



MINISTRY OF
SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

EIGHT PEAKS WINTER RECREATION SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING CHAPTER

The Eight Peaks Winter Recreation Sustainable Resource Management Planning (SRMP) area includes approximately 44,500 hectares of mountain slopes within about 15 kilometres of the community of Blue River (see Map 1). These slopes overlook the North Thompson River valley and the Mud Lake valley. Approximately 450 full-time residents make Blue River their home. The SRMP area is within the Simpcw (North Thompson Indian Band)/Secwepemc-claimed traditional territory.

Frequent heavy snowfalls and high annual snowfall accumulation make Blue River and adjacent areas attractive for winter recreation.¹ Both local residents and tourists enjoy snowmobiling and backcountry skiing in the planning area. The operations base for Mike Wiegele Heli-skiing (MWH) is in Blue River. From this community, MWH operates throughout the mountain ranges that bound much of the North Thompson River Valley. Blue River also supports a local snowmobile club, the Blue River Powder Packers.



Local residents and businesses are interested in expanding the range of winter recreation activities close to the community. The forest industry is supportive of sharing the land base with winter recreation, provided it does not unduly increase operating costs and there is controlled impact on the Timber Harvesting Land Base (THLB) over the short and long term. The mining sector has similar concerns. Strategic direction is, therefore, required to grow winter recreation in this planning area in a manner that integrates the activities where possible with other resource sector operations. Direction is also required to ensure this growth is not at the expense of the environment. A healthy environment is the foundation for a healthy wilderness and adventure tourism sector and a healthy community.

The goal of the Eight Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter is to establish resource management objectives to establish and maintain the conditions needed for sustainable growth of the winter recreation sector through integration with other resource sectors while incorporating the principles of sustainability² and stewardship.



The following Desired Future Condition statement has been developed to reflect the desired state of the planning area based on the goal of the Eight Peaks Winter Recreation SRMP Chapter.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION FOR THE PLANNING AREA:

Winter recreation will continue to grow at a moderate rate around Blue River. There will be a variety of motorized and non-motorized, public and commercial activities to enjoy. The local economy will be strengthened by the flow of visitor dollars. This will complement the benefits that continue to flow from an active forest sector. Local commitment to finding effective ways to balance the diverse needs of the user groups will ensure the quality of the recreation products available is high, and conflicts are infrequent. The measures implemented will reflect the strong commitment to stewardship, and will ensure that the growth of winter recreation will not result in adverse impacts to wildlife populations.

¹ For the purpose of this planning process, "winter recreation" includes both public and commercial recreation, unless otherwise specified, and includes both snow- and ice-based activities and the associated infrastructure including trails and ski runs. All winter recreation activities, including harvesting activities undertaken to support winter recreation activities, shall be consistent with the objective of this SRMP Chapter.
² Sustainability, for the purpose of this Chapter, is defined as a state or process that can be maintained indefinitely. The principles of sustainability integrate the social, economic, and environmental components of sustainability into a system that can be maintained in a healthy state indefinitely.

OBJECTIVES:

To achieve the Desired Future Condition for the planning area, the following results-based objectives³ shall be applied to the planning area (see Map 1). The context for each objective, its

implementation strategies and initial measures of success are provided in Appendices 1 and 2. The objectives reflect all three pillars of sustainability—community/social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

1. FIRST NATIONS

- 1.a. Consider First Nations information and knowledge to strengthen land and resource management.
- 1.b. Consider aboriginal rights and traditional uses in resource management.
- 1.c. Identify and pursue initiatives with First Nations that support sustainable economic development.

2. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

- 2.a. Encourage a diversity of compatible winter recreation tenures and associated businesses consistent with direction provided in this document and in Appendices 1 and 2 for each specific Winter Recreation Management Unit (see Map 2).

3. FORESTRY

- 3.a. Integrate winter recreation activities with forest management to optimize economic and social benefits derived from both (for example, modified silvicultural requirements on heli-ski runs).
- 3.b. Pursue opportunities to minimize the loss of timber volumes and productive forest land base due to winter recreation development.
- 3.c. Design all openings for winter recreation activities to maintain availability of adjacent timber without creating undue constraints on harvesting.
- 3.d. Manage access within the planning area to integrate winter recreation and resource-based industrial requirements.

4. MINING

- 4.a. Consider opportunities to integrate winter recreation and mineral exploration and development activities.
- 4.b. Manage exploration (temporary) and mine (permanent) accesses in a manner that supports public and commercial winter recreation.
- 4.c. Reclaim surface disturbances promptly to mitigate potential health and safety risks, and to facilitate continued use for winter recreation, on land used for winter recreation, especially where there are trails and ski runs.



³ The objectives have been grouped into "like" categories with clearer understanding and presentation of background information in Appendix 1.

OBJECTIVES:

5. RECREATION AND TOURISM

- 5.a. Minimize conflicts between user groups, maintain quality experiences, and retain environmental values by directing winter recreation activities to the appropriate Winter Recreation Management Units (see Map 2), and by incorporating the guidance provided through the Desired Future Condition statements and unit-specific strategies detailed in Appendix 2.
- 5.b. Integrate winter recreation activities with other resource-based activities to optimize economic and social benefits derived from the diversity of uses, and minimize negative impacts that one resource activity may have on another.
- 5.c. Minimize the disturbance from helicopters on the community of Blue River.
- 5.d. Manage access in a manner that supports the needs of public and commercial winter recreation, resource-based industries and wildlife in the planning area.



6. VIEWSCAPES

- 6.a. For all new openings, achieve the assigned visual quality objectives as defined through the Kamloops LRMP implementation process.
- 6.b. Consider modifying existing cut blocks and ski runs to improve visual appearance when new cut blocks and other developments are planned in the adjacent areas.
- 6.c. Design winter recreation developments in accordance with visual design principles to minimize visual quality constraints on surrounding timber availability.



⁴ Includes trails, ski runs, emergency structures, and buildings.

OBJECTIVES:

7. KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES

GRIZZLY BEARS

- 7.a. Design winter recreation infrastructure⁴ and conduct winter recreation activities to maintain functional integrity of grizzly bear habitat, prevent bear access to human-supplied foods, and minimize bear/human encounters.



MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

- 7.b. Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities in such a way as to maintain the natural distribution of caribou, minimize stress caused by human disturbance and maintain the functional integrity of habitat.
- 7.c. Update existing recreation management plans to better reflect the best available wildlife inventory, guidelines and monitoring procedures.



MOUNTAIN GOATS

- 7.d. Design winter recreation infrastructure and conduct winter recreation activities to maintain the natural population distribution of mountain goats, avoid harassment of animals caused by recreation use, and maintain habitat quality.
- 7e. Update existing recreation management plans to better reflect the best available wildlife inventory, guidelines and monitoring procedures.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Through implementation of the objectives detailed above, the following outcomes are anticipated:

- Development of a new frontcountry heli-ski product, including the development of eight new open terrain ski runs and nineteen managed forest ski runs;⁵
- Development of new commercial recreation operations including snowmobile touring, backcountry skiing, ice-climbing, snowshoeing and possibly a cat-ski or snowmobile-ski operation;
- Enhanced and streamlined decision-making for Land and Water BC Inc.;
- Continued and expanded opportunities for public recreation;
- Continued development, where appropriate, of traditional cut blocks that can be used for snowmobiling use;
- Raised awareness in the public recreation community of key habitat areas;
- Development of openings for winter recreation activities that have been designed and managed to ensure that they do not impact the timber availability on adjacent harvestable land;
- Development of innovative forestry practices to allow for creation of openings that can be used for winter recreation pursuits and regenerated at the same time, so that the loss of area from the timber harvesting land base is minimal;
- Enhanced ability for the Ministry of Forests to accommodate innovative practices developed to integrate forestry and winter recreation activities;
- Partnerships between the forest licensees and recreation development proponents;
- Establishment of new First Nations businesses and business partnerships;
- Partnerships or joint ventures between First Nations, forest licensees, and recreation development proponents;
- Increased certainty for commercial operators to conduct viable activities where appropriate;
- Economic growth from winter recreation is founded in a healthy environment;
- Stewardship is championed as an economic driver to create internationally competitive and desirable winter recreation products.

WINTER RECREATION MANAGEMENT UNITS

Winter recreation management units have been identified to simplify implementation of the winter recreation management objectives (see map 2). These units have been defined based on consideration of the environmental resources in the planning area, and the existing winter recreation uses. Strategies for achieving the

management objectives in specific Winter Recreation Management Units are provided in Appendix 2.

⁵ Rotational heli-ski runs: Temporary heli-ski runs, making use of recently harvested and fully restocked areas until such time as regeneration height impedes skiing or skiing may cause damage to regeneration. At that time, skiing will cease on that area and may move to another recently harvested and fully restocked area. Rotational runs continue to fully contribute to the area timber supply.
Managed forest ski runs: Permanent frontcountry heli-ski runs (200 meter maximum width) created and managed to provide for ski terrain. Forest cover is retained or regenerated to reduce timber availability impacts on adjacent working forest lands by contributing to improved visual management, prompt hydrologic green-up to reduce the equivalent clear-cut area identified within these runs, improved environmental values, and reduced natural hazards. While these runs may be removed from the timber harvesting land base, they will be used to pilot innovative silviculture techniques in an effort to regenerate at least part of the run with merchantable timber for future harvesting.
Open terrain ski runs: Permanent frontcountry heli-ski runs (200 meter maximum width) created primarily to accommodate heli-skiing, and ultimately removed from the timber harvesting land base. Retained or managed forest cover and vegetation on these runs contributes to visual management, environmental values, and ski terrain design, ensuring undue constraints are not imposed on adjacent harvestable lands.

IMPLEMENTATION

Approval of strategic level plans gives direction to operational level plans, but does not constitute approval of operational plans or proposals. Operational planning forms the link between strategic planning direction and operational implementation and integration.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Successful implementation of this Chapter will require the development of cooperative agreements between user groups, formalized legally where appropriate by government, and adhered to by all. A key element to the successful implementation of this Chapter will be cooperation between forest and commercial recreation tenure holders to fully realize the opportunities to integrate commercial winter recreation development with operational timber harvesting. Cooperative agreements will be required between these parties to manage access and timber harvesting, including scheduling of activities, sharing of costs, defining legal liabilities and monitoring processes. Cooperative agreements and operational level management plans (see below) are integrally linked and will be developed in conjunction with one another.

Where parties are unable to negotiate a cooperative agreement, despite significant effort by all, the statutory decision maker responsible for applications for the works required (i.e. cutting permits) should review and consider rationales submitted by both parties prior to approving or rejecting the application. Timber harvesting and development of winter recreation infrastructure may proceed in the absence of

cooperative agreements, provided it is consistent with the objectives of this Chapter, the Kamloops LRMP and other government policy.

Cooperation between commercial recreation tenure holders and public winter recreation users will also be essential to minimize potential conflict.

OPERATIONAL LEVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Integration of recreational activities and forest development at an operational level, should attempt to minimize harvesting costs, maximize recreational benefits, and, where possible, optimize forest benefits. Recreation development proponents should work in partnership with forest operators and relevant agencies to develop and implement an operational level management plan. This management plan should utilize the concept of "total chance planning."⁵ The approval agencies should determine the level of public and stakeholder input that is required.

This operational level management plan will form the basis for cooperative management and agreements. It should outline and clarify the methods by which Chapter objectives will be met, indicate the ways in which key impacts will be mitigated, and outline the cooperative framework and scheduling of forest harvesting, silvicultural activities, and ongoing forest management responsibilities. The operational level management plan is an integral part of operational documents and, in many cases, will form the basis for operational monitoring and compliance. The operational level management plan should be included as part of the commercial recreation tenure approval or amendment document.

⁴ "Total Chance Planning" is preliminary long term integrated resource management planning over an entire development area for the best realization of all broader or strategic objectives. It often serves as the link between strategic planning direction and operational details.

MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Indicators that can be used to test the implementation of the results-based objectives are detailed in Appendix 1 as Measures of Success. Additional site-specific measures may be developed during the operational planning and approval processes. The responsibility for monitoring is a function of the government agencies involved. For example, the Ministry of Forests is responsible for harvesting-related activities; Land and Water BC Inc. is responsible for monitoring management plans tied to commercial recreation tenures. Agencies may direct proponents, tenure holders and operators to devise and implement monitoring and reporting systems.

Every two years, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM) will conduct a review of approved SRMP Chapters to assess progress in Chapter implementation. Every five

years, the MSRM Regional Director will conduct a review of approved SRMP Chapters to assess the extent to which the Chapters are effective in achieving defined objectives. Where regional interpretation of effectiveness monitoring results shows that the objectives are not effective in achieving stated planning Chapter goals, the MSRM Regional Director will coordinate the development of measures to improve effectiveness.

MSRM recognizes that new information will become available over time that may require revisiting portions of this planning Chapter and therefore will monitor implementation of this Chapter accordingly. This SRMP Chapter and/or the legal objectives established to implement it may be subject to review at times other than the specified two/five year scheduled review, in order to address issues that arise.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Compliance and enforcement is linked to fulfillment of conditions in operational tenure documents, and to relevant Provincial and Federal laws and regulations and is the responsibility of the relevant agencies.

APPROVAL

The Eight Peaks Winter Recreation Sustainable Resource Management Planning Chapter is hereby approved this day, _____, 2003.

Honourable Minister Stan Hagen
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management

** All photos within the Eight Peaks SRMP Winter Recreation Chapter were provided by: Alvin Dyck, Myles Bruns, Doug Jury, Mike Wiegele Heli-skiing, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.*

MAP 1: STEWARDSHIP

Insert Stewardship (Map 1)

MAP 2: WINTER RECREATION MANAGEMENT UNITS

Insert Winter Recreation Management Units (Map 2)