

# Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan

## Access Management Study



Prepared for:

**The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management**

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## **1.0 Background and Introduction**

The Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) was approved in the Vanderhoof Forest District in 1997. Development of this plan included identification of a range of interests and values within the Vanderhoof Forest District, and then proposal of a variety of management strategies to conserve these values for the future. One of these management strategies was the Vanderhoof Access Management Plan (AMP), which has been in effect since 1998. Both of these plans have been included in the planning processes of resource development since their inception in 1997 and 1998 respectively. However, the mountain pine beetle epidemic has caused both the LRMP and the AMP to become quickly outdated due to increases in timber harvesting levels throughout the Vanderhoof district. The imminent threat of losing the district's timber resource to mortality caused by beetle has shifted the focus away from original LRMP initiatives, including the AMP. Some initiatives developed through the LRMP have remained intact, including the Protected Areas Strategy. However, other initiatives, such as access management, have become secondary to the salvage of beetle infested timber. With an accelerated harvest rate to capture losses due to infestation, higher levels of access development into previously un-accessed areas is also occurring. This accelerated access development will undeniably have impacts to other resource values within and adjacent to the Vanderhoof Forest District.

In light of the mountain pine beetle epidemic, the LRMP is being re-visited to try and bring this plan in line with the drastic changes that have occurred in the past, and are continuing to occur in the Vanderhoof area. One of the most heated issues amongst resource developers, stakeholders and the public within the Vanderhoof LRMP area is the concept of access management. Therefore, as part of the LRMP review process, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management for the Northern Interior Region has initiated an information gathering project to solicit local input to identify resource values, concerns and comments regarding access in the Vanderhoof Forest District. This report will detail the methodology developed for the data gathering exercise, the results of the project with regards to demographics and public response, a discussion of the ideas and issues brought forth by local parties, and finally, a summary indicating the proposed future steps for this process. A spatial analysis of existing and potential future access concerns will also be conducted and included as part of the discussion, with a map attached as an Appendix.

## **2.0 Methodology**

### ***2.1 Survey Development***

This project was developed to solicit information about access management issues from an extensive local population, including previous Vanderhoof LRMP participants and a variety of stakeholders in and around the Vanderhoof area. A list of previous LRMP participants was provided by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, and this list was cross referenced with a list of stakeholders with interests in the Vanderhoof Forest District that had been part of previous Forest Development Planning with local forest licensees. This resulted in a sizeable list of potential participants for the study and it was determined that a mail-out survey, followed up with more in-depth personal interviews would be the most efficient and cost effective method of collecting data.

The access management survey package was created in a format to allow open and candid response from those who chose to participate. Six short answer questions were developed to determine participant's views on the following topics:

- their overall opinion of access management,
- what access management means to them,
- whether or not the current access management plan is effective,
- what areas of the Vanderhoof Forest District they would like to see access managed,
- what methods of access management and access restriction are preferred, and finally,
- what the potential access issues will be in the Vanderhoof Forest District in the next three to five years.

## **2.2 Survey Distribution**

Access management surveys were mailed out with a covering letter detailing the intended process and also included a pre-paid return envelope to encourage participants to respond. Once the survey was distributed amongst the initial mail-out group, a small percentage of the local public requested that they be added to the participant group so they could provide input. Their information was collected either through additional survey distribution or through the interviewing process that took place after participants returned their survey packages. The final list of potential survey participants totaled 297, broken down into individuals, groups and businesses, and First Nations. Of the final mail-out total, 175 potential participants were individuals, 107 were representatives of businesses or groups with interests in the Vanderhoof Forest District, and 15 were First Nations with current or historical interest in the Vanderhoof area.

## **2.3 Interview Process**

Part of the access management survey included a section where participants could supply contact information if they wanted to participate further in the process, including involvement in a more detailed discussion regarding access management in the Vanderhoof Forest District. Interview candidates were contacted by either phone or email to arrange personal interviews to discuss their concerns further. In order to offer the potential survey participants a variety of options based on their location and comfort level, several interview options were proposed. Options available to willing participants included:

- an interview by phone,
- booking an appointment with the contractor hired to gather information for this project on behalf of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management,
- booking an appointment directly with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, or
- taking part in a set meeting date that was advertised for February 11, 2005 at the Ministry of Forests office in Vanderhoof, where representatives from both the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management and the contractor were present.

Interviews were conducted with the hopes of exploring the background of the responses given in the survey in order to fully investigate the issues identified by the particular respondent. More detailed information about specific areas of interest was delivered and participants were able to identify the full realm of their concerns based on past practice and future interests in access management within the district.

## 3.0 Results

### 3.1 Survey Response Rate

As mentioned previously, 297 total potential participants were included in the access management survey sample group. Initially, it was expected that the level of participation would be approximately 10% of the original mail-out sample population, or approximately 30 responses. Actual results of response to the access management survey were 66 respondents, which amounts to approximately 22% of the total potential participants. The expected response rate to the survey was more than doubled, giving the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management a substantial view of the issues surrounding access management that are deemed important by a variety of members of the public. Demographics of the survey respondents will be analysed further in sub-section 3.3.

### 3.2 Interview Response Rate

In total, 21 individuals and 15 groups requested to be involved further in the access management process. Attempts to contact these 36 respondents resulted in 8 that were unable to be contacted due to failed attempts or timeline issues, 8 that did not confirm further involvement and 20 respondents that participated in a more in-depth interview. Interviews were conducted at various locations and by phone. Of the 20 interviews completed, 5 occurred at the office of the contractor, 10 were conducted by phone, 3 personal visits to stakeholders outside of town were made and 2 interviews were held at the advertised February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting date at the Ministry of Forests office in Vanderhoof.

### 3.3 Respondent Breakdown

The original survey sample group included a diverse range of interests from people, groups and businesses, and First Nations with inherent interest in the Vanderhoof Forest District. Individuals and groups that responded to the survey were broken down into subsets, including members of government, members of local industry, area stakeholders, and members of the general public. A significant number of responses to the survey were received from each group, giving a voice to distinctly different members of the overall public with interests in the Vanderhoof Forest District and the issue of access management. Table 1 contains a detailed breakdown of survey respondents.

**Table 1. Breakdown of Survey Respondents**

<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Responses Received</b>
Government	8	12
Industry	9	14
Stakeholders	29	44
General Public	20	30
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

Analysis of the demographics of the respondents to the survey listed in Table 1 gives an indication that issues of access management are important to a variety of members of the public. This survey inspired a vast range of issues being brought forth for further analysis by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. Although the range of issues is broad and public opinion often spans the entire extent of an identified issue, the results of the survey will provide a starting point for future strategic planning of access management in the Vanderhoof Forest District.

## 4.0 Information Compilation

Responses to the access management survey and information collected in the interview process yielded a vast range of issues and an even larger range of opinions offered regarding these issues. As such, a method of summarizing the information supplied by respondents was difficult to determine. This section will deal with each individual question posed within the access management survey and will include a summary of the results given by respondents themed out by issue or response where possible. The following sections were not interpreted from their original submission, but were categorized according to the general theme of the response and condensed in order to allow for ease of reporting.

### 4.1 Importance of Access Management

The first question of the access management survey asked participants if they thought access management in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan was an important issue. Of the 66 total survey respondents, 59 direct responses to this question were received. Generally, respondents believe access management is an important issue, with 93% of respondents answering yes and 7% of respondents answering no to the first question. Table 2 lists a summary of the responses received and indicates the reasons why respondents identified access management as being an important or not important issue within the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan.

**Table 2. Importance of Access Management in the Vanderhoof LRMP Area**

<b>Do you think access management in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan is an important issue?</b>	
<b>YES 93%</b>	<b>NO 7%</b>
Forest lands and the access to them belongs to the public, not only resort owners, ranchers, loggers and trappers. The access management plan reflects on management of a public resource and there should be no inequities regarding access.	Access management should be scientifically studied to prove the need.
Access is identified as an area of concern by many interest groups because it impacts most resource users.	With proper planning and layout, access management should not be necessary.
Access needs to be controlled to help protect wildlife values and to protect populations for the future. Habitat fragmentation and road-induced mortality will be big issues.	Not as important as beetle impacts and community stability.
Access is key to all types of recreation and their enjoyment. Both motorized and non-motorized access is important depending on the experience being sought after.	Access management means restrictions. All access is required to manage beetle.
A balance of values is important, not just timber extraction. In order to achieve this balance, the access management plan needs to be updated and reviewed regularly.	
Access affects all the values identified in the LRMP and should be managed to protect those values and to meet the intent of the LRMP.	
Access can directly affect the livelihoods of those employed in a resource-based industry.	
Increased harvesting due to mountain pine beetle will open up extensive access in a shorter time frame. Management will be important to keep roads in check and to avoid negative impacts to other values.	
A variety of access options should be available and restrictions should occur only if for legitimate reasons, applying equally to everyone.	



**Table 2 (Continued)**

<b>Do you think access management in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan is an important issue?</b>	
<b>YES 93%</b>	<b>NO 7%</b>
To allow for access control that will aid in timely harvesting of beetle killed timber, reforestation, preservation of water quality and protection of wildlife.	
Access management is important if common sense is used. Some district assets need to be protected and access management is a valuable tool that can be used.	
Access management is a method to control resource users so that sustainability occurs and there is something left for the future.	
Important issue with the on-going pressure for road deactivation due to increased liability for industry with roads remaining open.	
There are too many restrictions. More public access gives the public a better idea of what land and resource management is and how it works for them. It also allows for fire suppression to protect the value of the forest resource.	
Pressures on the land base are dynamic and will be increased in the future. Of equal significance is the ability of government to manage in light of changing political pressures and resources.	
More access means more pressure for the animals and the protected areas are becoming smaller and smaller. There are not enough Conservation Officers to deal with poaching. With more roads and blocks it is important to make sure animals have relatively undisturbed areas for survival. This can be promoted with access control. It is vital for the survival of wildlife and the survival of tourism based industry.	
Access planning must allow for all agencies to meet the requirements of their mandate. It is a big concern between industry and other uses and can't be used strictly for personal interest, economic or otherwise.	

Generally, access management was deemed important by the majority of respondents for a variety of reasons that relate to personal experience, broad-based concerns for sustainability of resources and a common desire to reach a balance between resource user groups. Many other issues are interconnected with access management, including the mountain pine beetle epidemic and the quality of life for residents of the Vanderhoof area and those visiting this area. In order to reach a balance of values that will provide benefits to all interests, access management in the Vanderhoof Forest District will be an important part of the Land and Resource Management Plan process.

**4.2 What Does Access Management Mean?**

While it is important to identify whether or not access management is an important issue in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan, it is equally as important to determine what the concept of access management actually means to the public and stakeholders with interests in the Vanderhoof Forest District. The second question of the access management survey asked participants what access management meant to them. Examples were offered, including: managing for more roads, for less roads, for more public vehicle access, for less public vehicle access, wildlife population management, public recreation opportunity, commercial recreation opportunity, managing visual quality, maintaining non-motorized wilderness experiences, etc. Most respondents of the survey utilized the given examples as part of their response, while some also added their

own vision of what access management means within the Vanderhoof district. Table 3 highlights the percentage breakdown of those who chose answers from the given examples.

**Table 3. Summary of Responses to Identified Access Management Outcomes**

<b>Desired Access Management Outcome</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents in Favor</b>
Managing for More Roads	4%
Managing For Less Roads	8%
More Public Vehicle Access	11%
Less Public Vehicle Access	13%
Wildlife Population Management	14%
Public Recreation Opportunity	18%
Commercial Recreation Opportunity	11%
Managing Visual Quality	8%
Maintaining Non-motorized Wilderness Experiences	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that access management means a variety of things to the respondents of this survey. While public recreation opportunity was given the most weight of the response at 18%, it is clear that not one particular value was heavily valued over another. Many other ideas of what access management actually means were also included as part of the response to this survey question. The following bullet points highlight the general themes that were suggested:

- Access management should provide a balance of all competing issues and interests. More roads should occur in the productive forest and fewer roads should occur where values are at risk. There should be a balance of values with management that will provide a mix of opportunities to meet everyone's needs in an organized fashion.
- Access should be managed in the Vanderhoof Forest District to reduce future risks to resources and the environment. These risks include but are not limited to wildfire, negative influences to wildlife, and negative impacts to forest ecosystems, soil and water systems.
- Initially, access management should focus on maximizing the availability and the overall access to the timber resource. Once the mountain pine beetle epidemic is over, access management can be used to manage other resource interests within the Vanderhoof Forest District.
- Access management should open up equal opportunities for all members of the public with regards to fish, wildlife, recreation, range, and wilderness experiences. Access management should not allow for elitist use of any part of the land base.
- Access management should be limited in scope to management of the road resource. It should not be used to manage wildlife or fisheries values. Both wildlife and fisheries need to be managed through regulation and the proper government channels, such as the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- Roads and access need to be managed only when there is an identified problem that is put forth by an accredited source. Access should not pertain to personal interests and should be managed for the common good of the public.
- Management of access should include the utilization and removal of roads for access to the timber resource. Main networks of roads should remain open for public and other resource use, but roads developed strictly to access timber should be deactivated or rehabilitated as required.

- Access management should control the negative influence caused by road building. This includes sediment control, predator control, control of road hunters, control of poaching of wildlife, and control of destructive or invasive use by the public or other users. Increased access should result in an increase of conservation officers.
- Access management should limit access while maintaining safety for the public. The public and affected stakeholders should be kept informed of access plans and should be consulted about access control areas. Access control should never be used to protect private enterprise.
- Access management should result in less vehicular access to protect wildlife and to promote wilderness. Some roads are necessary but there should be ways to control access for wildlife, predator control, maintenance of wilderness experiences and control of negative influences to other values identified in the district.
- Access management should involve cooperative and coordinated planning. Access needs to be planned, access control needs to be enforced, and the public needs to be consulted.
- From the perspective of a Conservation Officer, access management involves issues of compliance and enforcement, providing up-to-date public information and accessing areas to conduct investigations related to compliance and enforcement. In order to be enforced, the public must have access to all related access management information (hunting and fishing synopsis, government centers, sporting goods stores, information kiosks, etc.).

Access management can mean different things to different people depending on their interests, past experiences and relationship to the resources present in the Vanderhoof district. There is no one particular vision of access management that is more important than the other, and a broad opinion of what access management is or should be can lead to overwhelming management problems. One of the most prevalent themes identified in the responses to this question was the acknowledgement that a balance of values is important. Access management goals will need to be developed in consideration of this balance within the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan area.

### **4.3 Current Access Management Effectiveness**

The third question of the access management survey explored the topic of whether or not respondents thought that effective methods of access management are being used in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan area. Of the 66 total respondents, 56 direct responses to this question were received. Generally, respondents believe effective methods of access management are not being used, with 62.5% of respondents answering no, 27% of respondents answering yes, 7% of respondents answering both yes and no, and 3.5% of respondents indicating they were unsure. As the range of responses was largely varied in both the yes and no categories, Table 4 lists the general themes developed by respondents who directly answered this question, and this includes answers that alluded to the general theme of the effectiveness of access management given through indirect responses.

**Table 4. Effectiveness of Access Management Methods in the Vanderhoof LRMP Area**

<b>Do you feel that effective methods of access management are being used in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan area?</b>			
<b>YES 27%</b>	<b>YES AND NO 5%</b>	<b>UNSURE 4%</b>	<b>NO 64%</b>
	Some are effective and some aren't. Road deactivations sometimes create access inequities, as certain vehicles can't pass. Gates make kingdoms for those that have keys.		Deactivation is costly and eliminates quick access for fire control. Deactivation is also unsafe for the public and other users. Liability for roads should be assumed by the government to eliminate deactivation by Licensees. Mountain pine beetle also causes ineffective use of deactivation because of re-entry issues.
	Access management requires dedication and commitment. It can and must be done, but requires some effort by everyone.		Secondary and/or spur roads should be deactivated when they are no longer required for timber extraction.
	LRMP effectiveness is only as good as it is able to conform and adapt, be adhered to by all stakeholders, and the strive to find a balance.		Access restrictions don't seem to apply to everyone. Either harvesting is the only priority or certain individuals use closures for personal gain. Vocal stakeholders get what they want at the expense of other interests. Stakeholder areas should not be protected by road closures. Access restrictions should also not be elitist. If access is restricted, it should apply to all users, not just to those without the right type of vehicle.
	Temporary and permanent deactivation needs to be part of the plan, along with development of guidelines and timelines.		Methods of access management are ineffective. This is in part due to mountain pine beetle and previous management provisions being over-ridden. Access control is viewed by some as a challenge and not all vehicles are controlled (ie: ATVs). Methods that may be effective are not enforced. The intent is often there but there is a lack of legal tools/mechanisms to enforce closures.
	Present methods work well most of the time. It is a learning process that is constantly updating as new knowledge or needs are defined or as failures are recognized.		The plan fell behind 3 to 4 years ago and needs to be re-visited based on updated road and trail inventories. Current responsibility is on Licensees and because harvesting has the highest priority minimum effort is put forth to maintain access commitments.
	Great improvements can be made in planning, interpretation and implementation of a much more public friendly process and strategy.		The access sub-committee from the LRMP is not being used. The Ministry of Forests should not be responsible for access closures to manage other resources when their expertise is timber. There is a lack of regulatory alignment between government agencies and more defined roles and responsibilities are required to implement and enforce an access management plan.
	Before the mountain pine beetle, current methods were ok. The plan has fallen apart with the drive to salvage beetle wood.		Permanent closures are not necessary, better management is needed. Also, mountain pine beetle does not follow boundaries and management of access should be left until after the beetle epidemic has subsided.
	Road blocks are generally effective, although cumbersome.		Access control should be used on a site level basis instead of using broad objectives that may not best suit the purpose.

**Table 4 (Continued)**

<b>Do you feel that effective methods of access management are being used in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan area?</b>			
<b>YES</b> 27%	<b>YES AND NO</b> 5%	<b>UNSURE</b> 4%	<b>NO</b> 64%
	Good communication and signs are important.		Citizens should not be denied access to roads they have paid for. There should be no access restrictions and no road closures at all. Opening access spreads out resource use rather than concentrating it in defined areas.
	The methods used are effective. The real issue is where restrictions are being used.		Current methods of access restriction are a liability for everyone. The use of gates needs to be better promoted. Gates with signs indicating consequences of unauthorized access would be effective, but more enforcement by a regulatory body would be required.
	Up until now there has been a fairly good dialogue between joint users of the resource and there is hope that this cooperation continues in light of increased harvesting.		Roads should not be constructed in riparian or critical habitat areas. There should be more areas with no management at all, including fire protection.
	Most access management points deter road hunters, therefore they are effective for the intended purpose.		Fire protection planning has never been included in the access management plan.
	The LRMP process gave an opportunity for individuals and groups to be heard. This process should be more 'living' as resource issues change, needs change and awareness changes.		
	While appreciating issues around manpower and budgets, access management points could be better maintained in terms of barricades and signage. The ability to provide enforcement is greatly enhanced when the public is fully aware of the location, type and purpose of an access management point.		
	Some people in the forest industry try the best they can and others think access control is not important. This can influence the overall effectiveness. If people destroy gates or blocks they should be charged and it should be in the newspaper to let the public know it won't be tolerated. Explain the importance of access control to the public.		

One of the most prevalent responses received for this question regarding effectiveness of current access management methods was that the current access management plan fell behind when increased harvesting of mountain pine beetle infested wood began.

**4.4 Access Management Areas: Existing and Proposed**

The question of effective methods of access management in the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan area was further divided into part 'a' and 'b' where respondents could suggest changes to access management areas already included in the Access Management Plan, or could propose new areas of access management. Table 5 summarizes the first part of this question with general comments about existing access

management areas and then more specific examples of existing areas within the Access Management Plan that respondents feel should be managed differently. Table 6 summarizes the second part of this question, again with general comments about new areas that should be added to the Access Management Plan and then with specific areas they feel should be assessed and added to the existing Access Management Plan for the Vanderhoof district. A spatial analysis of both of these summaries is also included as Appendix I using the original Access Management Plan as a starting point.

**Table 5. Existing Access Management Areas and Proposed Changes**

<b>Are there areas in the existing Access Management Plan that should be managed differently?</b>	
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Existing Areas of the Access Management Plan Proposed to be Managed Differently</b>
Roads should not be deactivated. Deactivation of logging roads by removing culverts, bridges and/or trenching is unjustifiable. Public monies were extended to Licensees to remove the fiber resource and deactivation to avoid liability or future cost is not in the best interest of the public good.	The end of the Gold Road (Access Point 3), The Blue 4000 Road (Access Points 6, 37, 57), the Blue Road past Kuyakuz Lake (Access Point 67), Malaput Road (Access Point 67), and Moose Lake Road (Access Point 7) should all be open to Limited Entry Hunting.
Access points should have locked gates with signage and ditches or barricades to prevent any vehicle access.	The access closure on the Finger road should be put back in place to protect high wildlife values as stated in the plan. (Access Point 11)
Gates are a bad tool. Waterbars should not be used as a form of access restriction and non-motorized access should include planes.	Entiako and Laidman Lake is non-motorized access for everyone except for guide-outfitters. Non-motorized restriction should apply to all users.
Deactivation needs to be part of the Access Management Plan and stakeholder input is important.	Fawnie mountains access restriction to protect caribou is not effective and should be re-assessed or removed. Wolves, windfall and snow depths affect caribou, not access. (Access Point 33)
Ensure a road closure has merit and that areas are closed for the right reasons.	Access/non-access to the Blackwater River from the lower Kluskus. Without Conservation Officers to monitor these restrictions, what is the point? These access points need to be enforced. (Access Points 7,8,46,63).
Do not close or deactivate roads that lead to lakes and/or campsites.	Do not deactivate the Green 9000 road. (Area of Access Point 63).
More coordination with forest companies is required due to increases in harvesting.	Alexander Mackenzie Trail has so much access that there is a loss of evidence of the original route. This and other historical trails should be better preserved regardless of timber values. (Access Points 56,62,68)
Access should be managed differently where recreation and tenure opportunities are denied.	Protection of wildlife values around the Blackwater River.
Access control points just seem to happen with no public consultation and no use of the access sub-committee (for example: the Malaput road at 19km and the Finger road).	Better access to the Sutherland corridor and Francois South areas for future timber supply.
Do not falsify why areas have been closed.	Caribou areas in the Southwest.
The roads south of Fraser Lake should not be managed. Areas should be logged and then the roads should be removed.	The original intent of the Moose Lake access restriction was lost due to mountain pine beetle harvesting. (Access Point 7)
No more than 4% of the Timber Harvesting Land Base should be in permanent access.	There is no data to substantiate claims that the Davidson has wildlife value. (Access Point 35)

**Table 5 (Continued)**

<b>Are there areas in the existing Access Management Plan that should be managed differently?</b>	
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Existing Areas of the Access Management Plan Proposed to be Managed Differently</b>
Protected areas should be reassessed for value. Has mountain pine beetle changed land status or resource values that were previously protected?	Crystal Lake access restrictions are no longer valid due to mountain pine beetle harvesting. (Access Points 4, 50, 51, 60)
There should be land use regulations in place to control public and ATV access in order to manage the intent of the LRMP.	Entiako caribou area is not a valid access restriction because access control does not address the problem.
All existing access points should be revisited and the rationale for each point reassessed.	The Malaput, Swanson and Gold Road should not have access restrictions to protect guiding territories. (Access Points 3, 67, 75)
No comment on where access management occurs, but feel very strongly about how access is managed. Gates should be used and violators should be prosecuted. Tearing up roads to restrict access is ridiculous.	Mount Davidson in the Davidson Access Management Area is caribou and moose winter range. BCTS should not issue a short-term sale here.
There should be no roads around or through Parks.	Wolf lake, Kluskus 17000 is not effective. (Access Point 8)
	The access control that was in place on the road that leaves the Kluskus at 125km going north, on the west side of Chedakuz Creek should be replaced after harvesting.
	The Sutherland/Shass Mountain area should be managed for access due to caribou and access induced predation by wolves.
	The Blue 7000 road should be closed to the public as it is part of a range and guiding territory. (Access Point 68)
	The Green 9000 road has major ATV and 4x4 traffic during hunting season. (Access Point 63)
	Vehicles regularly pull out barricades at 38km on the Kluskus at Greer Creek crossing (one example of many). (Access Point 19).
	The east Swanson, Domtar and Greer Creek points should be moved. (Access Points 19, 50, 51, 75)
	Grizzly Valley, Tatelkuz Lake should be controlled for wildlife and historic value.
	Euchiniko River for spring range and mineral licks.
	Island Lake Road should continue the current closure and there should be more access control along this road system (side roads).

**Table 6. New Access Management Areas Proposed by Survey Respondents**

<b>Are there new (access management) areas that should be added?</b>	
<b>General</b>	<b>Proposed New Areas for Access Management</b>
Areas where impacts to people's livelihoods will be the greatest.	The Chowsunket access management area should be expanded.
Roads associated with NRFLs and SNRFLs. Forest Stewardship Plans need to include plans for deactivation.	Put a gate on Davidson Creek now that industrial traffic is gone. (Access Point 35)
If access management is necessary after logging, then don't log the area in the first place.	Mountain goat habitat along the Holy Cross should be managed for access.
Areas where natural range barriers have been removed.	Access restriction on the Yellow Road.
Areas where wildlife shelter and refuge have been removed.	The Kenney Dam area needs fire guards to protect wildlife from the next fire.
Areas where lodge exclusiveness is gone	Anahim Connector, should not be pursued until an economic analysis is done.
Manage for better access to lakes and more recreation sites.	Guide areas 713G003 and 713G004.
No areas should be added until data is obtained from accredited biologists, hydrologists, geologists, etc. to support the restriction.	Bobtail/Kluskus Connector, deactivate all secondary roads and retain a buffer to provide visual screens. Rehabilitate all roads leading to Finger/Tatuk Provincial Park.
Access management should occur only if in the interest of the public good. There should be no private guide outfitter areas.	Deactivate all non-essential roads in the west end of the Bobtail system for wildlife purposes.
Access management has to become a key element at the initial planning stages of forest development. Natural barriers (gullies, swamps) should be used as access control points.	Tatuk Hills, Iron Mountain and the hills surrounding Finger and Tatuk Lakes are important viewsapes.
Include road rehabilitation as part of operational plans. Forest regeneration makes a great control point.	10km south of Moose Lake, and west from Lot 3113 to the end of the road requires some deactivation.
Roads should not be built within 2km of protected areas.	Protection of the Chedakuz wetland complex.
No new areas should be added to the plan without public consultation.	The road west of Laidman Lake airstrip needs to be deactivated.
The entire LRMP area should be an access management area.	Areas on both sides of the Stuart River Provincial Park to preserve rich wildlife, diversity, cultural and scenic value that is unique to the Vanderhoof area.
Access restriction should be avoided until the mountain pine beetle and subsequent fire pressures are lessened.	Off the 200 road towards Graham Lake should have the bridge removed or the road closed in some other form.
Beetle impacted areas and new proposed access management areas should be reviewed to help balance the intent of the LRMP.	All new blocks and side roads on the 200 road from the Nithi Valley to Trout Lake should be closed.
Areas within 500m of identified ungulate winter range or mineral licks should require permanent road deactivation.	After logging is done, close the Arrow Empty to truck traffic. Leave it open for ATVs, horses and skidoos.
All new blocks and new roads should be totally deactivated after replanting.	The roads behind Scott Lake towards 897-237 should be closed to trucks. After logging, close the 244 road to trucks, leave it open for ATVs and horses.



It is apparent from the high level of response to all sub-parts of question 3 that the majority of the public and stakeholders believe areas of access management are valuable to either help protect other resource values or to promote a certain type of activity in a designated area. While it may not be possible to make all the proposed changes to the existing Access Management Plan as outlined in Table 5, or add all the newly proposed areas outlined in Table 6, this analysis will provide a useful starting point for the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. Further work and analysis based on these general comments and defined management areas should help to resolve some of the access management concerns within the Vanderhoof district.

#### **4.5 Access Management Tools**

Within the current Access Management Plan for the Vanderhoof Forest District, it states that a range of access management should be used as required. Primarily this plan consists of access management areas and specified access management points where some form of restriction or closure may be placed. The fourth question of the access management survey involved an analysis of what other tools for access management respondents could see being effective in their areas of concern. The choices given in the survey included designated road closures, access control points, public education, coordinated operational plans, stakeholder agreements, and Wildlife Act closures. An option was also given to provide other tools respondents thought would be effective for access management. Table 7 highlights the percentage breakdown of those who chose answers from the given examples.

**Table 7. Summary of Responses to Desired Access Management Tools**

<b>Desired Access Management Tool</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents in Favor</b>
Designated Road Closures	14.5%
Access Control Points	20%
Public Education	13.5%
Coordinated Operational Plans	14.5%
Stakeholder Agreements	14.5%
Wildlife Act Closures	17%
Other: (None, Deactivation, Gates, Rehabilitation, Signs, Land Act Closures, Reclamation)	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results presented in Table 7 indicate that effective tools for access management mean a variety of things to the respondents of this survey. While access control points were given the most weight of the response at 20%, it is clear that not one particular access management tool was heavily valued over another. Some general comments were also given as part of the response to this question. The following bullet points highlight the general themes that were suggested:

- If access control is not in legislation then it is not enforceable. The reasons for closure need to be clear and transparent.
- A mix of options is desirable, based on what is best for the given circumstance.
- Use the access we have to help diversify the economy. Research points of interest and make good use of access for public education purposes.
- Well researched and unbiased scientific data should be the starting base of any planning strategy.
- Let people with Limited Entry Hunting authorization have access and you will know who is in the area.

- Keep the process open to the public.
- Wildlife Act closures would be desirable if they are supported by data and not just the opinion of a stakeholder or member of the public.
- Road closures and access points are not effective.
- All access management tools have their place but education is the one element that has not been adequately emphasized in the past. Legislated closures such as those under the Wildlife Act would be the most enforceable.
- How would Wildlife Act Closures work and how effective would they be against poaching? As long as people can go into areas with trucks there will be poaching. Poachers do not drive in the middle of the night on an ATV with a flashlight. They go where the roads are open.

Responses to the question of effective access management tools indicate overall that one method is not preferred over another. Generally, respondents have indicated that a variety of management tools is required in order to reach a balance among user groups. While some are not in favor of any access management at all, most respondents feel that a variety of tools that are prescribed through an open and transparent process would help to manage many of the access concerns present in the Vanderhoof Forest District now and in the future.

#### **4.6 Road Access Control**

Road access control is one of the more controversial issues that was brought out of the access management data gathering project. The fifth question in the mail-out survey asked participants what methods they preferred for road access control within the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management plan area. The choices supplied included gates, berms/blocks, excavations, signs, bridge removal, spreading slash, rehabilitation and an 'other' category. Space was also provided in this survey question where respondents could discuss the reasons for their preferred choice(s) or give more information about access control or restrictions in general. Table 8 summarizes the response generated from the choices supplied in the survey.

**Table 8. Summary of Preferred Access Control or Restriction Methods**

<b>Desired Access Control Method</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents in Favor</b>
Gates	15%
Berms/Blocks	12%
Excavations	11%
Signs	15%
Bridge Removal	15%
Spreading Slash	8%
Rehabilitation	13%
None of the Above	6%
Other: (Deactivation, Special Permits, Reforestation, Regulation, Legislative Closures)	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Again, there was no method of access control that was favored over another. The use of signs showed the highest response at 15%, but it is clear that respondents favor the use of a variety of closure methods. Respondents that answered none of the above did so based on a dislike for any of the listed options, or because they were not in favor of any kind of access restriction. A variety of general comments were also received as part of the response for this question. The general themes are included in the bullet points below:

- Gates offer quick access for fire control, harvesting and silviculture with less overall cost, and are more effective than berms, blocks or excavations. Gates with signage will keep people out of areas and will not destroy the road surface.
- Gates have received a negative stigma in this area, but they give a clear representation of their intent and also allow abbreviated access for officials when required. Gates combined with well maintained signs are effective. Maintaining signage and gate checks may be a suitable project for Youth Development Corps if the Ministry of Forests has access to that program. Government has applied for a project involving inventory and upgrading of Management Unit signs. Perhaps a coordinated approach to backcountry signage would be a useful program.
- Roads are in poor shape because Licensees are not maintaining them.
- Gates make kingdoms because they imply that a restricted number of stakeholders have privileges at the extent of others. Berms, blocks or gates don't work because people will work to get around them. Gates can also be vandalized, which increases the overall cost to use them. ATV and off-road vehicle access management requires more rigorous methods.
- Signs are not effective. Access control needs to be in regulation so it can be properly enforced.
- Berms are dangerous for the public and bridge removal seems an unnecessary expense along with being too permanent for this district with the potential need for fire control.
- If an access restriction is applied it should be for all users, not just vehicle traffic.
- There should be no access restrictions. Access helps with the management of other resources. The public pays taxes to enjoy Crown land and they should not be denied this right. Older members of the public require good access in order to make use of the wilderness and recreation resources available.
- The use of gates, blocks and signs in combination would be the most effective. Access control will require more than one measure and a combination of methods in any area would be most effective.
- Government should use timely satellite image maps to monitor and control road density and access management issues.
- If roads are created solely for timber harvest, they should be reverted back to forest after harvesting is complete. Mountain pine beetle has created a fragile area and it must be rehabilitated for the future enhancement of forestry and recreational grounds.
- A user pay system for access would give people more incentive to be involved in management of the land base.
- All listed access control methods are elitist because only ATVs or snowmobiles can access an area after any of these control structures are put in place. If access is the issue the restriction should apply to everyone. If hunting is the issue it should be dealt with through hunting regulations, not access control.
- Access control implies that other stakeholders/Licensees are unwilling to accept maintenance/liability responsibilities of roads, which should be re-examined in light of mountain pine beetle harvesting.
- Access control provides special interest groups with unlimited opportunities. Blocking roads to please guide-outfitters is unacceptable.
- Berms and excavations need to be substantial to be effective. Planning road development around natural barriers would be the most effective and cost conscious. The use of gates or blocks on a flat surface is difficult if not impossible to manage.
- Access control should be site-specific with sound social and environmental assessments completed to determine what should be done. All control measures can

be effective for different areas depending on the location and other users of the land base.

- If a road has a future use in forest management, it should not be ripped up for temporary access control. If people will not respect the consensus of the LRMP group, they need to be punished. Main roads should not be blocked at all. Moving road blocks, deactivating and reactivating roads is a complete waste of money.
- More public involvement is required. Current groups for public consultation are generally formed of stakeholders that have particular interests in the land base. More of the general public needs to be consulted to get a more balanced viewpoint.
- Gates work but only if the key is controlled. If agreements are made, forestry workers must be made aware. Blocks work well when properly installed, and work even better if preceded by an excavation. Signs are important and work well when placed at the beginning of the road system. Bridge removal is effective and logging operations should make use of temporary bridges. Rehabilitation works well close to sensitive areas and Parks.

A variety of issues were highlighted in the responses received for this survey question. Within each issue, there was a broad range of opinions identified that covered almost every point of the access control spectrum. While not every concern of every respondent will be able to be fully addressed through the access management planning process, future goals should strive to reach a balance of interests through the implementation of a variety of access control features. Working toward a balance of values appears to be a favored method of addressing such a broad range of identified concerns and issues brought forth by an inspired and passionate local voice.

#### ***4.7 Emerging Access Management Issues***

The final question posed in the access management mail-out survey was one of the more important questions from a strategic planning viewpoint. This question asked respondents to list what they thought would be the most important access issues that would emerge within the Vanderhoof Forest District in the next three to five years. While some of the feedback generated from this question was not directly related to access, it was included along with the identified potential access issues for further consideration and reference by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. Issues were broken up by major theme and are summarized in Table 9 on the following pages.

**Table 9. Summary of Emerging Access Related Issues Identified by Survey Respondents**

<b>Wildlife Issues</b>	<b>Safety Issues</b>	<b>Mountain Pine Beetle Issues</b>	<b>Access Management Issues</b>	<b>Recreation Issues</b>	<b>Resource Based Business Issues</b>	<b>Government Issues</b>
Increased access will increase wildlife pressures such as harassment from motorized vehicles.	Increased access could increase the risk of man-caused fires.	Altering of water tables and impacts to soil as a result.	Dealing with access issues through access management, not wildlife and fisheries issues.	Less value of the natural world with diminishing remote areas.	Potential exploitation of wildlife affecting livelihoods of guides.	Already limited resources of Conservation Officers being spread even thinner
Increased hunting pressure due to moose populations increasing from habitat creation.	Maintain enough access for fire control while rehabilitating all non-usable roads.	Legislative requirements and Provincial standards. What is the relevance in this district due to beetle.	Once the timber is gone who will maintain roads that access lodges and public recreation sites?	Access to sensitive areas should be closed off.	Visitors from other areas not understanding scope of access management plan.	Wildlife branch not stepping up to monitor wildlife populations.
Increased harvest will severely impact wildlife habitat along with increased hunting pressure from more access.	Safety of workers in the forest due to increased fire risk from dead wood.	Current legislation doesn't apply locally. Have more people be able to make local decisions.	Government spends a lot of money to return fire control damage back to a natural state. Why can't this same effort be applied to access?	Increase in roads jeopardizing remoteness and isolation of recreation and tourism opportunities.	Potential increases in private land sales if more lake-side areas are opened up.	Keeping current with the vast amount of changes occurring in this district due to increased harvest.
Increased access will lead to increases in the number of road hunters.	Higher volumes of traffic will increase the risk of road travel.	Blow down issues as a result of extensive harvest and creation of openings.	Increased ATV use that is next to impossible to control.	Access management to allow nature to heal the land from beetle and harvesting.	Tourism management as this industry will increase after beetle is gone.	Lack of communication between branches of government.
Management of increasing wolf populations.	Fire protection as a trade-off with access control.	Loss of natural range barriers.	Anahim connector, pros and cons.	Fewer wilderness opportunities.	Visual quality impacts to other resource based industries.	Who is going to monitor access?
Increased pressure on wildlife from increased access.	Access control with public safety in mind.	Continuing to work in the spirit of cooperation in the interest of LRMP values.	Continued expansion of access for beetle control and fire suppression.	ATVs developing new patterns of use.	Access control being used to promote guide-outfitting businesses.	Lack of resources to monitor and enforce hunting regulations.
Roads will initially have a negative impact on wildlife, but after five years, the harvested openings will be a wildlife haven.	Increased fire risk and hazard.	Beetle harvest has opened up the central interior and access control must be implemented.	Access restrictions concentrating resource use and resulting in over use in some areas.	Review of Protected areas to see if they still hold the same value as when established.	The need for forest companies to become more involved in educating the public.	No current inventory on wildlife. Seasons are set on harvest and this will blow up in WLAPs face.

**Table 9. (Continued)**

<b>Wildlife Issues</b>	<b>Safety Issues</b>	<b>Mountain Pine Beetle Issues</b>	<b>Access Management Issues</b>	<b>Recreation Issues</b>	<b>Resource Based Business Issues</b>	<b>Government Issues</b>
Wildlife will adapt to new access but will be deprived of adequate cover due to increased harvest. Too many large areas are being harvested without proper planning.	Areas of limited or no access will have high losses during wildfire. Will these losses be acceptable if they are the result of road closures?	Prince George to Smithers will be the most concentrated forest base in the province due to beetle harvest. Management challenge will happen once the beetle is gone.	Commercial access being misused/abused by recreation pursuits and hunters.	Vast tracts of dry dead trees that will not be appealing from a recreation stance. Other areas will need to be opened up for the public.	Non-motorized wilderness experiences should be actively promoted and access to these pursuits actively controlled.	Cooperation and coordination of planning. One access coordinator as a central agency for planning and enforcement should be considered.
Hunting pressure. Vanderhoof has three open moose seasons. New access will flood hunters to this area. Other places in BC need more open seasons to lessen pressure.	Search and rescue impacts from road closures. People may attempt to go down restricted roads. How will Search and Rescue get them out?	Access restriction. The real alteration to the environment is caused by harvesting, but by using access control it attempts to put the burden on the public for management.	Payment for access needs to be implemented as a means of financing management just as you pay for the right to hunt.	Road closures affecting recreation or game-guiding. Closures should only be used to prevent road damage or to avoid conflict with forestry operations.	Access to range and control of range cattle as a result of increased roads and the removal of natural range barriers.	Other agencies will need to get involved to deal with other resources. Wildlife and fisheries problems should not be governed by access.
Decreases in plant and animal species as a direct result of motorized access.	Road safety.	Downfall of the forest industry due to beetle and the need to open new opportunities for tourism.	Self-regulation will create a local consciousness and a long-term education process.	Will improved access to some trophy class lakes mean increased regulation where in the past poor access was self limiting?	Access closures used to promote wilderness as access to lakes and recreation sites will be plentiful.	The public and industry need clear direction regarding whom to talk to. What is the hierarchy and who is responsible?
Human encroachment on wildlife.	Increased logging traffic.	Beetle salvage efforts into multi-value emphasis areas.	What value will there be in keeping all developed roads open in five years?		Stakeholders losing their livelihood with no compensation.	Finding a fair and just balance for access management in the long-term..
Habitat fragmentation.		Water quality post harvest.	High cost of road maintenance.		Pursuit of single interests being controlled through access management.	Mediator between all interest groups.
Loss of landscape level corridors.		Maximizing beetle salvage efforts.	Determining what is a manageable road density.		Areas of no disturbance or activity.	
Managing wildlife for quality, not opportunity.		Realization of "if we don't log it, it will be wasted" not being true.	Public outcry from being denied access.		Where access control has been established, it must be maintained.	
Identification of reserve areas that will not be harvested for future wildlife and biodiversity values.		Access management needs to become part of the planning process for forest companies.	If harvest levels increase, the number of access management points should also increase.		Tourism opportunities for after beetle harvest must be recognized as important. Visuals and wilderness are key.	

**Table 9 (Continued)**

<b>Wildlife Issues</b>	<b>Safety Issues</b>	<b>Mountain Pine Beetle Issues</b>	<b>Access Management Issues</b>	<b>Recreation Issues</b>	<b>Resource Based Business Issues</b>	<b>Government Issues</b>
Caribou issues.		Road network coordination in beetle salvage efforts.	Permanent deactivation for roads accessing cutblocks.		Forest companies will be the first to leave, tourism will remain.	
Wildlife and habitat impacts.		Increase in activity due to increased harvesting. Access points will be open for most of the year and this may not be acceptable to some stakeholders.	After harvesting is complete, who will pay for and who will complete long-term road maintenance?			
		Improved access to sensitive areas (aquatic and terrestrial) due to increased beetle harvest.	Who will monitor roads and prescribe required maintenance in the future?			
		Economic fall down after beetle.	Road rehabilitation.			
			People (primarily hunters) who feel they have a right to drive their machines wherever they want.			
			Aging population demographic that will need more vehicle access to backcountry recreation.			
			Planning of proper access management to protect wildlife, the environment and wilderness tourism.			
			Better methods of deactivation are required.			
			Joining of Quesnel and Vanderhoof Forest Districts.			
			Circle routes.			
			Hydrological effects of roads (stream flow/water quality).			
			Changing access management from black/white approach to multi-value approach.			

Most of the identified issues from survey respondents fell into the access management issue category. This was followed by mountain pine beetle related issues and then by wildlife related issues. Not all of the issues identified in Table 9 will be able to be addressed through an updated access management plan. However, this summary will provide a good starting point for further discussions between the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management and members of the public that indicated an interest in participating further in this process.

## **5.0 Summary**

This access management information gathering project generated considerable interest and participation by the members of the public in and around the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan area. As was indicated previously in Section 3.2, a total of 33 respondents were interested in continuing to be involved with the access management analysis as part of the LRMP. This number should only be considered a starting point for the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management as it is very likely that other previous LRMP participants may also wish to be further involved but were not able to complete and return the mail-out survey. From this willing group of public members, government will hear a local voice and the chance of developing a Vanderhoof strategy to solve local access issues will be more plausible.

Now that the initial stages of information gathering are complete, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management will continue to develop further steps in this process. While these steps are subject to change based on timing, budgets and workloads, the following is a rough estimate of proposed next steps:

- Access study information and this report will be provided to government agencies responsible for implementation of the Vanderhoof LRMP.
- Various government staff will meet internally to discuss the outcomes of the survey and interview process.
- Government representatives will contact those respondents indicating a desire to participate further in this process to discuss the overall results of the study.

Additionally:

- In mid-spring 2005, an access management strategy may be developed with a working group of study participants and government.
- Access strategy information will then be provided to LRMP participants and the public for review.
- Modifications will be made as required based on public review and the strategy will be implemented as a component of the LRMP.