



Federation of Mountain Clubs

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

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Scott Back,
Planning Section Head,
Ministry of Environment,
4051 18th Ave.,
Prince George,
BC

30 Sep 2008

BY FAX: 250-565-6940 and email: scott.back@gov.bc.ca,

Mt Robson Park Draft Management Plan.

Dear Mr. Back,

Our organization represents the interests of over 20 backcountry hiking and mountaineering clubs with a total membership of about 3500 individuals.

We have reviewed the revised draft of June 2008 and are very concerned about the revisions to the zoning within the Berg Lake Corridor of Mt. Robson Park. From our understanding of land use definitions, these revisions can allow increased motorized activity and increased air access in a significantly larger area of the park, and the possible construction of more permanent facilities in addition to the presently planned one "fixed roof accommodation" lodge. Most of our members have no strong objection to a small increase in capacity of the existing accommodation, but would object very strongly to more lodges than that presently planned at Robson Pass. With respect to this planned facility, we support the concept of maintaining the guests within the overnight user quota for the Berg Lake trail, and would appreciate receiving any more information that comes available for minimizing the footprint of this facility.

It is clear from the input of our member clubs that flight seeing and aircraft access remains a key concern and we strongly request that a concerted effort be identified to limit and potentially reduce mechanized access within or over Mt. Robson Park.

The existing 1992 Master Plan zones the Berg Lake Trail corridor as 'Natural Environment', surrounded by a 'Wilderness Recreation' zone which encompasses Mt. Robson on one side of the corridor, and a 'Wilderness Conservation' zone located on the other or northwest side of the corridor. In the past, these two zones provided the strongest protection available in a provincial park. The 2007 draft plan proposed similar zoning, but in contrast, the June 2008 draft removes both wilderness zones. If the latest draft provisions were to be adopted, the

entire area around Mt. Robson would be zoned 'Nature Recreation' .We understand this proposed zoning would, in theory, permit construction of permanent facilities and potentially allow motorized activity, not just along the trail corridor, but everywhere within the zone. While we understand there is no plans at present to permit motorized activity or construction of more facilities, we must stress that this change in zoning could be an incipient weakness in overall protection and might facilitate undesirable changes in the future. We again stress that any changes of this nature would be totally inconsistent with protection of the highest mountain in the Rockies and should be inconsistent with the region's World Heritage Site designation.

Our organization's position is quite consistent with the general public's position, as supported by the BC Government's "Park Legacy Project" of the 1990's. When asked for input, the public has consistently maintained that our wilderness area or backcountry parks should be protected against further incursions of developments and motorized activities, not only to protect the public's experience when visiting the park but also to protect wildlife which are all part of the wilderness experience.

Yours Truly,

Brian Wood,
President, Federation of Mountains Clubs of BC
