

ROSSLAND RANGE RECREATION SITE

MANAGEMENT PLAN

November 13, 2014

This Management Plan will be incorporated into an agreement between the Ministry of Forests Recreational Sites and Trails Branch and the Friends of the Rossland Range. It will become the official set of directions by which the Friends of the Rossland Range and the community manage the Recreation Site.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Rossland Range Recreation Site represents the culmination of many years of community recreational use and stewardship of the Rossland Range high country. It builds on the efforts of generations of local explorers and volunteers who found the good places, made trails and shelters, and showed us a kind of free and natural recreation that has come in recent years to be appreciated by more and more people from far and wide.

Although the history of managing recreation in the Rossland Range has been one of hands-on local community volunteerism, over the years it became apparent that something more was needed in order to provide a secure future for public recreation in our hills. So the Recreation Site also represents the culmination of many years of efforts by volunteers who would rather have been out in the mountains – years spent doing research, hosting meetings, writing applications, and waiting for government responses, all in aid of gaining official status for our traditional playground. Now we have it.

With the creation of the Rossland Range Recreation Site, we have achieved official recognition of the unique public recreational value of our local mountains. We can use the Recreation Site to build something that will last. This Management Plan is our blueprint.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location

The Rossland Range Recreation Site includes the higher terrain of the Rossland Range from the tenure held by Red Mountain Resorts in the south to the tenure held by Big Red Cats in the north. (See the attached map.)

2.2 Nature Of The Terrain

The Recreation Site contains four general types of terrain:

1. A system of high alpine and sub-alpine ridges with a number of distinct summits and steep basins, just west of Highway 3B, beginning adjacent to Red Mountain's tenure and extending to the summit of Mt. Lepsoe;
2. The Old Glory Mountain massif to the west of the main spine of the ridge system;
3. Mt. Crowe, to the north-east of Nancy Greene Summit;
4. Relatively gentle forested areas near Nancy Greene Summit, where a distinct plateau-like effect is noticeable, as well as along the lower slopes to the east of the high ridge system.

2.3 Major Recreational Uses

The terrain in the Recreation Site lends itself to numerous non-motorized uses in both summer and winter, comprising:

1. Mountain biking on provincially designated trails such as the Seven Summits Trail;
2. Hiking, typically on designated trails leading to and through the alpine areas;
3. Alpine ski touring, for instance to the summit of Old Glory Mountain;
4. Alpine-style “day adventure” skiing, which consists of using the steep terrain above a basin for repeated climbs and descents, rather than a single, longer trip to a destination such as a summit.
5. Light ski touring and snowshoeing in the gentler, forested terrain, following informal trails and routes.
6. Equestrian use.

2.4 Access

The Recreation Site is accessed by Highway 3B, which parallels the Recreation Site’s high ridges and basins from Red Mountain Resort to Nancy Greene Summit, where it passes through the Recreation Site, separating Mt. Crowe and a substantial part of the gentle Nancy Greene Summit plateau from the rest of the Recreation Site.

Users park at the developed area at Nancy Greene Summit, as well as at several locations along Highway 3B, some of which are maintained on an irregular basis.

The easy access provided by Highway 3B makes the Recreation Site directly accessible to users with many different interests, and a large range of ability levels.

Travel through the lower, more-gentle terrain is facilitated in summer by forestry roads and developed trails, and by forestry roads and informal routes in winter. Access to the higher basins and ridges in winter is provided by informal routes which are subject to changing levels of accessibility as the forest changes over time.

2.5 Level Of Recreational Use

Over the past decade, the area within the Recreation Site has transformed from a relatively lightly-used amenity enjoyed by residents of local communities to a destination for recreational users from throughout the region and beyond.

New types of recreational gear, from lighter, more easily-ridden mountain bikes to new-generation skis and snowshoes have made it easier for less-experienced users to penetrate farther into the Recreation Site.

Forestry operations have made large portions of the easier terrain in the Recreation Site more accessible for less-experienced users. Development of a high-quality trail system has had a similar effect.

Expansion of the boundaries of Red Mountain Resort, and the creation of a cat-skiing tenure held by Big Red Cats have led to concentration of public recreational use in the area of the Recreation Site.

Those with experience in the Rossland Range over the years estimate that recreational use of the area within the Recreation Site, both summer and winter, has increased 10-fold over the past decade.

2.6 Forestry

Most of the Recreation Site is within “the working forest,” subject to a tenure held by ATCO Wood Products, and in a few small areas to a designation under the auspices of BC Timber Sales, Kootenay Business Area.

Recreational activities and projects in the Recreation Site do not take precedence over forestry planning and operations, or the rights of the forestry tenure holder.

2.7 Shelters

An important part of the winter recreational experience in the Recreation Site is the presence of volunteer-maintained shelters, which provide both destinations for light touring in the gentler terrain and security for “day adventure” skiers venturing into more challenging terrain.

2.8 Motorized Recreational Use

Motorized use in the non-snow seasons is restricted to forestry roads. The provincially-designated trails prohibit motorized use.

In the past, non-motorized winter users and snowmobilers have been able to use the forestry roads and other routes cooperatively. Motorized use has not been intensive.

Greatly-increased numbers of non-motorized recreational users, and changes in snowmobile technology, seem to have made most areas within the Recreation Site less interesting for snowmobilers, and snowmobile use in recent winters has been low. However, the new snowmobiles are capable of more-easily accessing the high basins and ridges.

2.9 Hunting and trapping

The Recreation Site does not exclude hunting or trapping

2.10 History Of Community Self-Regulation

Over the years, people recreating in the Recreation Site area have developed a cooperative approach to sharing the use of the landscape. This informal approach remains a major attraction for users of the area.

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE RECREATION SITE

The over-arching purpose of the Recreation Site is to provide official and community recognition for the area as a unique free public recreational amenity.

Flowing from this primary purpose, the Recreation Site is intended to achieve the following goals:

1. To allow planning for the proper management of recreation so that the area remains attractive for present and future users;
2. To allow planning for retention of the area's natural qualities and ecological integrity;
3. To be a vehicle for cooperation between recreational user groups, and between recreational users and other stakeholders;
4. To be a framework within which the community and the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch can cooperatively carry out management activities;
5. To be a platform from which to seek funding for management programs and activities.

4.0 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

In order to achieve the Recreation Site's purpose and goals, a number of key matters must be dealt with. They include:

1. Recognition of a legal entity to act as the community organization that will enter into a management agreement with the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch, and then be the lead agency in carrying out the terms of the agreement;
2. Management of recreational use so that it does not overwhelm the natural qualities of the area or degrade environmental values;
3. Public education about the Recreation Site, including education about its history and culture, and its proper and safe use;
4. Liaison with stakeholders;
5. Creating safe parking;
6. Creating and maintaining access for winter use as the forest changes over time;
7. Creating a limited number of high-quality day-use shelters.

5.0 ACTIONS

5.1 Legal Entity

The Friends of the Rossland Range Society (FORRS) will act as the legal entity in partnership with the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch, and will sign the management agreement.

5.2 Governance

The plan expresses a partnership between FORRS and the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch, with each partner having particular capacities that will assist in carrying out the plan.

FORRS will engage the community in carrying out the programs and activities identified in the management plan.

FORRS will further the actions called for in the plan with due diligence, and seek to develop practical time-lines for projects.

FORRS will seek to preserve the culture of cooperative shared use in the Recreation Site, so that minimal formal regulation is required.

Because of the history and purpose of the Recreation Site, FORRS will work to ensure that fees are not imposed for use of the Recreation Site.

The Recreation Sites and Trails Branch will recognize the limitations of volunteer participation in managing the Recreation Site, and allow for prioritization and phasing of activities.

FORRS and the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch will seek the participation of the public in making key decisions about managing the Recreation Site.

5.3 A Rolling Plan

As conditions in the Recreation Site change, the current plan may need to be revised from time to time. FORRS will engage the community and the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch in creating proposed revisions to the plan, and submit the proposed changes for approval by the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch.

5.4 Preservation Of Natural Qualities

FORRS will incorporate information about natural and environmental values into all plans for activities to improve recreational use, and will seek to manage activities to prevent damage to those values.

5.5 Public Education

As an initial step, FORRS will create signage telling the public about the important aspects of the Recreation Site.

When a project such as the creation of new access is undertaken, FORRS will include appropriate signage in the project.

Other public education activities that can be considered as resources permit include:

1. Interpretive signs about natural values, sensitive areas, cultural history, and forestry;
2. Signage requesting appropriate use;
3. Articles;
4. Brochures.

5.6 Stakeholder Liaison

FORRS will maintain a list of significant stakeholders. FORRS will engage stakeholders when planning projects.

ATCO Wood Products has discussed their liaison requirements with FORRS. See the comments by ATCO's Chief Forester, under Section 5.7 - Parking and Access below.

The snowmobile clubs have asked that FORRS bring any issues to them for cooperative resolution.

The local Search and Rescue organizations consider it important to have motorized access to a limited portion of the Recreation Site for a few days in winter, and would like to be kept informed and made part of the Recreation Site liaison network.

FORRS will work with representatives of the local hunting community , as well as the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch, on ways to ensure that hunting can be carried out safely in the Recreation Site.

5.7 Parking And Access

Parking along Highway 3B presents challenges for both recreational users and the highway maintenance contractor:

1. The Ministry of Transportation provides only a very minimal budget to develop and maintain parking. New parking areas, and higher-priority snowploughing of existing areas, are hard to achieve and may require engaging other partners.
2. Informal parking on the shoulders of the highway in winter is hazardous, and needs to be discouraged.

3. There is potential for conflict between stakeholders over parking, e.g. recreational users blocking access by ATCO Wood Products or Big Red Cats.

As an initial step, FORRS will engage the various stakeholders in discussions about the parking challenges in the Recreation Site.

The general principle to be implemented in managing parking is to encourage parking in safe, developed areas, and to facilitate access from those places to the terrain being sought by recreational users. (See the proposed projects below for access trails from parking areas to skiing basins.)

Access projects away from the highway should be coordinated with the other aspects of the Recreation Site, such as shelter locations, parking, and sensitive areas e.g. wetlands, bear denning areas, refuge areas for lynxes, etc.

Access should also be planned in consideration of historic sites such as the site of the 1947 airplane crash in the South Murphy Creek Valley.

Creating better winter access through the forest requires working in active cooperation with ATCO Wood Products, since access projects can adversely affect forestry if not carried out properly.

Below are comments by ATCO's Forestry Manager, which should be considered part of the plan:

- Rather than making blanket prescriptions, the Recreation Site access managers should identify each specific access project, figure out what would likely work best for improving access, and consult with ATCO on a case-by-case basis.
- Put everything relevant on a map – location, proposed work, roads, any sensitive areas, etc. Use GPS to help locate the proposed work. The ATCO workers on the ground are good at working with maps, but not so happy with wordy planning documents.
- The Recreation Site access managers should confer with ATCO's Silviculture Coordinator.
- Identify any roads that are important for recreation – skiing and possibly access to huts. Recognize that this is so ATCO can keep roads open for recreation, but doesn't commit ATCO to staying off a road that is needed for a time to do winter harvesting. There is enough room in the landscape to temporarily relocate ski routes.
- ATCO aggressively closes unneeded roads and returns the site to its original contours. When roads are kept open, ATCO has a legal obligation to maintain them to prevent erosion or damage to watercourses.
- For light ski touring and snowshoeing access through new growth, think in terms of corridors, not wholesale thinning. Where thinning is appropriate in new growth, the ideal final spacing is 2.7 meters between stems, which gives quite a bit of room for a trail, especially with careful limbing of trail-side trees.

- Limbing new growth along trails is generally okay, provided that it doesn't extend too high and compromise the growth of the tree, e.g. a tree 6 meters tall could be limbed up to about 2.5 meters. Rather than taking branches only off the trail side of the tree, remove the complete whorl of branches so the tree stays balanced. Trim close to the trunk; over time that produces a better log, with fewer loose knots.
- Mature stands can be made safer for skiing by removing dead lower limbs, and by dropping dead trees to the ground. Use a "lop and scatter" technique, i.e. cut stems into pieces that are short enough to lie on the ground, so they don't bridge any terrain features that would keep them elevated.
- Old roads being shut in by alder or willow can always be brushed out.

Within the general principles above, and the guidance provided by ATCO, below are some examples of access projects (other than parking) that could be undertaken as resources become available (See map):

- a) Identify the forestry roads that would improve recreation if kept open, and discuss them with ATCO.
- b) Restore light skiing routes from the Nancy Greene Summit parking area through the new growth to Red Dog Cabin, Mosquito hut and surroundings.
- c) Create a winter trail from the Nancy Greene Summit parking area (the entrance to the "Cookie Jar" trail) to near the intersection of the various branches of the Crowe Road.
- d) Create a winter trail from the Murphy Creek Road parking area to the lower Elgood Creek valley to provide an alternative to unsafe parking on the highway.
- e) Create a winter trail from the "Mosquito" plateau to the Cliff Road in the vicinity of View hut.
- f) Create a winter trail from the 7 Summits Trail into the "Spider Valley" to provide an alternative to unsafe parking where "Spider Creek" crosses the highway.
- g) Drop deadfalls and prune dead limbs in the mature forests in the Murphy Creek, Elgood Creek and "Spider Creek" basins, and possibly on the west facing slopes of Mt. Crowe.
- h) Brush out old roads, e.g. on "Cutblock Peak."
- i) Space new growth on "Cutblock Peak" to provide safer skiing.
- j) Trim Alders in the old cutblock in lower Lepsoe Basin (above where the 7 Summits Trail crosses the basin), to improve skiing.

(This list is not exhaustive. The access committee or members of the public may propose other projects. The list is also not in any firm order of priority. The Recreation Site access committee can determine what should be done first)

5.8 A New Generation Of High-Quality Day-Use Shelters

(Some of the material below has been noted earlier in this plan. Because of the importance of a good strategy for making the transition to a new generation of shelters, it is repeated for clarity.)

This plan for a transition to a new generation of higher-quality shelters should be seen as an opportunity to build for the future as times change.

5.8.1 History

The first shelters within the Recreation Site area were built by a small, close-knit group of friends within a relatively local community. They were used as lunch/social destinations for light cross-country ski touring, and were mostly primitive pole-and-tarp shacks.

Over time, a number of changes have occurred :

- New generations have arrived, with new people moving to the local area, including many young people with children, and busier lifestyles.
- Many more people from farther away are accessing the area, a shift from purely local to regional, and even international, recognition.
- There has been a vast increase in use of the Recreation Site area and shelters (close to a ten-fold increase in 10 years).
- New uses have come to the fore, such as backcountry skiing on alpine touring gear, interest in more challenging terrain, backcountry “day adventures” (multiple climbs and downhill runs from a base at the bottom of the steeper terrain), and snowshoeing (a “tidal wave” of new users). Light ski touring is more and more popular. The new equipment allows easier access to more distant parts of the Recreation Site. Many more children are being brought to the area, including very young ones. There are many more inexperienced people as well as many more “hard-core” people looking for steep lines.
- Forestry harvesting has made access easier in many areas. New growth has made access harder in some areas. Use of shelters has changed accordingly.
- There has been a shift from “disposable” pole and tarp shacks to huts with metal or plastic roofs, with better shelter survival and less garbage from defunct tarps and stoves, but with the increased appearance of the shelters being fixed, permanent structures.
- There is now a need for higher-quality shelters that are safer for children and more attractive to the new demographic of users. There is also a need to eliminate proliferation of shelters.

5.8.2 Landscape

The main spine of the Rossland Range in the Recreation Site is a single north-south oriented ridge with multiple small peaks, parallel to Highway 3B, all accessible as a day

tour (or less) from the highway. None of it is seriously remote. The Old Glory area is a “stretch” for day touring, but is not actually very large.

The terrain is varied and complex, but lends itself to 2 basic kinds of winter recreational uses:

- Alpine touring to the peaks and along the ridges, including multiple-run alpine touring “day adventures.”
- Light touring and snowshoeing, mostly in the more gentle terrain around Nancy Greene Summit.

Most users participate in light touring and snowshoeing; however alpine touring is becoming increasingly popular. Since un-tracked snow is a big alpine touring attraction, and because of the higher risks involved, planning for alpine touring use at lower densities than for light touring is appropriate. Both relaxed recreation and “hard-core” endeavors can have a place in the Recreation Site.

Every summit in the Recreation Site can be accessed with some persistence on light ski gear or snowshoes. Every summit also has at least one aspect with avalanche potential.

The Hanna Creek, South Murphy Creek, Elgood Creek and “Spider Creek” (between the north and east ridges of Mt. Lepsoe) valleys and the slopes above them are four distinct recreational “pods” separated from each other by steep ridge systems. Very few recreational users traverse from one of these drainages to another in a typical day.

The area around Nancy Greene Summit is relatively plateau-like, with many routes for light touring and snowshoeing.

Although the terrain around Nancy Greene Summit is relatively easy, it is at an elevation of around 1600 meters, and winter weather can be severe and changeable. Even experienced local users have been caught out by weather in this area, sometimes within 2 or 3 kilometers of the Summit parking lot.

The slopes of Mt. Crowe within the Rec Site are unique because they are suitable for easy/intermediate alpine touring, but are also safely accessible by those on lighter gear. Virtually all of the slopes on Mt. Crowe within the Recreation Site run downhill to easy terrain that leads “home.”

5.8.3 Shelters “Philosophy”

In the Recreation Site, the terrain, and the different styles of use, kinds of gear, and experience levels point to the need for shelters that serve two distinctly different purposes:

- “Social/motivational” shelters: These are the “classic huts” centered around Nancy Green Summit, that give people a positive destination, are places to socialize and enjoy a warm wood stove, and give security to new users, older people, and

families. These shelters are key to bringing out large numbers of the public to exercise and experience the outdoors.

- Alpine touring “day adventure” base shelters: These shelters have a more serious safety function, being located at the foot of terrain that can be hazardous. They function as refuges and re-grouping points e.g. for putting gear such as climbing skins back in order, changing and drying clothing to forestall hypothermia, resting and recuperating. They also could play positive roles in search and rescue operations in the high country.

People on light ski gear or snowshoes do visit the more “day adventure”-oriented shelters in the Murphy Creek, Elgood Creek and “Spider Creek” valleys as well as on Mt. Crowe (the Crowe’s Nest hut), and alpine tourers make occasional use of “social” shelters such as Mosquito, Berry Ridge and Sunspot. The terrain around Mt. Crowe, because it is not broken up by steep ridge systems, particularly invites use of the shelters by both alpine touring skiers and less-aggressive users.

All the shelters under consideration are for day use only.

A shelter for overnight use somewhere in the Recreation Site has been suggested at various times. However, almost the entire Recreation Site is accessible as a day tour from Highway 3B, and the logistical and administrative tasks attached to an overnight shelter are considerable. For these reasons, the current plan does not include any overnight shelters.

5.8.4 Zones, Uses, And Current Shelters

NOTE: The shelters listed in this section, and in the transition strategy below, were chosen for inclusion because they were identified through several processes as the ones that have the highest value to the public. Comments by members of the community at various public workshops were confirmed by development of a matrix of criteria that allowed a ranking system to be created.

For the purpose of planning where shelters should be placed, the terrain and the way the various uses are distributed suggest these zones, with major type of use and current cabins noted (see map):

- Hanna Creek basin: Alpine touring, “day adventure.” *No recognized shelter.* (Active City of Rossland watershed.)
- South Murphy Creek basin: Alpine touring, “day adventure.” *Igloo Hut.* (Active City of Rossland watershed.)
- Elgood Creek basin: Alpine touring, “day adventure.” *Not So Secret Hut.* (Designated but unused City of Rossland watershed.)
- “Spider” Valley basin (between the north and east ridges of Mt. Lepsoe). Alpine touring “day adventure.” *Barking Spider Hut.*

- “Near and easy” Nancy Greene Summit plateau area (both sides of Highway 3B): Light ski touring, snowshoeing (easy and close). *Surprise Hut, Eagle’s Nest Hut, Sunspot Hut, Red Dog Cabin, Rock-n-Roll Hut, Mosquito Hut.*
- Mt. Crowe North Ridge. Light ski touring and snowshoeing (a “stretch” destination for many). *(New) Crowe North Ridge Cabin, Viewpoint hut, Lost hut.*
- Mt. Crowe north-west facing slopes (above Mosquito hut). Alpine touring “day adventure” (relatively easy). *Crowe’s Nest hut.*
- Lepsoe Basin (between the north and north-west ridges of Mt. Lepsoe, including upper north ridge of Mt. Lepsoe). Light ski touring, snowshoeing, occasional alpine touring. *Berry Ridge hut.*

There are other structures within the Recreation Site, but the ones listed above are those which are actively (often heavily) used by the public, and which have “champions” who look after them for the public. Structures that should be treated as historic sites rather than active shelters are listed below. There are also structures that do not meet the criteria for public shelters, or are abandoned. Those structures are not listed in this section or the transition strategy below, and are subject to the general regulations about unauthorized construction on Crown land. (See comments in Section 5.8.8 - Removal of Inappropriate Structures below.)

5.8.5 Transition Strategy

The strategy is based on these principles and rules:

- **Terrain:** Where the landscape forms distinct enclaves or “pods” isolated from each other by steep ridges, each “pod” should be considered for a shelter on its own merits. Where the landscape is more open, such as on and below the slopes of Mt. Crowe, and in Lepsoe Basin, consolidation of shelters and multiple purposes for shelters may be practical.
- **A rational official plan:** An important value of a workable shelter plan is to answer concerns that a proliferation of unregulated huts in the Rossland Range sets a poor example. Whatever the final number of shelters in the Rec Site may be, simply having an official plan that is clear about the rules prevents builders of unauthorized structures from using the presence of the Recreation Site shelters as an excuse not to comply with the legislation. If the public is to buy into the plan, the final number of shelters should reasonably address the purposes of the shelters, the constraints imposed by the terrain, and the needs of the public.
- **Transition over time:** There are neither the volunteer resources nor the funding to implement a plan for the shelters on a short time-line. The shelters listed above should be considered as part of a longer-term transition strategy, not subject to immediate removal, but also not guaranteed a permanent place.
- **A transition plan should respect the history of the community’s involvement in the huts, including the commitment and emotional involvement of the hut “champions.”** The shelters listed above do not pose a risk to the Rec Site, its users, or its ecology. Many of them are crude, but they work for now, and they are being looked

after. Simple passage of time could do much to alleviate the community's anxieties about their fate.

- Because of the active public use of existing shelters, an "old" shelter recognized in the plan should not be removed until its replacement under this strategy has been completed, unless the old shelter has fallen into disuse. **Shelters currently recognized as important to the public will be removed if they are no longer being used or maintained.**
- New shelters should be located as appropriate for present uses and forest cover conditions, but constructed so they could be fairly easily dismantled and removed, or moved to another location in the future, possibly with floors, roofs and walls built in modules, assembled using screws instead of nails.
- The size of new shelters should be carefully considered. Experience indicates that it is easy to build too big. However, in some locations, e.g. Mosquito hut, a larger shelter is required.
- New shelters must meet the standards set by the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch. Essentially, the standards require a shelter to have:
 - a) a tightly framed floor supported clear of the ground on a foundation such as rock and mortar pillars;
 - b) rodent-proof construction;
 - c) a durable roof able to bear or shed heavy snow loads;
 - d) an attractive exterior finish;
 - e) a sound, safe stove and chimney;
 - f) a fire extinguisher and first aid kit. [This requirement may have to be subject to practical considerations, with more-distant shelters, and those with more a more serious safety function, taking priority.]

[These standards may be amended.]

These standards do not dictate a single approved style of shelter; shelters can reflect the creativity of their builders.

- New shelters must include appropriate outhouses as part of each project.
- The locations of new replacement/consolidation shelters must be mapped. GPS coordinates must be provided to the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch for both current shelters and new replacement/consolidation shelters as they are built.
- **Structures (new and old) not in the plan: The shelters, both current and future, listed in the transition strategy are the only structures permitted. Any others are subject to removal.**

5.8.6 Steps In The Transition To The New Generation Of Shelters

Shelters Other Than In Terrain-Limited Pods:

1. Mt. Crowe north ridge:

Goal: Create one shelter of appropriate size and construction in a suitable location on the north ridge of Mt. Crowe as a “stretch destination” shelter for ski touring and snowshoeing.

Remove Lost hut.

[The following is provisional, and will be finalized soon.] *Reduce the other two current structures to one, possibly by dismantling the new structure (“Mt. Crowe North Ridge Cabin”) and using the materials to reconstruct View hut to meet the Recreation Site standards.*

Rationale: Lost hut is poorly built, and because of forest harvesting is now very exposed. It could not be renovated to Recreation Site standards. View hut and the new structure (“Mt. Crowe North Ridge Cabin”) are close to each other, and together represent excessive development in the area.

2. Mt. Crowe northwest slopes and “Mosquito” area of Nancy Green Summit plateau:

Goal: Create one shelter of appropriate size and construction in an appropriate location to serve as both a safety shelter for skiers on the west slopes of Mt. Crowe and a destination shelter for skiers and snowshoers traversing the gentler terrain between Mt. Crowe and Nancy Greene Summit (the “Mosquito” plateau).

Build a new shelter near the present “Mosquito” hut, possibly on the slight bench just within the standing forest above the “Mosquito” cutblocks, and remove the Crowe’s Nest Hut and Mosquito Hut.

Rationale: Mosquito Hut is now too accessible from a permanent forestry road, and is taking abuse in the non-winter seasons. It is also exposed, not windproof, and difficult to heat. Supplying firewood has become a problem. It would be difficult to upgrade Mosquito to the required standards. Crowe’s Nest hut is situated at 2020 meters elevation, where the forest grows very slowly. Over the years, cutting firewood for the Crowe’s Nest has had significant impact on the sub-alpine landscape. A safety shelter for Mt. Crowe would probably be more effective if it were placed lower on the mountain.

3. Nancy Greene Summit, “near” south side of Highway 3B:

Goal: Create one shelter of appropriate size and construction to serve as a destination shelter for users with limited capacities, e.g. people new to touring, families, people who require gentle and easily-accessible terrain.

Build a new shelter, possibly halfway between Surprise hut and Eagle’s Nest hut, and remove Surprise and Eagle’s Nest huts.

Rationale: A shelter near the parking lot is needed to provide for use by families and others with limited capabilities. However, Surprise hut is not structurally sound, and would be difficult to bring up to the new standards. Eagle’s Nest hut would also require

significant work to bring it up to standards, and is located in an area attractive to packrats.

4. Nancy Greene Summit plateau, “near” north side of Highway 3B:

Goal: To preserve Rock and Roll hut and Red Dog Cabin as suitable near to mid-range destination shelters suitable for families, and others who seek a shorter touring experience.

Upgrade or replace Rock and Roll hut to meet the new standards. Maintain Red Dog Cabin, and construct a new outhouse.

Rationale: Red Dog Cabin is the only shelter that currently meets the basic Recreation Site standards, and is heavily used. Rock and Roll hut, while it does not meet the Recreation Site standards, has proven to be in a good location for use by families and others wishing an easy day of touring.

5. Lepsoe Basin, lower Mt. Lepsoe north ridge:

Goal: Create one shelter of appropriate size and construction as a destination and safety shelter for people touring on the north ridge of Mt. Lepsoe and in Lepsoe Basin

Build a new shelter between Sunspot hut and Berry Ridge hut. Remove Sunspot and Berry Ridge.

Rationale: Neither Sunspot hut nor Berry Ridge hut can be easily brought up to the new shelter standards. The forest around Berry Ridge hut does not support long-term firewood gathering.

“Day Adventure” Base Shelters Within Terrain-Limited Pods:

1. South Murphy Creek Basin:

Goal: Create an appropriate shelter to act as a safety and base shelter for skiers using the steeper terrain in the headwaters of South Murphy Creek, and to provide a “stretch destination” shelter for light touring and snowshoeing.

Upgrade Igloo hut to the Recreation Site standards. Immediately build a high-quality, properly-located outhouse.

Rationale: The slopes in the headwaters of the south fork of Murphy Creek are receiving increasing use for Alpine Touring “day adventure” skiing. Igloo hut has proven to be in a good location to act as a safety and base shelter. The upper Murphy Creek valley is also being increasingly used by light ski tourers and snowshoers, who appreciate Igloo hut as a destination.

2. Elgood Creek basin:

Goal: Create an appropriate safety and base shelter for skiers using the steeper terrain in the headwaters of Elgood Creek.

Construct a new shelter to replace Not So Secret hut, further up the Elgood Creek valley, closer to the actively skied slopes. Remove the current Not So Secret hut.

Rationale: The slopes into the Elgood Creek valley contain much challenging terrain, which is being increasingly skied, with a subsequent increasing need for a safety and base shelter. Not So Secret hut could not easily be modified to meet the Recreation Site standards, and is in a location that makes it impractical as a safety shelter.

3. “Spider Valley” (between the north and east ridges of Mt. Lepsoe):

Goal: Create an appropriate safety and base shelter for skiers using both the “Spider” valley and the steeper slopes above the “Spider” valley.

Reconstruct Barking Spider hut to the new standards.

Rationale: The “Spider” valley and its surrounding slopes include complex terrain presenting numerous challenges. The Barking Spider hut has proven to be in a reasonably good location to work as a safety and base shelter for this terrain.

Note: The mapped locations of proposed replacement/consolidation shelters are approximate. Actual locations will be chosen by the Recreation Site team doing the work, considering all the relevant variables and in consultation with stakeholders.

5.8.7 A Project-Oriented Approach

The transition strategy (and the plan in general) is structured to be implemented as a series of projects. There are opportunities for individuals or groups to take leadership on a specific project. For instance, the people involved with a current hut may appreciate the challenge of creating a new and better shelter. A mountain club may wish to contribute to the Recreation Site. A local business may wish to do the same thing. Or people new to the community and the Recreation Site may wish to make their own contributions. FORRS will explore these kinds of possibilities.

5.8.8 Removal Of Inappropriate Structures

Removal of structures made redundant by new construction under the shelters transition strategy must be carried out as part of each construction project.

FORRS will also remove structures that were considered public huts in the past, but have fallen into disuse, such as Buffalo Jump hut and Tee-pee hut.

Volunteer resources for removal of other defunct “non-public” structures are limited. It may be possible for volunteers to dismantle old structures so that metal parts, e.g. roofs and stoves, can be removed by helicopter in a single “sweep,” and to cut up wooden parts so that they lie flat on the ground and will decompose. It may also be possible to find funding, e.g. for youth employment, to remove structures in cooperation with the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch. FORRS will explore the potential for this.

5.8.9 Heritage Sites

Cookie Jar Cabin and the forest fire lookout on the summit of Old Glory should be considered heritage/interpretive sites, not part of the plan for public shelters.

The stove in Cookie Jar should be removed, and an interpretive sign placed. The fire lookout should be renovated (under a separate plan), and interpretive signage provided.

Rationale: The Cookie Jar has significant community attachment, and is a memorial to both historic uses in the Rossland Range (prospecting) and to Cookie L'Ecluse. The forest fire lookout is an important hiking destination, with great historic value, but is not safe or maintainable as a winter shelter because of its exposed location.

FORRS will decommission the Cookie Jar hut, with appropriate signage. As a project separate from the Recreation Site plan, FORRS will work with the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch on developing the Old Glory lookout as an interpretive site.

5.8.10 Working The Plan And Maintaining Shelters

FORRS will establish a volunteer program to look after the shelters in the plan. FORRS will also seek funding as needed to carry out projects required by the plan.

5.8.11 Process

- FORRS and the community will implement the shelters transition strategy with appropriate consultation with all stakeholders.
- The shelters transition strategy will not be altered without consulting the community.
- FORRS and the community will implement the plan with due diligence and timeliness, as resources permit.

NOTE:

The map accompanying this plan is part of a work in progress. It will eventually include other layers of information as required to carry out the plan. The present map is designed specifically to help explain the rationale behind the shelters transition strategy.