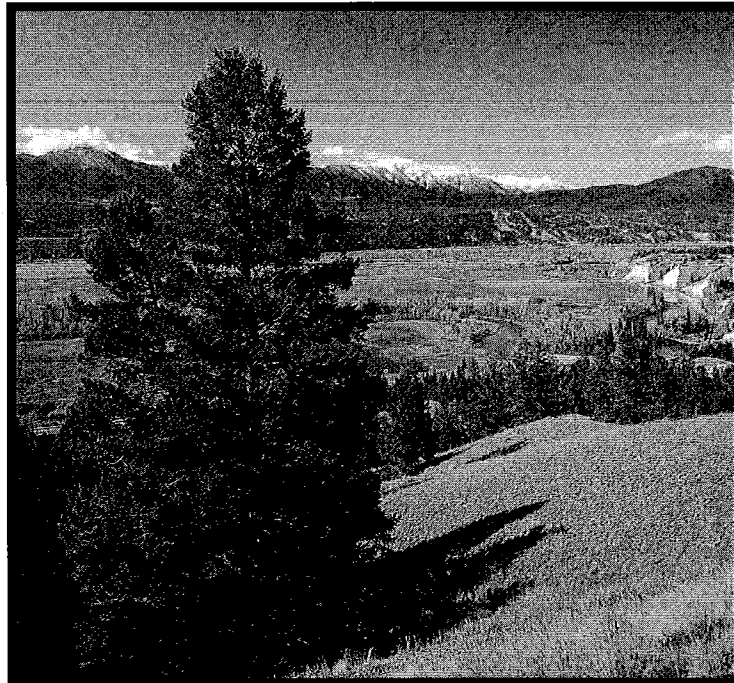


T H E
EAST KOOTENAY
LAND-USE PLAN



GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
MARCH 1995

A SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE PLAN FOR THE EAST KOOTENAY

Over a two-year period, the people of the East Kootenay worked together to prepare a land-use plan for their region. The goal was to put an end to land-use uncertainty and ensure stability and security for communities and families, and provide a sustainable environment. The progress they made was substantial: general agreement on many land-use areas and consensus on a jobs and economic strategy, and on ways to ensure continuing public involvement in the implementation of the land-use plan.

The land-use plan delivered by the government of British Columbia in March 1995 builds on that work.

It will help provide the stability needed to ensure a more sustainable economy and environment for the region. It clearly defines the land available for resource development, as well as the region's important wilderness areas that will be protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

The land-use plan is a positive step forward. However, the government recognizes that resolving long-standing land-use questions is only part of the answer to providing security for workers, families and communities in the East Kootenay. The region is facing a critical point in its history – the current forest industry overcapacity, and the prospect of fewer trees and fewer jobs as the timber supply is gradually reduced to a sustainable level, are creating uncertainty for workers and companies.

It's clear that fundamental change and a new cooperative vision are needed. That's why this land-use plan includes an economic strategy for the region and identifies the East Kootenay as a priority for the government's Forest Renewal Plan. By renewing the forest industry – with a new focus on labour-intensive forestry and value-added jobs and production – government and local residents can meet the challenge that lies ahead.

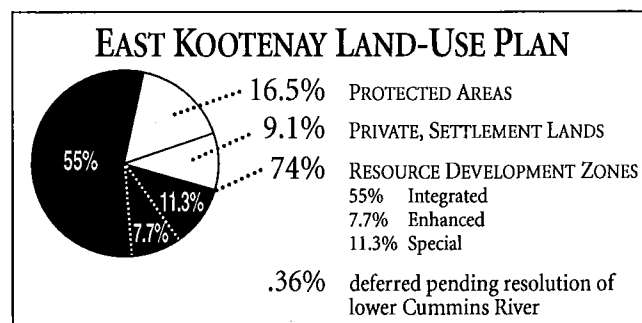
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAND-USE PLAN

Under the East Kootenay Land-Use Plan, the government is announcing the following decisions:

- ▲ **74 per cent of the region's lands are available for commercial resource use** – including sustainable forestry, mining, tourism and grazing – and recreation activities, including hunting and fishing. That's in addition to the 9.1 per cent of the region which is private land and available for commercial use.

- ▲ **This resource land base is divided into three resource zones**, depending on intensity of use – Integrated Resource Management Zone (55 per cent), Enhanced Resource Development Zone (7.7 per cent), and Special Resource Management Zone (11.3 per cent).

- **THE INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONE** contains areas available for a full range of resource use and have a moderate to low sensitivity to resource development.
- **THE ENHANCED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ZONE** contains areas where economic benefits and jobs will be increased through intensive resource management and development. This plan defines some of the specific areas in this zone that are available for enhanced use by resource industries – a follow-up process will confirm further areas available for enhanced timber and forage production, mining, and other resource use, as well as management objectives and guidelines.
- **THE SPECIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONE** includes areas where the full range of resource use will proceed, but in a way that respects sensitive natural and cultural values, such as fish and wildlife habitats, conservation values, community watersheds and sensitive recreation sites.



- ▲ **Seven new protected areas are being created under the Protected Areas Strategy** – logging, mining and other resource development will be prohibited in these areas.
- ▲ **Existing grazing, heli-skiing/hiking, hunting, trapping, and guide-outfitting activities will be allowed to continue** in the new protected areas.
- ▲ **The total protected area is increased by 3.3 per cent**, to 16.5 per cent from 13.2 per cent.

▲ **Future community involvement will provide a local say in the implementation of the land-use plan**, and identify impacts of land-use decisions.

▲ **A Kootenay-Boundary Economic Strategy will provide new job and economic opportunities** through:

- The establishment of a Resources Jobs Commissioner – serving the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-

Boundary – to help secure stable resource industry jobs;

- The creation of a government Rapid Response Team to spearhead the development of new economic opportunities in the Kootenay-Boundary region;
- The formation of a public Regional Transition Review Board to monitor and evaluate the economic strategy and its effectiveness.

RENEWING OUR FORESTS, SECURING OUR FUTURE

In B.C. today, people are wrestling with one of the most complex and compelling issues of our time – the need to protect our environment and, at the same time, sustain our economy for present and future generations.

Shortly after its election in 1991, the B.C. government initiated a comprehensive plan to meet that challenge. Three and a half years later, the government's actions are creating positive change for British Columbia:

- ▲ The new Forest Renewal Plan is creating hundreds of projects across the province to restore and protect the health of B.C.'s forests, create new forest jobs, and increase economic benefits from each tree harvested. In total, around \$400 million in increased timber fees paid by forest companies will be reinvested each year

into hundreds of forest renewal projects.

- ▲ The Forest Practices Code is ensuring new forestry standards and better management of the forest resource.
- ▲ The Protected Areas Strategy is doubling B.C.'s parks and protected wilderness.
- ▲ Through the work of the Commission on Resources and Environment and dedicated British Columbians across the province, long-standing land-use debates are being resolved. In 1994, the government delivered land-use plans for Vancouver Island and the Cariboo-Chilcotin, which marked important steps towards securing B.C.'s future.

HISTORY OF THE EAST KOOTENAY LAND-USE PLAN

JANUARY 1992 – B.C. government establishes the province-wide Commission on Resources and Environment to give people a direct say over land-use plans for their region. Regional land-use processes are announced for Vancouver Island, the Cariboo, and the Kootenays.

JANUARY 1993 – Participants involved in the Kootenays process decide to move forward with two separate land-use tables, one in the East and one in the West.

JUNE 1994 – Following almost two years of negotiations, the East Kootenay table reaches general agreement on many land-use areas and consensus on a jobs and economic strategy, and on ways to

ensure continuing public involvement in the implementation of the land-use plan.

OCTOBER 1994 – The Commission releases its report for the region.

DECEMBER 1994 to MARCH 1995 – Building on the work done by local residents, the government carries out three months of discussions with representatives from industry, environmental organizations, labour, communities, and other interests.

MARCH 1995 – The government releases its land-use plans for the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions, based on the work of the local CORE tables.

SECURE ACCESS TO RESOURCE LANDS FOR INDUSTRY AND WORKERS

74 Per Cent of the Region for Sustainable Resource Management

Secure access to natural resources is an essential first step in sustaining the region's economy and keeping people working for present and future generations. The East Kootenay Land-Use Plan provides that security of access by confirming that 74 per cent of the region's lands will be available for sustainable commercial resource use and recreation activities.

These lands are divided into three zones, depending on intensity of use: Integrated Resource Management Zone, Enhanced Resource Development Zone, and Special Resource Management Zone. Each zone consists of a number of separate areas spread throughout the region. Drawing from the work of the CORE table, broad management objectives covering all three zones include:

- ▲ Sustainable timber harvesting and related forestry will proceed.
- ▲ Mineral and other sub-surface resource exploration and development will proceed.
- ▲ Sustainable cattle grazing will be maintained and enhanced.
- ▲ Tourism, recreation (motorized, including snowmobiling, and non-motorized), guide-outfitting, trapping, hunting, fishing, and agro-forestry (botanical forest products) will proceed.
- ▲ Government regulations and standards – including guidelines under B.C.'s Forest Practices Code – apply to all resource activities in the zones.
- ▲ Resource development, and the sites on which it occurs, will be locally guided in a manner which respects sensitive natural and cultural values.

In addition, resource management objectives – including timber harvest objectives – will be developed to guide resource use and the protection of natural and cultural values. This will be based on the work of the CORE table. The land-use plan will be monitored to ensure that sustainability objectives are achieved.

INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONE

This zone – the largest of the three – contains areas where the full range of resource use and recreation activities can

proceed, including forestry and mining exploration and development. In total, about 55 per cent of the region's land base, or about 2.23 million hectares, falls within this zone.

In some areas within the zone – where sensitive values such as wildlife habitats or important views are minimal – resource development will be managed intensively with the goal of increasing production substantially. In other areas where sensitive values are higher, resource development will be managed in a way that respects those sensitive values.

ENHANCED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ZONE

Within this zone are areas of resource development emphasis where the productive capacity of natural resources can be increased to maximize jobs. Intensive forestry activities – such as selection logging, commercial thinning, horse logging, Christmas tree growing, woodlots and industrial forestry – are encouraged. For example:

- areas in the Golden Timber Supply Area can increase long-term fibre yields;
- high growing sites along the Spillamacheen River can increase forest production for Radium;
- areas along the lower White, Kootenay and Moyie rivers and other areas in the south and east can increase yields for Skookumchuk, Cranbrook and other mills;
- range production can be increased in this zone, as can motorized recreation – including snowmobiling – and tourism;
- mining can proceed across the zone with secured access.

These areas have a relatively low sensitivity to resource development, and their environmental quality will be maintained through the application of regulations and standards, such as the Forest Practices Code.

Under this plan, 7.7 per cent of the region – or about 316,000 hectares – is included in this zone, and those lands are largely dedicated for use by resource industries. Final boundaries and development guidelines will be set in a follow-up process involving a wide range of stakeholders to confirm further lands that can be dedicated for timber and forage production, and other resource development.

SPECIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONE

Some areas within this zone contain concentrations of special values – such as critical fish or wildlife habitats, important viewscapes, conservation values, community watersheds, sensitive recreation sites and cultural heritage features – where there is a higher sensitivity to resource development.

In these areas, all types of resource development and recreation activities can take place, but will be managed so as to respect these sensitive values.

Under this plan, 11.3 per cent of the region – or about 462,000 hectares – is within this zone.

In addition, this plan establishes two new Wildlife Management Areas within the Special Resource Management Zone. They are Columbia Marshes and East Columbia Lake. These areas will be administered by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and are created to maintain critical wildlife habitat, such as key winter ranges and stopovers on waterfowl migration routes. Carefully managed resource development is permitted in these WMAs, providing it is complementary to wildlife management objectives.

Those who negotiated at the local CORE tables worked hard to generate management objectives for all zones. In this land-use plan, the government has built on the work of the tables. Considerable efforts have been made already to integrate evolving standards under the Forest Practices Code with the tables' work. This work will continue, and the interested public will be given the opportunity to assist government in confirming appropriate guidelines for achieving management objectives in each area of the region.

RESOLVING UNCERTAINTY

Resource development can now proceed in numerous sites across the region which have been subject to uncertainty or constraints pending resolution of land-use issues. This includes Study Areas under the Protected Areas Strategy which are not among the seven new protected areas established by this plan.

Access to these areas provides greater certainty for existing jobs and encourages the creation of new jobs. Logging, mining, ranching and other resource development activities can now resume in these areas, subject to appropriate planning requirements and operation standards.

A STRATEGY FOR GOLDEN

In developing the East Kootenay Land-Use Plan, the government's key concern was ensuring community stability and resolving land-use questions so that other challenges around timber supply and job security could be faced and dealt with on more solid ground. In the Golden area, those land-use decisions are made more difficult by the fact that local forest operations are in a position of significant over-capacity fuelled by years of unsustainable harvest levels.

At the time of government's land-use decision for the East Kootenay, both government and residents of the Golden area were awaiting a final report by the provincial Job Protection Commissioner concerning the viability of the major timber licensee in the area, Evans Forests Products Ltd.

The government recognizes the importance of this report to the future of Golden and has therefore deferred the land-use decision regarding the lower

Cummins River. This decision further recognizes the fact that the Golden Community Committee could not reach agreement as to how to proceed with the Cummins.

This deferral will allow time for Evans Forest Products, the community of Golden and the government to review the Job Commissioner's report and plan ways to mitigate potential job loss. The Resources Jobs Commissioner – whose office will be located in Golden – and the Rapid Response Team will be given a priority of working with the community of Golden. Forest Renewal BC will be requested to consider projects that increase the wood supply in the area. For example, the Kinbasket Reservoir pilot project has a potential 1.8 million cubic metres of potentially salvageable wood.

The government will continue to work with the community of Golden to review the future of Cummins.

INCREASING PARKS AND PROTECTED WILDERNESS

Confirming Seven Protected Areas

The Kootenays is one of the richest areas in North America in terms of natural values – its spectacular scenic, wildlife, wilderness, and recreation values are internationally recognized.

So while clearly defining resource lands is essential in providing security for the people and communities of the Kootenays, equally important is the permanent protection of those natural values and the region's unique wilderness areas.

That's why this land-use plan creates seven new protected areas in the East Kootenay, increasing the region's total protected area by 3.2 per cent to 16.5 per cent.

In the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions combined, protected areas are increased from

9.14 per cent to 13.88 per cent.

Included in the new protected areas are the East Purcells, linking to the existing conservancy; the Height of the Rockies with its critical habitat for mountain goats, grizzlies and wolves; and the spectacular waterfalls of the Upper Cummins River.

Logging, mining and other resource development are prohibited in the new protected areas, while existing grazing, heli-skiing/hiking, hunting, trapping and guide-outfitting activities will be allowed.

Private land will not be included in a protected area unless the owner agrees with the designation or sells the land to the province.

THE NEW PROTECTED AREAS

(All areas approximate)

AKAMINA-KISHINENA: 11,700 hectares; critical link between Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta and Glacier National Park in the U.S., creating an unbroken internationally-protected area; will contribute to the long-term viability of wildlife populations in the region shared by B.C., Alberta, and the U.S.

BUGABOO EXTENSION: 13,650 ha; an addition to the existing Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park; will protect one of the most spectacular mountain areas in western North America; very high wilderness recreation values for mountaineering and hiking.

EAST PURCELLS: 34,300 ha; will help maintain the environmental integrity of one of the largest intact ecosystems in the southern half of the province; outstanding elk populations; high wilderness recreation values.

ELK LAKES: 11,850 ha; expands the existing Elk Lakes Provincial Park by adding the Elk Lakes Recreation area; links both to the new Height of the Rockies protected area and the Peter Lougheed Provincial Park in Alberta; high recreation values for hiking, wildlife viewing, camping, and fishing during the spring, summer and fall; Cardona Creek supports an

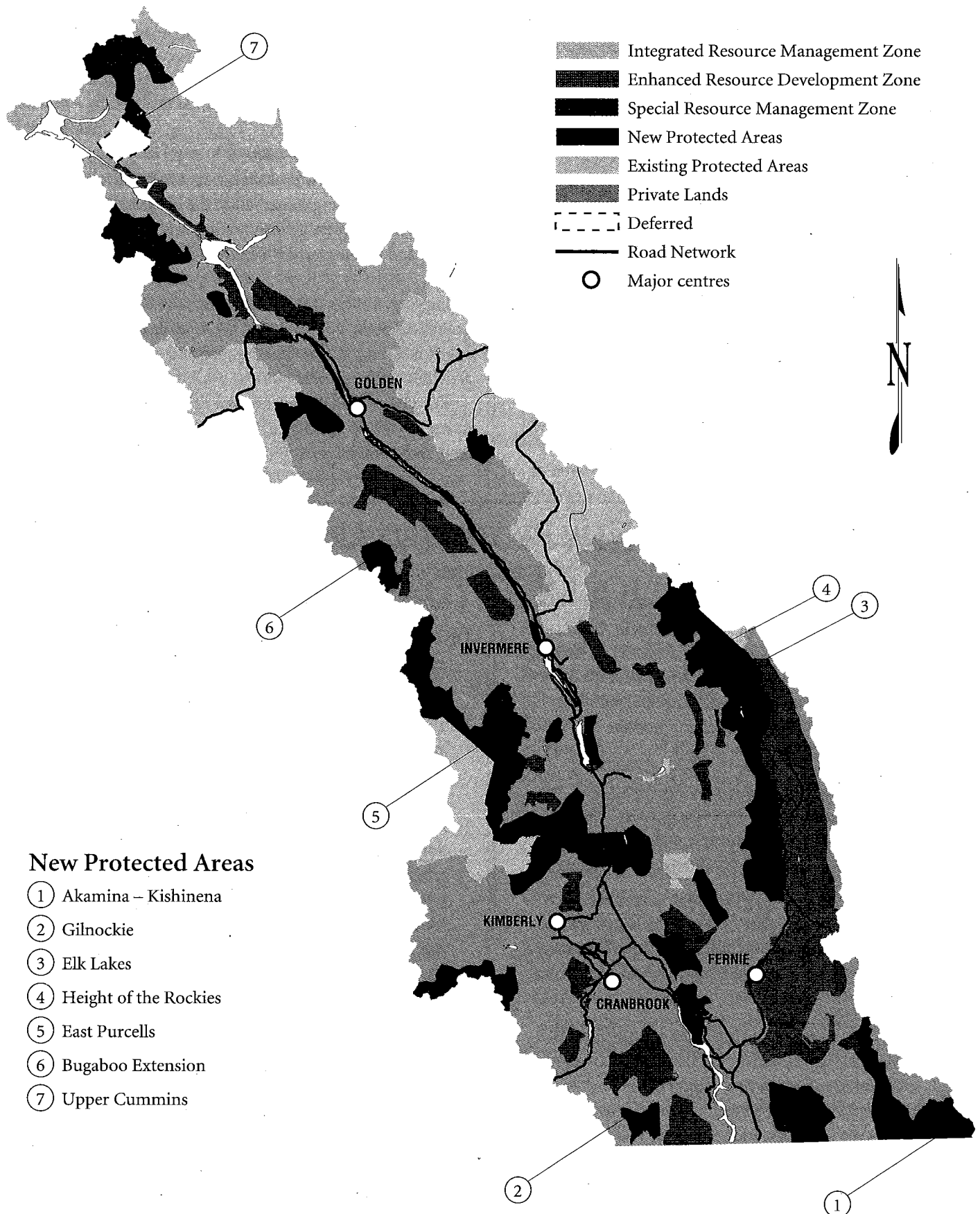
important sport fishery for cutthroat trout.

GILNOCKIE: 2,800 ha; contains some of the oldest larch and fir stands in the region; excellent elk areas that also support white-tailed deer, mule deer and moose.

HEIGHT OF THE ROCKIES: 54,500 ha; comprises a large part of the existing Height of the Rockies Wilderness Area; contains wildlife values that exceed those in National Parks; along with the bordering Elk Lakes protected area, it contains the largest concentration of mountain goat in the world; key habitat for grizzly, wolf, elk, bighorn sheep, and trophy cutthroat trout, and important wilderness and back-country recreation values; area contains prehistoric trails and was part of the route of the Palliser expedition and the Overlanders; links with Banff National Park and Peter Lougheed Park in Alberta.

UPPER CUMMINS: 6,100 ha; contains a connected series of three spectacular waterfalls and two glacial lakes set against the backdrop of the Clemenceau Ice Fields; contains nationally significant recreation values for mountaineering and ski-touring, and provides opportunities for wilderness expeditions into a remote and spectacular area.

The East-Kootenay Land-Use Plan



WORKING WITH LOCAL INDUSTRIES AND WORKERS TOWARD A SECURE FUTURE

All communities in the Kootenays depend on natural resources for their economic health and quality of life. Sustaining those natural resources, then, must become a priority for local residents and governments, industry, workers, and the provincial government. That means changing the practices of the past, and moving forward with a comprehensive plan that creates innovative new ways of ensuring jobs for workers, financial security for families, and stability for communities.

The problems of overcapacity, fewer natural resources and impending job layoffs will not be solved overnight – it will take time to fully implement the solution. Change is necessary, but it must be done at a rate which communities and residents can cope with.

This plan – and the land-use resolution it brings – is a key part of the solution. The government and local communities now have a shared responsibility to develop and implement other initiatives that will help build a strong economy for the region.

RENEWING THE FOREST INDUSTRY

More than 3,400 workers are directly employed in the forest industry in the East Kootenay, with a combined pre-tax income of about \$150 million a year. This is the single biggest economic generator in the region; yet it's also the industry facing the most severe problems.

It's time to renew the local forest industry by:

- making better use of the existing forest resource base through better management; and,
- getting more value from each tree cut through value-added manufacturing.

The first of these goals can be reached, in part, through this land-use plan. Some areas within both the Enhanced Resource Development Zone and the Integrated Resource Management Zone – and on certain site-specific locations in the Special Resource Management Zone – will be appropriate for intensive forestry, with the objective of increasing productivity and maximizing employment. New jobs can be created through intensive reforestation, spacing, thinning and new harvest practices.

As well, initiatives to increase the use of wood not currently harvested will also increase productivity from the existing forest resource base.

The second goal – getting more value from each tree cut – will involve a more fundamental shift in direction for the industry. Value-added manufacturing is a key component of the government's new Forest Renewal Plan, which is investing \$400 million a year in increased fees paid by the industry back into the forests. The government will work with Forest Renewal BC and local communities on a priority basis to develop appropriate value-added projects for the short and long term.

CERTAINTY FOR MINING

The mining industry – specifically the jobs and economic benefits stemming from the southeast coal industries and the Sullivan and other mines – has been an integral part of the growth of the East Kootenay for the last 100 years. So in developing this land-use plan, the government's priority for the mining industry was to help it maintain its historic prominence in B.C.'s economy.

This plan provides that certainty by ensuring full access to exploration and development in all three resource zones, with specific lands already identified for intensive coal mining in the Enhanced Resource Development Zone. In particular, mining exploration and development are acceptable activities within the Special Resource Management Zone, subject to sustainable development and sound mine development practices.

In addition, existing mineral claims that abut the new protected areas have been excluded from the boundaries. In particular, the Alderidge formation in the middle fork of Findlay watershed and the Rusty Ridge area are available for mining activity.

To ensure that mining remains as a viable resource sector in the Kootenays, an enhanced geoscience program will be delivered in the Kootenay-Boundary region. In particular, a \$500,000 geophysical survey will be conducted to assist in the search for new "Sullivan Mine-type" deposits. In addition, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources geoscience programs will ensure a comprehensive geoscience information package is available for a broad spectrum of the Kootenay-Boundary exploration community.

As well, a new management approach in the Kootenays will benefit the mining industry – a streamlined "single-window" approval process and a revised set of standards will encourage mineral exploration throughout the region. The industry will be consulted on the Forest Service's road reclamation program, including specific notice to the Chamber of Mines.

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY RANCHING INDUSTRY

Ensuring access to publicly-owned grazing lands is essential to maintaining a healthy ranching industry in the East Kootenay – which generates about \$6 million in gross production a year. Through this plan, grazing will be allowed in all resource zones and existing grazing will be continued in all new protected areas. And to increase forage production on public grazing lands throughout the Kootenay-Boundary region, an annual \$750,000 Grazing Enhancement Fund is being created. Dollars from this fund will go directly to develop and implement intensive range management practices – that maintain and enhance Animal Unit Months – and meet conservation needs. The Trench Rehabilitation program will increase forage production on a large area of the East Kootenay.

As well, the industry will be included in local management decisions regarding road reclamation, and training opportunities on the Forest Practices Code regulations and guidelines will be provided to the industry.

INCREASING TOURISM AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The government's land-use plan recognizes the key role tourism and commercial recreation play in the economy of the region and the province. It adds seven new protected areas to the region and ensures that key tourism values, such as important viewscapes, warrant special management in the Special and Integrated resource management zones.

Tourism and recreation activities are appropriate in all resource zones, and existing heli-skiing/hiking operations, and snowcat skiing will be able to continue in the new protected areas.

In recognition of the importance of tourism in all land-use decisions, the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture will identify a staff person to work with the tourism industry – specifically the Council of Tourism Associations and the Kootenay Country Tourism Association – in land-use planning in the Kootenay-Boundary region. As well, the Tourism Action Society of the Kootenays will receive \$100,000 to enhance tourism infrastructure across the entire region.

A new staff person is being assigned for the Kootenay-Boundary region to accelerate decisions on new Commercial Backcountry Recreation business proposals in the region. That means an increase in such activities as hut-to-hut hiking, snowmobiling, kayaking, ski-touring and mountaineering – resulting in an estimated 20 new CBR businesses and 60 new jobs over the next 18 months, and additional spin-off revenue in the accommodation and hospitality industries. And recreation groups will be included in all local access management decisions including road de-activation.

SAFEGUARDING WATERSHEDS

This plan recognizes the importance of safeguarding water supplies for communities and residents of the region. Community watershed guidelines from the new Forest Practices Code will be applied to protect domestic watersheds, including the requirement to complete watershed assessments on all community and high value fishery watersheds. Management guidelines for proposed development will be tied to the results of these assessments.

Licensed water users will be considered stakeholders in public planning and management processes involving watersheds. Watershed restoration will be undertaken on a priority basis across the region through Forest Renewal BC.

WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS

The provincial government has placed a priority on – and is working toward – the settlement of land claims with First Nations in British Columbia. The government reaffirms that the land-use decisions described here are without prejudice to aboriginal rights and treaty negotiations.

The Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Council were only involved as observers in the CORE process because they

indicated that treaty negotiations should precede the process. The Shuswap Nation did not participate in a formal way.

Land-use decisions contained within the East Kootenay Land-Use Plan will form the basis of the provincial government's position during treaty negotiations.

A KOOTENAY-BOUNDARY ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The process and discussions which have led to this land-use plan have brought public attention to a serious challenge that the government and all British Columbians — including residents of the East Kootenay region — must face: while almost all of the communities in our province are dependent to varying extents on forest resources, our forests have been harvested at rates that are not sustainable. Technological change in the last ten years has greatly reduced the number of jobs resulting from each truckload of wood.

This situation results from the cumulative effect of many historical impacts, such as flooding entire valleys for hydro-electric projects, building wood-processing operations so numerous or efficient that they outpace nature's ability to regenerate our forests, increased harvest rates to salvage beetle-infested trees, and poor management or lax enforcement by past governments. To remedy this situation, present harvest levels must decline to rates which are sustainable over the long term. When possible, the decline must also be phased in over time to ensure certainty for industries, communities and workers.

The government has recognized this problem and is taking careful but deliberate actions which will ensure a sound and certain future for the region. That includes regional land-use plans such as this, which incorporate the Protected Areas Strategy and its goal of protecting areas for the benefit of present and future generations. It also includes: the Timber Supply Review which will provide regular inventories of wood in the forests and determine what steps must be taken to arrive at sustainable levels of harvest; and a new Forest Practices Code, which is changing the way forests are managed in B.C.

The Kootenay-Boundary land-use tables recognized these challenges and proposed many solutions to aid the social and economic implementation of the land-use plans. Government is facing the challenge and will continue working with local communities to find solutions based on the work of the tables. That's also why a partnership has been formed with industry and others to create Forest Renewal BC — which will invest \$400 million a year in increased industry fees on projects that will renew our forests and, at the same time, create jobs and encourage new investments.

JOB CREATION UNDER THE FOREST RENEWAL PLAN

The Forest Renewal Plan will renew B.C.'s forests and create new forest jobs. During its start-up phase in 1994, \$3 million was allocated for watershed restoration, road rehabilitation, and intensive silviculture projects across the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions.

The projects involve road removal and site upgrading, replanting hillsides, stabilizing cuts and fills, removing stream obstructions, restoring displaced channels in waterways and improving fish habitat. Intensive silviculture projects include thinning, spacing, and fertilizing.

Forest Renewal BC, the agency created to oversee these new forest investments, is funding a new \$2.9 million program that will create jobs and increase local resident and community involvement in forest tenures — a provincial initiative to double the number of woodlot licences from 500 to 1,000 over three years. In the East Kootenay, that means an additional 17 woodlots by March 1997 — and for the entire Kootenay-Boundary region there will be 48 new woodlots over the same period.

Forest Renewal BC will be setting up regional offices across B.C. to assist community groups in developing forest renewal plans that meet local needs. A regional Forest Renewal BC office will be set up to serve both the East and West Kootenay-Boundary regions.

Announcements are expected in the near future on the locations of the office, plus substantial increases in province-wide and regional funding for renewal projects and further initiatives aimed at creating added value and more jobs from every tree harvested. As well, further economic initiatives to create even more jobs under the Kootenay-Boundary economic strategy will be unveiled in the days and weeks following the release of the land-use plan.

A RESOURCES JOBS COMMISSIONER

A new, full time Resources Jobs Commissioner will be appointed under the Job Protection Commission to ensure the economic strategy works effectively in both the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions. The Commissioner's office will be located in Golden.

The Commissioner will function as a strategic link between companies, workers, communities, all levels of

government and others – working with these groups to secure stable jobs now and in the future. He or she will also work with major companies to identify and contact workers who require assistance in obtaining secure employment, training or career counselling.

The Commissioner will also work with other regional initiatives and agencies – including the Kootenay Regional Advisory Group, local and regional governments, Forest Renewal BC, Skills Now, and regional benefits resulting from the Columbia River Treaty Downstream Benefits agreement – to ensure that job creation and other economic initiatives are coordinated and appropriate available resources are directed to immediate needs when necessary.

A RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

The government is confident that potential job losses due to the land use decision can be mitigated as part of the economic strategy. However, serious challenges facing the regional forest industry – including timber supply shortages and overcapacity in primary timber-processing facilities – require extraordinary measures.

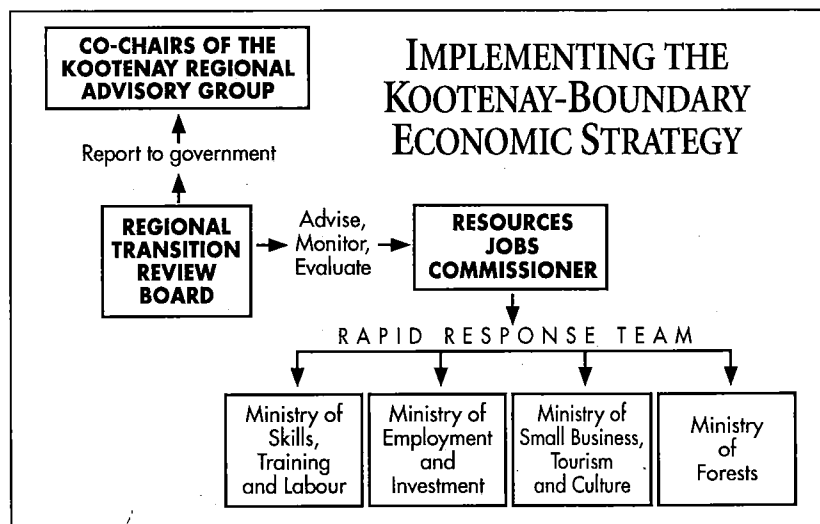
To respond to this urgent need, the government is establishing a Rapid Response Team – for the entire Kootenay-Boundary region – to work with the Resources Jobs Commissioner. The team will consist of senior staff from the ministries of Forests; Employment and Investment; Skills, Training and Labour; and Small Business, Tourism and Culture.

The Rapid Response Team will work with communities and local groups to examine the economic circumstances and prospects in both the East and West Kootenay-Boundary regions, assess possible impacts and identify and facilitate economic opportunities. The team will be appointed by the Premier and will have the authority required to ensure access to and immediate application of the full range of available government services and initiatives.

As a first priority, the Rapid Response Team will work with the Resources Jobs Commissioner to develop and implement an economic transition strategy with the community of Golden.

KOOTENAY REGIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

The Kootenay Regional Advisory Group (Krag) consists of a broad spectrum of regional residents including both business, labour, environment, and provincial, regional and municipal government representatives involved in regional economic development. Since 1988, this group has played a



vital role in identifying regional economic priorities for the government.

The current co-chairs of Krag are Kootenay MLA Anne Edwards, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and Nelson-Creston MLA Corky Evans, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Forests.

Government recognizes Krag's invaluable assistance in providing economic co-ordination, planning and priority setting for the region. In particular, jobs strategy initiatives outlined here will incorporate the achievements and direction of Krag to date where appropriate and be coordinated with the continued work of this group. The government will support Krag through staff in regional offices.

A REGIONAL TRANSITION REVIEW BOARD

To ensure the economic strategy meets the needs of the people who live and work in the region, the government will move quickly to establish a Regional Transition Review Board composed entirely of local residents.

The board will monitor and evaluate the economic strategy as it unfolds, review the planning and implementation activities of both the Resources Jobs Commissioner and the Rapid Response Team, plus provide regional perspectives on provincial economic development initiatives.

In particular, the board will evaluate how well the economic strategy initiatives respond to all significant employment impacts on resource industries – regardless of the source of the impacts – and provide advice on whether the response is directed towards needs in an efficient and effective manner.

The board will consist of four to six members and include representation from the forest industry, organized labour, communities and other key economic stakeholders. It will report to government through the two regional MLAs who co-chair the Kootenay Regional Advisory Group.

SKILLS NOW: TRAINING FOR WORKERS

Skills Now, the provincial government's \$200 million skills training plan for B.C., is already well underway on its goal to retrain workers closer to home – ensuring they have the skills needed to keep pace with their current job or take advantage of new job opportunities in a changing economy.

Skills Now is providing new educational opportunities in the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions including:

- ▲ New community skills centres in Revelstoke, Sparwood, and Kimberley that will open this spring, providing skills upgrading for workers. The location of at least one more community skills centre will be announced soon.

- ▲ Working with industry to establish four small business training and sectoral partnerships in areas such as home-based business, retail training, and tourism business management.
- ▲ Two new programs at local colleges: an Adventure Tourism program at East Kootenay Community College; and an Integrated Environmental Planning program at Selkirk College. Also, there will be a \$225,000 increase in funding to the Kootenay School of the Arts through its affiliation with the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, starting in 1995/96.
- ▲ Two Quick Response Training Programs for upgrading worker skills at East Kootenay Community College and in Revelstoke.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE BOARDS

The B.C. government will sponsor a region-wide workshop in June 1995 to obtain advice on the structure of community resource boards for the Kootenays. The workshop will be developed in cooperation with the Kootenay Regional Advisory Group, a regional economic development group that has served an important advisory role to government for the last seven years.

Resource boards could be established to ensure local input and advice on implementation of this land-use plan.

The workshop will consider how the boards would provide local knowledge and advice for consideration in decisions on land use to ensure that all interests are included.

They boards may also provide advice on government's development of resource management objectives and guidelines, and on the resolution of disputes when there is disagreement on implementation of the land-use plan. They may also assist in the assessment of the socio-economic impacts of land-use decisions.

Representation on the boards will also include key local industries such as forestry, mining, ranching, agriculture, tourism, guiding, as well as organized labour, First Nations, environmental and local government interests. The work of the CORE tables will be a valuable starting point for the boards.

CONCLUSION: *MEETING THE CHALLENGE*

The process and discussions leading up to this land-use plan demonstrate this government's commitment to work closely with regional residents and face the difficult challenge that still lies ahead – providing a secure and sustainable future for workers, industries, communities and the environment. Working together, we will meet that challenge and find the solutions to protect both jobs and the environment. Work will now begin to:

▲ Move ahead with key elements of the plan, including:

- implementing the Grazing Enhancement Fund;
- implementing the Geophysical Survey Program for the mining industry;
- developing resource management objectives, including timber fibre-yield objectives for the forest industry;
- streamlining the permitting process for mineral exploration and development;
- accelerating the application approval process for commercial back-country recreation applications;
- establishing a regional Forest Renewal BC office;
- developing further Forest Renewal projects;
- appointing a Resources Jobs Commissioner, members of the Rapid Response Team, and the public representatives of the Regional Transition Review Board; and,
- opening Skills Now centres.

▲ Completing key elements of the plan, including:

- final boundaries and management objectives for the Enhanced Resource Development Zone;
- in consultation with the community, an economic strategy for the Golden area; and,

- following a workshop in June, 1995, establish or confirm a Community Resource Board(s)

▲ Proceeding with permit approvals for work in all resource zones.

This land-use plan sets out a long-term direction. The historical impacts to the resources in the region have made planning for a sustainable future essential in the East Kootenay. Implementation of the plan will proceed carefully and sensitively to minimize any potential impacts on workers and communities. At the same time, it is essential the plan proceed to ensure that both resource development and the environment are sustained for present and future generations.

This plan represents a significant positive step towards resolving conflicts between people and groups with different perspectives on land-use issues. It also reaffirms and reflects the government's continuing commitment to listen to what people from all walks of life have to say about their future vision for the land they call "home."

The plan incorporates two years of sincere negotiations between representatives of all major sector interests in the East Kootenay, and builds on the progress achieved there with more than two months of further concentrated, follow-up consultations with regional residents. It is the sum total of all this and more – a fair and workable resolution of long-standing issues that reflects the needs and wishes of all East Kootenay residents.

The success of this plan depends on the hard work and good will of all people. By working together in a spirit of cooperation and trust, we can ensure a healthy and productive land base and a strong and growing economy – not only for ourselves but for future generations to come.