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To: Whom It May Concern

Re: 2009 Bear Creek Recreation Site Annual Report

A look back and a look ahead



The Terrace Mountain Fire burns out of control in August

In 2009, huge strides were made in the implementation of a sustainable motorized trail system in the Bear Creek Recreation Site. It was a year of impressive grants, construction, reconstruction, trail closures, erosion control, fencing to control cattle and riders, trail hardening, forest fires, stakeholder issues, vandalism, and political posturing all culminated by the construction of a trail and bridge across Bald Range Creek. It was a long, tough year and all parties involved with the project implementation should be commended for their patience, persistence, and a job well done.

RecConnect has experience in implementing large projects like Bear Creek. We recognize that a lot of work has been done, but there is a lot left to do. We need to keep focused on the 4 E's- Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Evaluation and remember that we need to implement all of these equally. We have done well with Engineering, Education, and Evaluation, but we need to focus more on Enforcement. It is critical and we will not succeed without it. Listed below is a summary of accomplishments, but also a list of emphasis items for 2010 to help keep the project moving forward toward successful, effective implementation.

Section A: Accomplishments

1. The first-ever trail map for Bear creek was produced under a grant from the Canadian Off-highway Vehicle Association (COHV). The map is a huge education tool because it shows riders not only where they are, but also where they can and can't go. The map addresses Bear Creek issues, the rules for riding there, rider ethics and etiquette, and the environment. About 5,000 maps were printed were distributed at the trailheads and at outlets throughout the Okanagan Valley. The map boxes were provided by a tourism grant from the Regional District of Central Okanagan.
2. RecConnect performed planning, design, and layout on 31 km of double-track trails and 14.5 km of single-track trails. About 17.5 km of flaglines are on the ground and ready to be built next year.
3. About 18 km of double-track trails and 7.5 km of single-trails were constructed. About 34 km of trails have been constructed since implementation began in the fall of 2008. New trails are designed to flow with the landscape, lay lightly on the landscape, and roll with the landscape to provide effective, natural drainage. All new trail flaglines have been reviewed by Westbank First Nation.
4. About 5.5 km of trails or old roads were reconstructed. Reconstruction means that the trail tread was improved, drainage structures were added, and any non-sustainable sections were either rebuilt or relocated.
5. Approximately 10 km of old grown-over roads were brushed out to be used as part of the trail system.
6. As a trail is implemented, all non-designated trails that connect or bisect the trail are closed and rehabbed. In addition, existing trails which are either in the wrong place, not part of the designated trail system, and/or are non-sustainable are being closed and rehabilitated. At least 13 km were closed this year bringing the total to date to about 19 km. Of the trails closed, approximately 25 steep and eroded hillclimb trails have been closed.



Old roads are used as trails
when possible



A rock check dam

7. As part of the rehabilitation, approximately 40 check dams have been constructed on steep, heavily eroded hillclimbs. These serve to stabilize the eroded channel, trap sediment delivery, reduce water velocity, and deter use. Most of the check dams are constructed of cobble-size rock, but in areas that were so steep that we couldn't haul the rock, we built log check dams.



X-ditches channel water into the natural drainages

8. Also as part of the rehabilitation, approximately 30 cross ditches have been constructed. These ditches restore natural drainage patterns by channeling water from the steep hillclimbs back into the natural draws. This reduces water velocity and the potential delivery of sedimentation.
9. Trails in potentially soft areas are being hardened with rock, usually crushed rock. About 1k of trail has been hardened to date. When construction is complete on Trail 4 which leads to and crosses Bald Range Creek, the entire length of trail in the BRC basin will have been hardened.
10. An 11.5-metre log stringer bridge was installed on Trail 4 at Bald Range Creek. This beautiful bridge was designed and installed by professional engineers from Boxwood FPS Ltd and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts (MTCA). Its 60-inch width will accommodate motorcycles and ATVs and it was designed to support the weight of the Sweco trail dozer, so all riders, personnel, and equipment will be kept out of the stream course.
11. Through construction, reconstruction, and utilization of existing roads and trails, about 125 km of designated trails are now implemented and will be shown on the 2010 map.
12. Approximately 85 4"x 4" treated posts were installed; 61 yield and yield ahead signs were installed at road crossings; about 20 trail junctions were signed; and about 75 reassurance markers were made up and installed.
13. All areas of ground disturbance have been seeded and silt fencing has been installed in areas where there is potential for direct connectivity to streams.



Seeding a closed trail

Fill slopes that are in drainage courses or major trail drains have been armored with rock.

14. To protect water quality, barbed wire fencing was installed in the lower Bald Range Creek drainage to keep cattle and riders out of the creek.
15. A \$416,292.00 JOP grant was secured to construct the Aspen Trailhead, finish planning and construct the Jackpine Flats Trailhead, and install 20km of fencing around the Bald Range Grassland and other areas. Issues with Tolko and removing timber land from the TFL have delayed the Aspen and Jackpine TH projects, however Russell fencing is being installed that will encircle the Bald Range Grassland to control access of cattle and riders. When completed, this fencing project will set the stage for rehabilitation of hillclimbs and other impacts on the Grassland. It will also allow outstanding viewpoints and provide opportunities for interpretation of the Grassland ecosystem and range management.
16. Through grants and MTCA funding, approximately \$1.3 million has been secured to date for the Bear Creek Recreation Site.

17. As in 2008, M&M Performance in Kelowna donated two Honda ATVs for use by the Okanagan Trail Riders Association (OTRA) crew. These are invaluable for transporting crew members and hauling materials and supplies into the work sites. Winn Rentals donated essential equipment rental for trail hardening and check dam construction.



18. Due to extreme fire danger and the Terrace Mountain Fire, the Recreation Site was closed from July 22- August 26. The Terrace Fire burned about 9277 hectares of which about 25% or 2300 hectares was within the Recreation Site. There were some impacts and RecConnect conducted an assessment of those impacts and wrote a report for MTCA, but fortunately no flaglines were lost and none of currently designated trails or signage was impacted.

19. No discussion of 2009 accomplishments would be complete without acknowledging the National Trail Coalition funding through the British Columbia Off-Road Motorcycling Association (BCORMA). We wish to thank the National Trails Coalition and BCORMA for making critical funds available for the Bear Creek OHV project. With this funding, double-track trails were constructed, single-track trails were constructed, hand-built single-track trails were constructed,



A volunteer Trail Ranger educates a rider about the Bald Range Creek enclosure fence.

and signing was installed. In addition, non-sustainable trails were closed and rehabbed and erosion control structures were installed including log and rock check dams. Finally, these funds were used to purchase and install the bridge across Bald Range Creek.

20. Maps, signage, and the volunteer Trail Patrol program stress rider education and responsible ethics. More than 200

hours were volunteered for Trail Patrol in 2009. From 2008 to present, over 1,000 riders have been encountered and documented through the Trail Patrol program.

- a. Trail Patrol occurs almost every weekend.
- b. About 97% is day use. We expect this to change.
- c. About 50- 60% are here for the first time. This is a huge and unexpected number.
- d. About 75% are here for a short-term recreation experience. Many are vacationers who ride in the morning and ski in the afternoon. Many ride before or after work or school.
- e. About 15% is quad use. This number appears to be growing.

21. From 2008 to present, about 265 sound tests have been performed by Trail Patrollers.



Volunteers performing a sound check

- a. About 55% passed the tech check for sound and spark arrestors.
- b. About 70% passed the tech check for sound, but did not have a spark arrestor.
- c. About 215 Bear Creek “Tech Checked, Riding Right” decals have been given out to compliant OHVs. This means that many OHVs are checked and passed without a formal sound test. It also means that about an equal number on OHVs are checked and failed without a formal sound test.
- d. Local dealers have become inundated by rider requests for spark arrestors and sound reducing products.

22. RecConnect wrote a monitoring plan and ocular monitoring occurs every time the OTRA crew or MTCA are on site. Some 2009 monitoring observations are:

- a. There are riders at Bear Creek every day.
- b. Rider response and acceptance to change has been very good. There have been very few negative encounters, however, it is time to enter into the Enforcement phase of the 4 Es. There must be a consequence for non-compliance.
- c. Many are having trouble finding the trails and we have installed more signs to rectify this.
- d. Many are not programmed to look for a map box, take a map, or understand a map.
- e. On the other hand, we are now stocking the map boxes several times a week and it is encouraging to drive into the staging area and see riders reading the maps.
- f. Many have gone to the OTRA or Bear Creek website to obtain information before arriving. This is highly encouraging and reinforces our “Know Before You Go” “Find Out Before You Ride Out” messages. The website was updated through a tourism grant from the Regional District of Central Okanagan and had more than 1400 hits since June.
- g. The number of families is increasing and now out-numbers the traditional all male groups. There is a huge need to build a



Bear Creek is now a place for family fun with trails for riders of all skill levels

- tot lot so the kids have a safe place to ride.
- h. Riders are finally getting out of the Lower Pit area to ride the trails. The sound level in the pits has decreased dramatically.
 - i. Tolko has observed and we confirm that the number of riders who hillclimb in the gravel pit at the 8 km or road ride Bear Main has significantly decreased from last year.
 - j. Some riders of the “high impact” group are now leaving without unloading their bikes.
 - k. Compliance with the Bald Range Creek range fence was unexpectedly good. The fence was breached twice early on, but this was due to riders being able to get into BRC from other routes and then getting trapped because they couldn’t get out. Once all access trails were closed, there were no more breaches of the fence.
 - l. There have been very few breaches of closed trails. Most trails that were closed and seeded last fall have grown in very well this year.

The following sections discuss suggested priorities for 2010 from RecConnect’s perspective. Though the priorities are separated by entity, many require coordinated effort by all parties. These are brainstormed lists, so they are not in any order of precedence.

Section B: 2010 Priorities for OTRA, MTCA, and RecConnect



Ken Umbarger loads trail hardening material



Trail hardening on TR 4

1. Discuss whether we should develop our own Bear Creek Trail Pass or implement the BCORMA Trail Pass. Will this be implemented in 2010? If so, we need to revise the information on the map before it gets printed and revise our Required to Ride signs.
2. Perform trail condition surveys and monitoring immediately after the snow melts in the spring.
3. Insure that monitoring is performed and recorded as per the monitoring plan.
4. Work with MoF to insure that the BRC fencing is repaired prior to spring OHV use and cattle turnout.
5. Continue to “button up” the TR 4/BRC crossing. Install fencing, barriers, cattleguards, and signing before the trail is open to use.

6. Work to secure construction and maintenance funding for 2010 and beyond.
7. Strive to increase positive communication with the West Kelowna Council, the water purveyors, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, and the Regional District of Central Okanagan.
8. Complete any remaining items in the 2009 Program of Work.

Section C: 2010 Priorities for OTRA

1. Provide a toilet facility at the Lower Pits. We would prefer not to invest a lot of money at this site unless it is determined that the Aspen TH will can never be built. The old toilet was primitive, hard to clean, and not very user friendly. We would examine the possibility of renting one or two porta-potties and setting them inside the concrete walls so they couldn't be tipped over. Pre-cast concrete toilets are expensive, but very durable and easy to clean. Since we are in a watershed and sanitation is an issue, we could explore the possibility of requesting a grant for two toilets from the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

2. Increase the number of Trail Rangers and their participation. It is now critical that we have patrollers out every weekend during the riding season. The education component is a huge task and we need at least 12 TRs to help share the burden. RecConnect will provide Trail Ranger training as needed. The TRs need to be outfitted with bright green or yellow vests to further identify them as TRs. We also need to purchase more TR magnetic door placards.



Check dams in an old eroded trail



Signing is simple, effective, & professional

3. Form a trail maintenance team. Now that we have 125 km of trails designated, it is essential that we keep them brushed out and rideable or we will lose control of the riders. Trees are constantly falling over whether there is a wind event or not. Every trail needs to be checked at least once every two weeks and more often would be better if we have the people to do it. This group needs to be formally organized and dedicated. They should have jerseys that identify them as members of the trail maintenance team (need to come up with a better name for this group).

This group needs to have a mix of single-trackers and double-trackers and they need to be supplied with small chainsaws, bow saws, fork racks for the

saws on bikes, and appropriate protective gear. The fun part about this group is that the work could actually be part of a ride- like Carol's Wednesday ride group- but the work has to be documented for volunteer hours and accomplishment reports.

4. Change the structure of the trail crew. One thing we learned from the NTC experience is that there is a benefit to having a crew foreman. Neither Terry nor Ken want this role and having a foreman frees them up to focus on equipment operation and maintenance. Having a foreman also frees up time for RecConnect to pursue other priorities. However, it will not be easy to find a qualified person who is interested in this position.

We also need to agree on oversight structure and job responsibilities of the crew members. This is another lesson learned from the NTC. For efficiency and effectiveness, lines of authority need to be clearly identified. Roles and responsibilities need to be identified for each person in the field. Equipment operators should not be debating the validity of the designer's decisions. The task of implementing, operating, and maintaining a motorized trail system in Bear Creek is a monumental task. It isn't going to succeed with a loose-knit structure or a "good old boy" attitude. It is a business and needs to be run like a business.

5. The 2009 field season was a long one and everyone was getting pretty edgy by the end of it. After two seasons of construction, we now know that we generally have conditions from July to September that are too dry for trail construction. This could be an opportunity to give the crew time off so they have a break between the spring push and the fall push. Between the 1pm equipment shutdown and the fire watch, efficiency is lost during this time period. This is not to say that there isn't work that could be done, but it could be done on an "as personnel is available" basis and certainly less than a 40-hour week.



An old trail that has been closed & signed

Work that could occur during this period are lower fire risk items like installing signs, sign posts, bollards, fencing or barriers, culverts, or applying trail hardening.



Two of our three crewmembers from Westbank First Nation work on a check dam

6. Having adequate secure storage continues to be an issue and considerable time is lost loading and unloading equipment and supplies. Though our storage space is convenient, it is not efficient. This is a long term project. Once construction is complete, maintenance will be a full-time job, so we need storage space that will serve us in the long-term. We do not currently have adequate space to stockpile posts, barriers, and fencing

materials, let alone the equipment. We need a space that is larger, secure, accessible, has power, and is cheap (not asking for too much here).

If the motocross track goes defunct, could that area be fenced, lighted, and used as an operations center?

We continue to look at Tolko's log sorting yard. They have a large area that they appear to be using less as their operations change and it would be ideal from a location and space standpoint. To date, they have not been receptive to this idea, but could we change that (see Section D-2 below)?



Culverts are installed in wet or seasonally wet draws.

7. We need more equipment. With a crew of five, we could easily use 3 or 4 quads instead of the two we have now. As we get into towing, hauling, and grooming, the quads need to be 500cc minimum, 4WD, and liquid-cooled. Of course, if we have more quads, we need another trailer to haul them on. If we have another trailer, we could use another crew vehicle. While the Yanmar mini-excavator is a great machine, it does not serve as a loader and is too slow to “walk” in to isolated areas to dig holes for signs, barriers, etc. A small 4WD tractor/backhoe that is

less than 50” wide would serve both of these needs and others very well. Having this may require the purchase of another equipment trailer.

As we get into a maintenance mode, we will need grooming equipment like a rock rake(s). As we develop a maintenance team, they will need quads, bikes, and saws. A Rokon Trail Breaker would be an excellent piece of equipment for building, compacting, and maintaining single-track trails. A Yamaha TW200 would also work well.

We need to look into the future and plan for it. Where do we get the money to purchase all of this and where do we store it? We



Communication with stakeholders is important. In October, there was a field trip with the West Kelowna Mayor and Council.

will have to look at grant opportunities or revenues from trail use fees and we need to explore these options now.

8. Seek a partnership with an equestrian group or a business like the Fintry High Farm. Equestrians are also “single-trackers” and horses can be used to haul in culverts, trail hardening rock, or other construction materials.

Section D: 2010 Emphasis Items for MTCA

1. Seek a legal opinion on Tolko’s position in the Recreation Site and the percentage of their TFL that has actually been withdrawn to date. Continue to work with Tolko to obtain permission to use the Aspen TH site. It is critical to the project that we have this trailhead so we can direct use away from the Lower Pits and funnel riders onto the designated trails.



A sustainable trail winds through the bush

2. Tolko is a key stakeholder and we must establish a working relationship with them. We sense an apprehension on their part as to the inter-relationship between the Recreation Site and the TFL and between forest management activities and recreation activities. We need to continue to meet with them in the office and the field to build a trusting relationship and perhaps develop a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with them. We seem to be in a position of asking things from them, but we need to be able to give them something in return.

Are there other examples in the Province of good timber/recreation partnerships?

3. As we discussed with Tolko, schedule a spring planning meeting between Tolko, MTCA, and RecConnect.
4. Continue to meet with Tolko, C&E, and the District Manager about changing the rules for the use of OHVs on FSRs in the Recreation Site (ie, closing them to non-street legal OHVs, but



Hauling rock to harden the bridge approaches

allowing crossings and the use of short sections to take advantage of road infrastructure on creek crossings. Note: this discussion needs to occur early in the winter so that the rules can be updated before the map gets re-printed in March.

5. Based on the outcome of #4, develop and install appropriate signing for the FSRs in the Recreation Site. It is important that we educate the riders as to where they can ride or not and the rules to ride there.
6. Schedule a spring (annual) Advisory Committee meeting. This could be an office meeting or a field trip.



The finished approaches to the bridge

7. It is essential that we have regular enforcement this year. Work with C&E and the Conservation Officers to develop priorities and budgets for patrol in Bear Creek. Patrols need to be coordinated with the OTRA TRs so that enforcement personnel know what to look for. RecConnect will provide training on OHV infractions for the enforcement officers if necessary.
8. Meet with Jeff Austin and come to agreement on the legal status of the road to the quarry. Can OHVs be on it or not? This would be a good time to discuss the installation of a gate on the road above the Upper Pits.
9. Develop and install portal signs for the Recreation Site. Again, it is important for people to know when they are in it because the rules are different in the Site.
10. Work with Tolko and whoever to obtain the necessary permissions to build the portal kiosk at the base of Bear Main and the Westside Road.
11. Finish the process of installing Bear Creek directional signs along the Westside Road. This is work that could not be completed as part of the RDCO tourism grant.

12. Strive to set up a Minister-level field review of Bear Creek.
13. Use the media on a regular basis to: a) help the public understand who MTCA is and what they do; b) raise awareness that Bear Creek is a Recreation site and what is really happening in the Recreation Site; c) increase public awareness of social issues like vandalism and bush parties and the cost and destructiveness of these activities; d) increase rider education and ethics by publicizing the rules for riding here and the fact that they will be enforced; and e) use all of the above to offset the misinformation and negative press that the project's antagonists have used to sway public and political opinion.



The completed bridge at Bald Range Creek

Section E: 2010 Priorities for RecConnect

1. Prepare updates for the 2010 Bear Creek map. Contact BCORMA to see if any NTC funds are available to pay for the printing. (Note: this communication has been started.)
2. Develop the 2010 Program of Work.
3. Develop a drainage plan for the Bald Range Creek road.
4. Complete planning and layout of trail links to La Casa.
5. Complete planning and design of the Northeast (La Casa) Trailhead.

6. Finish the planning and start the layout of trail links to Terrace Mountain.
7. Finish trail planning in the Bald Range area.
8. Seek alternative sites for the Jackpine Flats Trailhead (unless Tolko or MTCA changes their position on this issue).
9. Seek and train people willing to help with the trail layout and design. This will free up more time for RecConnect to pursue planning issues. RecConnect will provide on-site trail layout and design training.

10. Complete the conceptual plan for the entire Recreation Site.

11. There have been issues in some places with the constructed trail not meeting the intended design or alignment. RecConnect will work more closely with the crew to correct these issues and to insure that the crew has the same vision of the end product as the designer.



The Sweco dozer and Yanmar mini-excavator work well together



Yield and yield ahead signs are installed at road crossings



All trails are two-way

12. Work with MTCA to develop GIS layers that show the trail planning, progress of implementation, and the closure of trails and areas.
13. Seek a suitable site that could serve as a play area away from main roads and viewsheds. This will help facilitate the closure of the rock quarry at the 8 km mark on Bear Main which is a safety issue for commercial traffic and a noise issue for nearby residents.
14. Seek to find and develop interpretive opportunities within the Recreation Site.



Bear Creek offers incredible scenic and recreation opportunities

Through a huge effort, great strides were made in the implementation of a sustainable OHV trail system in the Bear Creek Recreation Site in 2009. We hope that through cooperative efforts and increased communication at all levels that an equal amount can be achieved in 2010. It is too early to call Bear Creek a success story but it will become one through continued dedication and determination to effect change. The OHV management and resource protection tools being implemented here will make Bear Creek a model for the Province, if not all of Canada.

Sincerely,

Dick Dufourd

Dick Dufourd
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RecConnect, LLC