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27 February 2010

Draft management plan for the Esté-tiwilh/Sigurd Creek Conservancy

Dear Ms. Haberl,

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) represents the interests of twenty outdoor recreation clubs and some 3,500 members in British Columbia, most of them in the Lower Mainland region. The FMCBC's mission is to foster and promote the hiking, mountaineering, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing activities of the membership and the general public through leadership, advocacy and education. On behalf of its membership the FMCBC would like to provide the following comments on the draft management plan for the Esté-tiwilh/Sigurd Creek Conservancy.

The FMCBC agrees with the overall direction of the draft management plan for the Esté-tiwilh/Sigurd Creek Conservancy, and we would like comment on the portions of the plan that describe the values, role and management of recreation.

2.4 Recreation

This section identifies correctly the recreational role and values of Esté-tiwilh/Sigurd Creek, specifically

- The opportunities for hiking, mountaineering, backcountry skiing and camping. Snowshoeing is also becoming popular.
- Sigurd Creek Trail and the important connecting route to mountaineering objectives in Tantalus Provincial Park.
- The opportunity to improve and expand the trails in the area. Currently the trails are being maintained and marked by interested individuals. We strongly suggest consulting and coordinating with the volunteers on any trail improvements or new trails as they have considerable experience in the area (contact: Paul Kubik, pkubik@telus.net).

3.2. Zoning

The FMCBC fully supports the zoning as a Cultural Zone that allows low impact, non-mechanized recreation. The Sigurd Creek area is an important wilderness destination for users that range from hikers interested in seeing old-growth forests and the waterfall, to mountaineers accessing the Tantalus Range and backcountry skiers accessing peaks in the area. An important quality of the Esté-tiwilh/Sigurd Creek Conservancy is the lack of motorized recreation and logging or other natural resource extraction.

3.3. Management Objectives and Strategies

The FMCBC agrees with the strategy to limit signage to road access and trailhead/parking lot signs. This will help maintain the wilderness attributes of the Esté-tiwilh/Sigurd Creek Conservancy.

The FMCBC is concerned however with how the following strategies in the draft management plan could be interpreted and applied.

3.3. Management Objectives and Strategies

“Ensure any proposed development or facilities (e.g. Squamish Nation camp or cabin) in the conservancy are aesthetically pleasing, culturally appropriate and blend with the natural environment.” (p.11)

And:

“Monitor recreation use and, where necessary, take steps to manage the type, amount and location of recreation activities where, in the opinion of BC Parks or the Squamish Nation, the aesthetic, cultural and/or ecological values of the conservancy are being negatively impacted.” (p.13)

The FMCBC would like see the first of the above strategies modified to clarify that any new Squamish Nation developments or facilities built in the conservancy would take into account current trail and backcountry camping use so there will be no conflict or overuse of the trails or the wilderness campsites as a direct or indirect result of the new facilities.

Sincerely,

Brian Wood
President, FMCBC