



Honourable Steve Thomson  
Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

July 9, 2013

Dear Minister Thomson,

The Twentyone Mile Creek valley near Whistler has been a hot spot for conflicts between backcountry skiers and snowmobilers for a decade now. In the recent Sea to Sky LRMP, this area was designated as a non-motorized zone. However, government led signage and education efforts over the past 3 years have proven ineffective. This year snowmobilers demonstrated their understanding of the situation by admitting “we know it’s a voluntary closure but we are choosing not to comply”. It’s now time to legally close this area to snowmobiling under section 58 or the Forest and Range Practices act. Doing so would give conservation officers the authority to issue tickets and confiscate snowmobiles to enforce the non-motorized zoning.

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FMCBC) requests that a section 58 order be issued to legally prohibit snowmobiling in the following areas:

1. Twentyone Mile Creek and the north and east sides of Rainbow Mountain are designated non-motorized in the Sea to Sky LRMP amendment.
2. Hanging Lake and the surrounding drainage is now the most popular area for backcountry skiing in the area. A new backcountry ski trail offers quick access to the alpine from Whistler Olympic Park. This is one of the easiest to access backcountry skiing areas in Southwest BC and offers high quality skiing, even when the weather is poor or the avalanche hazard is high. Snowmobilers access this area by going through Twentyone Mile Creek.
3. Closing the south and west side of Mount Sproatt in order to simplify the boundary and make it easily enforceable. Closing this area would allow enforcement to be conducted at a choke point on Callaghan Creek FSR which all snowmobilers presently use to access Twentyone Mile Creek. If this area is not closed there would be a long, complex and difficult to enforce boundary between motorized and non-motorized zones. Also the Resort Municipality of Whistler is planning to create an alpine hiking and biking trails in this area.

At the same time we feel it would be wise to use the same section 58 order to prohibit helicopter drop offs in the above areas as they are also prohibited by the LRMP zoning.

Canadian Wilderness Adventures (CWA) commercial snowmobiling operations could continue as they don’t use the Twentyone Mile Creek and Hanging Lake areas that are popular with skiers. We would like to see CWA restrict their operations around Hanging Lake to non-motorized activities such as guided ski touring and snowshoeing. CWA could offer a morning snowcat service to backcountry skiers to reach the alpine south of Gin Peak near the CWA cabin.

The FMCBC has conducted a survey over the past 3 seasons to document snowmobile use in Twentyone Mile Creek. This survey shows that snowmobiling is a serious problem. Snowmobiles were observed in the



## Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

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watershed on 63% of recorded days, and snowmobile tracks on 69% of recorded days. The survey results clearly show that there has been no change to snowmobiler behavior over the past 3 seasons despite the signage and education efforts undertaken by Sites and Trails BC.

It's now time to take more serious action to keep snowmobilers out of Twentyone Mile Creek. A section 58 order will grant conservation officers the power they need to effectively enforce the LRMP. Snowmobilers have demonstrated contempt for voluntary compliance approach, so stricter methods are now necessary. We urge you take action in time for the 2014 winter season.

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FMCBC) is an umbrella organization of approximately 20 outdoor recreation clubs throughout the province. For over three decades we have represented the interests of self-propelled/non-motorized backcountry recreationists by maintaining and improving backcountry and wilderness experiences for our members and the public.

Sincerely,

Scott Webster  
President  
Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia

Attachment: Twentyone Mile Creek survey summary

CC: Jordan Sturdy, MLA, West Vancouver Sea to Sky  
CC: Norm Macdonald, MLA, Critic for Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations  
CC: Bill Marshall, Director, Recreation Sites and Trails BC  
CC: John Crooks, Manager: Recreation, Recreation Site and Trails BC