

A SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE PLAN FOR THE WEST KOOTENAY-BOUNDARY

People who live and work in the West Kootenay and Boundary country know better than anyone the delicate ecological balance that exists in their region. Their communities depend on natural resources, but past resource decisions have threatened the balance of people and nature, and with it the future prosperity for their families, communities and region.

Decisions on the future of West Kootenay-Boundary resource industries, jobs and natural resources are not easy, but they must be made and the challenges faced together. The costs of not having a workable plan are simply too high – more land-use conflicts and an uncertain economic future.

For almost two years, local residents committed their time and effort to work together at the Commission on Resources and Environment table, and their work produced results. Their knowledge and insights, gained through the CORE table and extensive follow-up discussions with the provincial government, has produced the West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan.

The plan identifies common goals to sustain both resources and communities, and sets out a course for getting there. The plan will help provide the stability needed to ensure strong, healthy communities for present and future generations by clearly defining the land available for resource use, particularly forestry, mining, agriculture and tourism, as well as the areas that will be protected.

And it will ensure the people who have chosen to live in the Kootenay-Boundary region can continue working and raising their families in a more secure future.

The plan is part of a comprehensive approach within which all parts of the region must be involved to ensure communities will be stable, informed, vibrant, integrated and sustainable. That's why this land-use plan also includes an economic strategy for the region and identifies the West Kootenay-Boundary as a priority for the government's Forest Renewal Plan. By renewing the forest industry – with a new focus on labor-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 West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan, the government is announcing the following decisions:

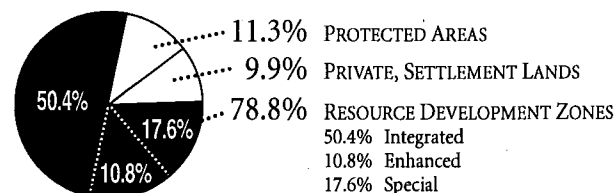
▲ 78.8 per cent of the region's lands are available for

commercial resource use – including sustainable forestry, mining, tourism and grazing – and recreation activities, including hunting and fishing.

▲ This resource land base is divided into three zones, depending on intensity of use – Integrated (50.4 per cent), Enhanced (10.8 per cent), and Special (17.6 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. The plan defines some of the specific areas in this zone that are available for enhanced use for 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.

WEST KOOTENAY-BOUNDARY LAND-USE PLAN



▲ Parks and protected wilderness in the West Kootenay-Boundary are being more than doubled to just over 11 per cent of the region. In addition, local planning processes will identify another 0.25 per cent of the West Kootenay-Boundary region for protection, in order to recognize special natural, recreational or cultural features. This will bring the total protected area percentage to about 11.3 per cent.

▲ Existing grazing, heli-skiing/hiking, snowcat skiing and

guide-outfitting activities will be allowed to continue in the new protected areas.

- ▲ **Nine new protected areas are being created under the Protected Areas Strategy.** Logging and resource development will be prohibited in these areas.
- ▲ **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 to serve both the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions and help secure stable resource industry jobs.
- The creation of a government Rapid Response Team to spearhead the development of new economic opportunities in the 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

When the provincial government came to office in late 1991, it broke with the past and set a new course for British Columbia – protecting our spectacular environment and sustaining resource jobs – for the sake of future generations.

The past three years have been a period of profound change in B.C. The government has made tough decisions that were long overdue. A long-range strategy for renewing our forests has been put in place. Environmental standards are being improved, and reinvestments made to reclaim our land and retrain our workers.

These actions are combining to create positive change for British Columbia:

- ▲ The new Forest Renewal Plan is already 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 more forest renewal projects.

- ▲ The Forest Practices Code is ensuring new forestry standards and better management of the resource.
- ▲ The Protected Areas Strategy is doubling B.C.'s parks and protected wilderness – expanding parks and preserving pristine wilderness for our children's future.
- ▲ Through the work of the Commission on Resources and Environment and dedicated British Columbians, 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 WEST KOOTENAY-BOUNDARY 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 Kootenay process decide to move forward with two separate land-use tables, one in the East and one in the West.

OCTOBER 1994 – Following 18 months of local discussions, the Commission releases reports for the West Kootenay-Boundary and East Kootenay regions.

DECEMBER 1994 to MARCH 1995 – Using these reports as the base, the B.C. government carries out further intensive discussions with the people and communities of the Kootenay-Boundary region.

MARCH 1995 – The government releases the West Kootenay-Boundary and East Kootenay land-use plans.

SECURE ACCESS TO RESOURCE LANDS FOR INDUSTRY AND WORKERS

78.8 Per Cent of the Region for Sustainable Resource Management

Secure access to natural resources is an essential first step in building stable, sustainable communities, protecting and providing quality jobs for present and future generations, and ensuring continued well-being for families in the West Kootenay-Boundary.

Development in the region will proceed with a full sense of responsibility to maintaining social, economic and environmental values. The land-use plan confirms that 78.8 per cent of the land base – or about 3.3 million hectares of Crown lands outside protected areas (11.3 per cent) and privately-owned or settlement lands (9.9 per cent) – are 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. 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 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 and covering more than 50 per cent of the region – about 2.1 million hectares – will comprise areas which provide for a broad range of resource use and recreation activities, including forestry and mining exploration and development.

In some areas within the zone, where sensitive values such as wildlife habitats or important viewsapes 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 values.

ENHANCED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ZONE

Within this zone the primary emphasis is on enhancing or increasing the productive capability of natural resources for all uses, thereby maximizing jobs on these lands.

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

Approximately 10.8 per cent, or more than 452,000 hectares, of the region could potentially be in the Enhanced Resource Development Zone. Final boundaries and development guidelines will be set by a follow-up process involving a wide range of stakeholders. Any additions will come from the Integrated Resource Management Zone.

SPECIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONE

Some areas within this zone contain concentrations of special values – such as critical fish or wildlife habitats, important viewsapes, 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 they will be managed so as to respect these sensitive values.

Under this plan, 17.6 per cent of the region, or about 737,000 hectares, is within this zone.

In addition, this plan establishes two new Wildlife Management Areas within this zone, at Midge Creek and Hamling Lakes. 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. 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, 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 table's 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 nine 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.

DOUBLING PARKS AND PROTECTED WILDERNESS

11.3 Per Cent of the West Kootenay-Boundary Will Be Protected

The West Kootenay-Boundary region is one of the richest areas in North America in terms of natural values – abundant and varied wildlife, spectacular scenery, and prime recreational opportunities.

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

That's why this land-use plan is more than doubling the region's parks and protected wilderness, with nine of the West Kootenay-Boundary's most important natural areas being permanently protected. The land-use plan increases parks and protected wilderness in the West Kootenay-Boundary to 11.3 per cent, an increase of more than 255,000 hectares, to a total of about 471,000 hectares.

In the East Kootenay and West Kootenay-Boundary regions combined, protected areas are increased from 9.14 per cent to 13.88 per cent.

From the old growth and alpine meadows of Granby to the undeveloped watersheds of West Arm, including Lasca Creek, the unique and varied ecosystems of the West Kootenay-Boundary are being protected for the enjoyment of British Columbians now and in the future.

Other sites preserved include the Goat Range extending from the headwaters of the Kaslo River in the south to Trout Lake in the north; the key grizzly habitat of Kokanee Glacier Extension; and the largely undisturbed low-elevation forests of the Gladstone area within the Selkirk Foothills.

Logging, mining and other resource development are prohibited in the new protected areas, while existing grazing, heli-skiing and hiking, snowcat skiing 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)

GRANBY: 38,600 ha; one of only a very few large undisturbed watersheds in the Okanagan-Boundary area and an important habitat for mountain goat and grizzly bear, the area includes old-growth forest and alpine/subalpine grassland meadows.

GLADSTONE: 40,900 ha; the area contains low-elevation forests and provides important winter ranges for deer and elk, includes high-value spawning areas for kokanee and adds natural, recreational and First Nations cultural features.

LOCKHART: 3,600 ha; intact watershed which rises steeply from the slopes of Kootenay Lake to alpine meadows, this contains old-growth forests, First Nations cultural values, and a regionally important hiking trail which will be extended to Upper Kianuko.

KIANUKO: 11,500 ha; contains the headwaters of Kianuko Creek as well as a number of small alpine lakes and meadows, along with old-growth forests and important habitat for caribou, moose and grizzly bear. Recreational uses include hiking, fishing, hunting and mountaineering.

GOAT RANGE: 79,500 ha; a large, generally undisturbed wilderness area with a mix of low, mid and high-elevation forests. Contains old-growth forests and extensive alpine meadows and lakes, provides a spawning and rearing habitat for the internationally important

Gerrard rainbow trout, and supports important wildlife and recreational values, including commercial heli-skiing.

WEST PURCELLS: 32,900 ha; diverse terrain, ranging from low-elevation shoreline to rugged canyons to forested slopes in the mid and high elevations, extensive alpine meadows, small lakes and rugged glaciated peaks. Year-round recreational opportunities include camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, caving, mountaineering, wildlife-viewing, snowmobiling and skiing.

WEST ARM: 25,700 ha; the area's proximity to the city of Nelson makes year-round recreation opportunities key, including wildlife and nature-viewing, water sports and skiing. Creeks within this area serve as a natural water source for the city. Lasca Creek, with its historic heritage trail, will be a significant and accessible wilderness asset for future generations. Also contains important heritage and First Nations cultural values.

KOKANEE GLACIER EXTENSION: 7,200 ha; key grizzly habitats provide a significant addition to Kokanee Glacier Park.

SYRINGA: 4,300 ha; this expansion to Syringa Park encompasses shoreline, grasslands, forests, steep water courses, canyons and cliffs, includes important First Nations cultural values, and provides important habitat for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, deer and elk.

COMMUNITY STABILITY FOR REVELSTOKE

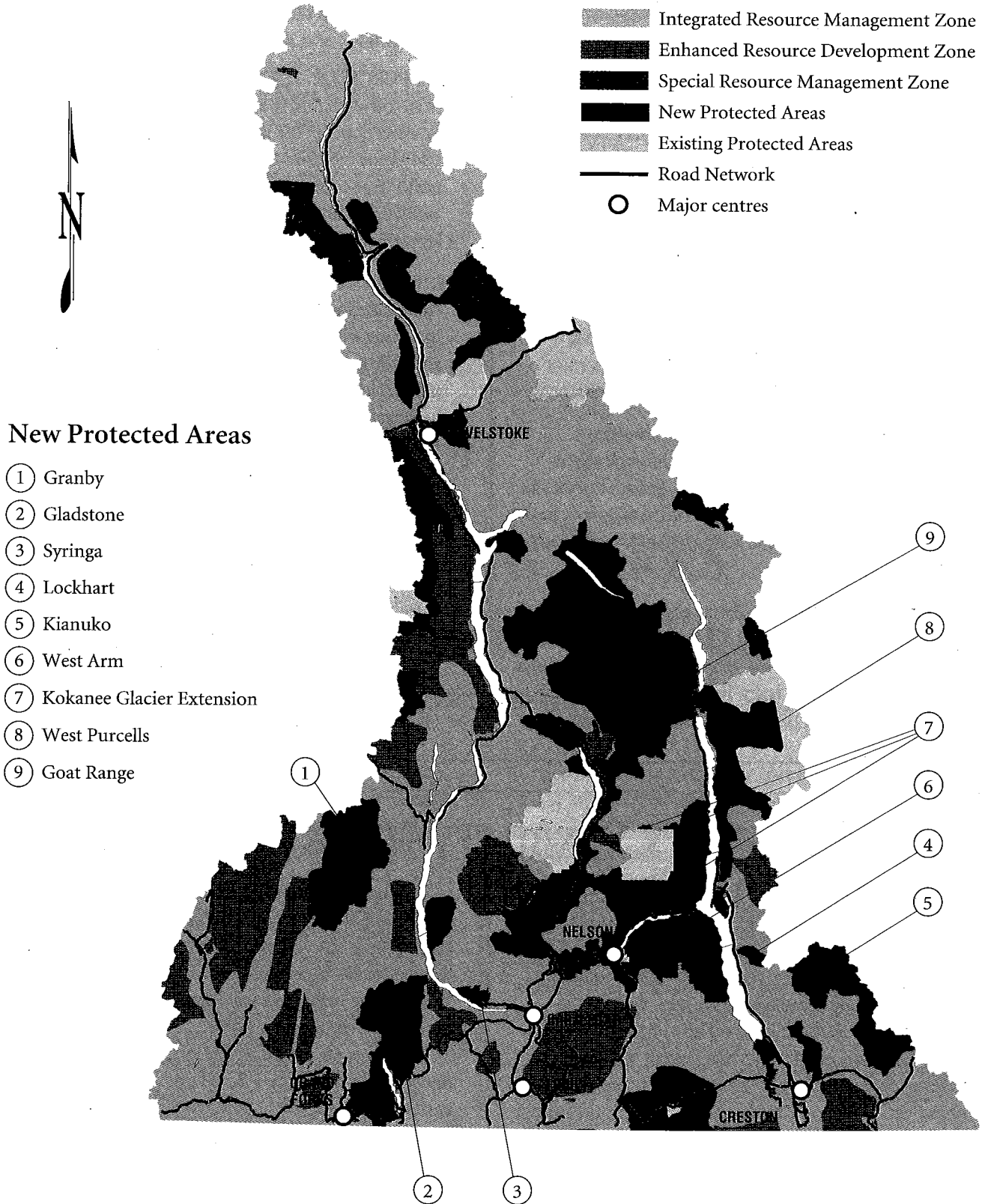
The community of Revelstoke is working to meet the special challenge of creating a balanced plan to ensure the long-term viability of the internationally important woodland caribou population resident in the area, while maintaining a viable forest industry. The community has provided input into the plan that defines resource management zones and identifies broad management objectives. The government's decision accepts the work of the people of Revelstoke and confirms the resource management zones which they have proposed.

The community will be invited to continue its work to provide the Minister of Forests with advice on land-use issues.

The immediate priority will be to provide advice on application of Forest Practices Code guidelines, caribou habitat needs, alternative harvesting and silviculture techniques and location of areas for enhanced forestry. The advisory committee will report to the Minister of Forests by December 31, 1995.

As well, as fibre-yield targets are finalized this year under the Timber Supply Review, government will ensure that management objectives for the region – including those that consider wildlife and environmental values – are defined so as to meet these volumes and provide for a sustainable community.

The West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan



WORKING WITH LOCAL INDUSTRIES AND WORKERS TOWARD A SECURE FUTURE

All Kootenay communities 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.

Decades of overcommitment of resources has resulted in forest overcutting to mill overcapacity, leading to fewer natural resources and impending job layoffs. Change must come, but it must be done at a rate which allows communities and residents to adjust. 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.

This land-use plan is one part of the solution. It identifies long-term goals. The government and local communities now have a shared responsibility to develop and implement other components that will help build a strong economy for the region.

RENEWING THE FOREST INDUSTRY

The forest industry in the West Kootenay-Boundary provides direct wages of about \$220 million for more than 5,200 residents – money that creates many other jobs as it flows through the region and beyond. However, the people of the region recognize the overcommitment of the industry, and that it must be re-structured to make it sustainable.

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

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

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 investment in 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.

Achieving the second goal 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 to develop appropriate value-added projects for the short and long term.

Furthermore, the Minister of Forests will appoint an advisory group in the Kootenay Lake area, to look at opportunities to better utilize the forest resource – including fibre available through the Forest Service Reserve and other sources – to enhance value-added enterprises and remanufacturing, and create more jobs per cubic metre of wood harvested.

CERTAINTY FOR MINING

Mining has a long and vibrant history throughout the West Kootenay-Boundary region, home to one of the largest smelter complexes in the world at Trail. The provincial government recognizes the significant contributions mining has made to the economic and social fabric of the region, and will continue to encourage a strong and healthy industry in the Kootenays and throughout B.C., now and in the future.

The West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan demonstrates that commitment by confirming that mining exploration and development activities have access to the land base that is specifically open to natural resource development. In particular, mining exploration and development are acceptable activities within the Special Resource Management Zone, subject to sustainable development and sound mine development practices.

As well, boundaries for the new protected areas have been drawn in such a way as to not conflict with existing claims on or adjacent to the boundaries.

To ensure mining remains as a viable resource sector in the Kootenay-Boundary, an enhanced geoscience program will be delivered in the 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.

A new management approach in the Kootenay-Boundary region will benefit the mining industry – a streamlined "single window" approval process and a revised set of standards will encourage mineral exploration throughout the region. As well, training opportunities will be provided for hardrock and placer miners and others in the industry regarding Forest Practices Code regulations and guidelines.

The industry will also be consulted on the Forest Service's road reclamation program, including specific notice to the Chamber of Mines.

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Agriculture is an important part of the West Kootenay-Boundary, from Nakusp to Creston. Cattle ranching is the primary agricultural activity, concentrated in the Grand Forks-Greenwood and Creston areas. The provincial government recognizes the importance of the ranching industry, which generates about \$5 million in gross production in the West Kootenay-Boundary alone, and confirms that grazing is an acceptable use in all resource management zones.

Existing grazing tenures in new protected areas will be continued. An annual \$750,000 Grazing Enhancement Fund for the Kootenay-Boundary region will be used to develop and implement intensive management practices, aimed at maintaining and increasing forage production, and meeting conservation needs. Training opportunities will be provided for ranchers and others in the industry regarding the Forest Practices Code.

PROMOTING GROWTH IN TOURISM AND RECREATION

The natural beauty of the West Kootenay-Boundary has led to a healthy and growing tourism industry, and the provincial government acknowledges the key role tourism and recreation play in efforts to diversify the resource-based economies of both the region and the province.

Tourism and recreation activities are allowed in all resource management zones. Existing heli-skiing/hiking operations and snowcat skiing operations will be acceptable uses in protected areas. Non-motorized and motorized recreation, including snowmobiling, will be acceptable activities in all resource management zones. And recreation groups will be included in all local access management decisions including road de-activation.

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 – particularly the Council of Tourism Associations and 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 Kootenay-Boundary region.

An extra full-time staff person will be assigned to 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 businesses and 60 new jobs region-wide over the next 18 months – with additional spin-off revenue in the accommodation and hospitality industries.

Land-use decisions in this plan – such as the establishment of nine new protected areas and the Special Resource Management Zones, plus guaranteed access opportunities to all zones – are also designed to promote expansion, new growth, investment and job creation for tourism-based industries. As well, Forest Practices Code guidelines will be applied to resource development to ensure visual values along river and trail corridors and in the vicinity of recreational areas are considered.

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 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 and Okanagan Nations did not participate in a formal way.

Land-use decisions contained within the West Kootenay-Boundary 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 West Kootenay-Boundary 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 10 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, this 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 planning 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 to work 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 work in 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 West Kootenay-Boundary, that means an additional 31 new woodlots by March of 1997, and for the entire Kootenay-Boundary region a total of 48 new woodlots by March, 1997.

Forest Renewal BC will also 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. An announcement is expected in the near future on the location 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.

Further economic initiatives to create even more jobs under this 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.

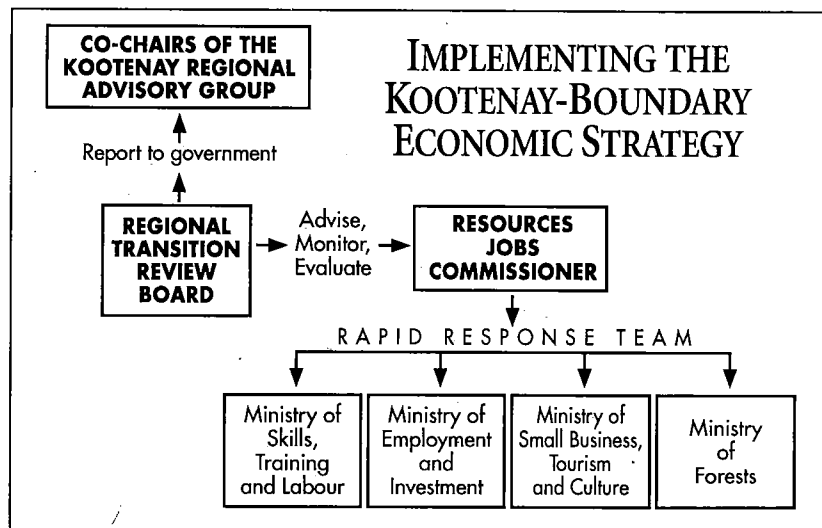
To respond to this urgent need, the government is establishing a Rapid Response Team – for the entire Kootenay-Boundary region – to work with the Resources Jobs Commissioner. The team will consist of senior staff from the ministries of Forests; Employment and Investment; Skills, Training and Labour; 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 development 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 business, labor, environmental, 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, economic 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. 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 regional 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 responses are 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 labor, 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 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 for the region's colleges: at Selkirk College an integrated environmental planning program, and at East Kootenay Community College a new program in adventure tourism. 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 in Revelstoke and at East Kootenay Community College.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE BOARDS

The B.C. government will sponsor a region-wide workshop in June 1995 to obtain advice on the structure of resource boards for the Kootenays. The workshop will be developed in co-operation 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.

Community Resource Boards will be established or confirmed to ensure local input and advice on implementation of this land-use plan.

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

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

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

