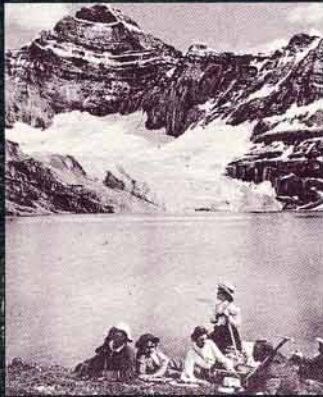


EAST KOOTENAY

Land Use Plan



COMMISSION ON
Resources and
Environment





COMMISSION ON Resources and Environment

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OVERVIEW

The West Kootenay–Boundary and East Kootenay land use plans are the third and fourth regional plans (after Vancouver Island and Cariboo-Chilcotin) developed and recommended for government and public consideration by the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) in 1994.

The B.C. legislature created CORE by statute (the Commissioner on Resources and Environment Act) in July 1992 for three primary reasons:

- to ensure the sustainability of a natural resource–based economy after a century of increasingly intense resource extraction, and the sustainability of the ecosystems that support all economic and non-economic activities in the province
- to increase the level of meaningful public participation in land use and resource management decisions.
- to address aboriginal concerns about land and resource use on the traditional territories of First Nations.

To address these concerns, the *Commissioner on Resources and Environment Act* provided for the creation of a sustainable provincial land use strategy, at the heart of which would be the development of comprehensive land use and resource management plans throughout the province, at the regional and community levels. The Act provided for regional plans to deal with land allocation issues, and community-based plans to address land use and related resource and environmental issues.

When CORE was created, the provincial government asked that priority be given to regional plans for the Kootenays, Vancouver Island and the Cariboo-Chilcotin, which had a history of conflict over land and resource use. The Kootenays have boundaries identical to the Nelson Forest Region, in the southeastern corner of B.C.

The proposed West Kootenay–Boundary and East Kootenay land use plans are being published simultaneously after a year and a half of intensive public participation, supported by detailed information from a variety of government agencies working together.

The East Kootenay Plan's 108 recommendations ensure that provincial policies such as the Protected Areas Strategy, Forest Practices Code and Forest Renewal Plan are implemented in the region in a manner that is informed by, and takes account of, local concerns and ideas. This linking of provincial, regional and local objectives is key both to the effectiveness of the developing provincial land use strategy and to bringing an end to the conflict that has divided communities in the region.

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Horsethief and Jumbo Creek watersheds. The area is renowned for its exceptional scenic, tourism and recreation, and wildlife values. At the headwaters of Horsethief Creek is Lake of the Hanging Glacier, a spectacular subalpine lake surrounded by glaciated peaks and glaciers which flow into the lake. Lake of the Hanging Glacier and the immediately surrounding area (3,310 hectares) was ranked eleventh out of 102 proposed protected areas for the East and West Kootenay-Boundary region by the government Regional Protected Areas Team (RPAT). Because the Lake of the Hanging Glacier is part of the much larger Jumbo/upper Horsethief Creek unit (29,649 hectares), the East Kootenay table did not propose it as a protected area during its land use negotiation process.

Given the significance of the scenic and recreational values associated with Lake of the Hanging Glacier, the commission recommends that:

74. Lake of the Hanging Glacier be considered as a possible Protected Area in the context of the provincial 12 percent Protected Areas account (see recommendation 45).

The upper end of Jumbo Creek has been proposed as the site of a major downhill ski resort. This proposal received considerable attention during the land use negotiation process, and the proponent hoped that a land use decision recommending approval of the development could be reached through this regional planning process. However, this type of site-specific proposal is far too detailed to be addressed as a land use approval at the regional planning level. Designation as a Special Management Area does not preclude the development of a ski resort, but a final decision on the compatibility of this proposal with other values in the area will need to be made through a detailed site-specific review process.

One of the significant resource use concerns expressed for this area during the land use negotiation process was the possible development of a road through Jumbo pass to connect the East and West Kootenays. Many

participants felt that such a road would seriously compromise the area's extraordinary wildlife and wilderness values.

The commission recommends that:

75. The approval process for a resort development in Jumbo Creek include an environmental assessment under the provincial Environmental Assessment Act.

This assessment should identify potential impacts and mitigative measures to address impacts prior to development approval. The process should also include public involvement to ensure that all values and perspectives are fully considered in a final decision. If this development proposal is approved, it should include a condition that no road access linking the East and West Kootenays through Jumbo Pass will be permitted.

WILDLIFE/LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

During the East Kootenay land use negotiations, the table identified a number of areas with high wildlife values which were also considered to be important as livestock grazing areas. Concern was expressed over the potential for conflict between these two values. Areas identified as important for wildlife and livestock included

- Wigwam/Lodgepole (polygon 1-1, especially Sheep Mountain)
- Newgate-Wardner (polygon 19-2)
- Pickering Hills (polygon 19-5)
- Bull Mountain (polygon 19-6)
- Wolf Creek/Wildhorse (polygon 20-1).

Identified were areas that have been proposed as Special Management Areas, as well as defined sites within larger units that have been proposed as Integrated Use Areas.

To address the potential for wildlife/livestock conflict, the table recommended that in areas with extremely high wildlife and biodiversity values, site-specific guidelines specifying enhanced levels of management should be