geomatics Technician at the local Ministry of Forest and Range confirmed that the Nak'azdli First Nation is the only First Nation whose area of interest is on the MRSA.
- The MRSA has no documented contact with the Nak'azdli First Nation, formal or informal, expressing any concerns or activities that are in conflict with the site.
- After several unsuccessful attempts, I spoke to Chief Fred Sam over the phone on April 27, 2009. I explained the purpose of the call. He was well aware of the location of the ski hill, and did not have any concerns with the application, but wanted to speak with a Band Member, Beverly Bird, who might have an interest to the south of the MRSA.
- I delivered a letter to the Band Office on April 28 (Appendix 4,5, and 2).
- I have attempted to contact the Chief several times, and was informed of April 30 that he is on medical leave and not expected back until May 4.

Section 4: Overlap With Existing Uses

4.1 – 4.4 The Geomatics Technician from the local MoFR has performed an Exhibit A process on the MRSA, and confirmed that there are no conflicts. There are two Trapper areas that are shown over the site (TR0725T005 and TR0725T006). There is an active trapline that exists to the SE of the MRSA, but it is well away from our tenured area.

4.5 Same as above. Beyond this, there are no continuous recreational activities on the MRSA. The only roaded access to the MRSA has a gate, located ~ 1.5 km from the site, that is locked after of the operational hours of the MRSA or the cross-country ski club.

Appendix 1 – Hazards and Safety Plan

I confirmed with the MRSA Manager, Daniel Goff, that we have a Hazards and Safety Plan which meets or exceeds Workers Compensation Board and approved industry standards and that my operation will meet the requirements of this plan.