

July 2, 2019

Minister Doug Donaldson

Please accept this letter as an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Forest and Range Practices Act.

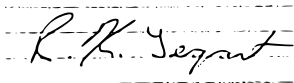
The Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society (RMTNRS) is a coalition of 9 ranching, hunting, environmental and wildlife organizations working together to restore and conserve the grasslands and open forests of the East Kootenay/Upper Columbia Valley region of southeastern British Columbia. The RMTNRS was established in 1996 to tackle the problem of declining grassland and open forest ecosystems in the Rocky Mountain Trench of southeastern British Columbia. The Society is a founding member of the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Program (ER Program) and is an active player in restoration activities. We undertake on-the-ground projects, raise funds, sponsor scientific research, carry out ongoing communications with the public, and advocate for continued provincial government support of the ER Program.

Ecosystem Restoration is a vital program and addresses many of the challenges identified in the proposed changes to the FRPA Act such as climate change, species at risk, drought and fire. Grasslands and open forest contribute to a healthy environment. They offset the effects of greenhouse gases by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. They preserve and enrich soil by preventing erosion, and addition nutrients. They discourage the spread of insects that attack and kill trees, and they form natural firebreaks that can stop the advance of catastrophic wildfire.

In response to challenges being faced today with the current Forest and Range Practices Act, we recommend prioritizing ER as a practice that integrates healthy fire resilient landscapes with wildlife habitat and interface issues in natural disturbance 4 ecosystems. In addition, we recommend it be treated as a cross jurisdictional strategic program that can interface with wildlife, range, tenures, invasive species and wildfire management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Forest and Range Practices Act.

Sincerely,



Richard Tegart  
Chair  
Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society



