

Cat Skiing Tenure Correspondence with Land & Water BC

During the recent AGM a motion was made to correspond with LWBC and the following emails were exchanged between FoRR and LWBC:

November 25, 2004 to LWBC:

Robin,

Re: the Gaul's cat Skiing Tenure Application, File# 440-4290.

The Friends of the Rossland Range is an active non-profit society, advocating for non-motorized recreation and wildlife values in the Rossland Range. Our political lobbying has succeeded in persuading the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management to initiate a land use planning process for the Rossland Area. MSRM staff (Gord McAdam) in Nelson are compiling a list of stakeholders and should begin the process early in the new year. It seems appropriate that any decision by L&WBC on the Gaul's tenure application be postponed until this process can consider and balance the various competing demands upon the area. This is the view of the membership of the Friends of the Rossland Range, expressed at our AGM last night.

Thanks for your consideration,

Stewart Spooner.

Friends of the Rossland Range.

November 26, 2004 to FoRR:

Thanks for your e- mail.... I am wondering if your group discussed this use over and above waiting for land use plans to be completed and what the issues concerns(if any) were. We need to make a decision on this application(one way or the other). There is no direction on waiting for plans to be finalized before applications are completed. Thanks.

S. Robin Fawcett

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November 25, 2004 to LWBC:

Robin,

The subject was certainly discussed at our meeting. Our directors and members have varying individual perspectives, however we seem to agree that:

- Any proposed cat-skiing tenure should exclude the area between the summit of Mt Crowe and Nancy Greene Pass, including the various informal cabins and interconnecting roads and trails. This area is intensively used by recreational cross-country skiers. This

exclusion should apply to the tenure, and not just addressed in a management plan (which can be more easily changed).

- Whilst the backcountry slopes of Mt's Neptune and Mackie are not intensively utilized at the moment (many of those that do ski here are certainly opposed), the growth of Rossland and Red Resort will likely result in more backcountry skiers, and increased demand for use of this area. Such land use may be more valuable to the local community. If tenure is granted now, it may be very difficult for the public to reclaim this area in the future.
- Local wildlife advocates are very concerned about the impact of cat-skiing on the Grizzly Bear and Wolf populations.
- A comprehensive consultative land use process seems the sensible and fair way to determine the best use of this public land.

Stewart Spooner
Friends of the Rossland Range.

December 15, 2004 to LWBC:

Re: the Gaul's cat-skiing tenure application in the Rossland Range.

Following from a representation by concerned members, the Friends of the Rossland Range wish to emphasize the value that the proposed tenure area has to the local community. We understand that the date for submissions has expired, but trust that these views will receive appropriate consideration.

The mountains around Nancy Greene Pass are one of the few easily accessible and still undeveloped cross-country and backcountry skiing locations in the area. It is increasingly popular, and contributes to Rossland's desirability to both visitors and prospective new residents. User conflict at other cat-skiing operations in the Kootenays have clearly shown that commercial cat-skiing operations are incompatible with independent backcountry recreation, particularly backcountry skiing and snowmobiling. With so many cat-skiing tenures being granted in the prime backcountry terrain of the Kootenays, untenured land is becoming increasingly scarce and therefore more valuable to independent recreationalists. The proliferation of established commercial operators makes the potential financial viability of the proposed operation and any associated benefit to the local economy less likely. For these reasons we believe the area has more value as undeveloped backcountry than as a commercial cat-skiing tenure. It is appropriate that the Gaul's application be delayed or denied, until these complex land use planning issues can be resolved as part of the impending review by the MSRM.

Stewart Spooner
Friends of the Rossland Range