

FRIENDS OF THE ROSSLAND RANGE SOCIETY
DESIGNATED RECREATION AREA PROPOSAL FOR OLD GLORY ALPINE AND NANCY
GREENE PASS AREAS
PUBLIC DISCUSSION DRAFT #1 – JUNE 30, 2010

1. *Name, etc. of applicant.* [Friends of the Rossland Range Society (FORRS), etc.]
2. *Overall purpose of the work:*

The Designated Recreation Area is intended as a vehicle for community management of the sensitive, higher-elevation, high-use “core” of the Rossland Range.

The Designated Recreation Area (DRA) builds on a history of community care in the Rossland Range. Its strength lies in guiding and supporting a culture of responsibility and respect. Both FORRS and the community recognize that capacity to enforce in other ways is very limited.

The terms of the DRA represent a partial plan, covering a few important elements and interests, for eventual incorporation into a comprehensive recreation plan for the entire Rossland Range, which should include broader recognition and management of ecosystem values, as well as planning for motorized interests.

The key purposes of the DRA are:

- To proactively manage recreational use in order to protect ecosystem and aesthetic values; to ensure that the impact of recreation on natural values stays within the adaptive capacity of the landscape;
- To support and protect the provincially-designated trails managed by the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society (e.g. 7 Summits Trail, Old Glory and Mt. Plewman Trails);
- To support and protect popular winter-use areas for activities such as back-country ski touring, light ski touring, and snowshoeing.
- To manage winter access co-operatively with the forest tenure holder, Atco Wood Products, by:
 - a) creation of off-highway parking where feasible, e.g. at Murphy Creek Road, Crowe Road, and Pass Road;
 - b) cutting of windthrow, dead-and-down trees and dead limbs for safety and access, as well as for forestry goals (e.g. fire suppression);
 - c) co-operative planning of spacing, thinning, and nuisance brush clearing for access and good forestry.
- To manage the number, location, construction, use and maintenance of winter day-use shelters in a zone centered on Nancy Greene Pass (see map – “Nancy Greene Pass hut zone”);
- To manage recreational use in the City of Rossland’s municipal watersheds, including number, location, construction, use and maintenance of winter-use huts (see map – “City of Rossland watershed zone”);

- To act as a mechanism for educating users about the need to be responsible for looking after the DRA and its diverse values;
- To act as a forum for conflict resolution;
- To organize and support volunteer programs for construction and maintenance of facilities, and for other activities in support of the purposes of the DRA.
- To act as a platform for negotiation with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure of a winter parking plan for Highway 3B from Red Mountain Resort to Nancy Greene Pass.

The DRA will operate in concert with the FORRS Streamkeepers Program and the forest demonstration project being jointly developed by FORRS and Atco Wood Products.

The DRA will not manage, or educate about, avalanche safety.

3. Brief description of the proposed work:

- Develop an inventory of ecosystems, focusing on sensitive habitats and species.
- Develop an inventory of high-use and high-impact recreational sites (the “hot spots”).
- Develop an estimate of recreational use, and of change in use over time.
- Develop a management plan to support the provincially-designated trails, in co-operation with the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society.
- Develop an access plan, in co-operation with Atco Wood Products, the City of Rossland, and the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary.
- Develop a management plan, in co-operation with Atco Wood Products, for the winter day-use shelters at Nancy Greene Pass.
- Develop a management plan, in co-operation with the City of Rossland and Atco Wood Products, for recreational use in Rossland’s watersheds, including presence of winter-use huts.
- Negotiate a co-operative management plan with the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society.
- Develop and carry out a plan for public education and publicity (signage, brochures, etc.)
- Negotiate with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding winter parking.
- Organize volunteer programs (e.g. a “cabin crew,” public education hosts).
- Construct or re-construct day-use shelters and huts to appropriate standards.
- Remove inappropriate structures and garbage.
- Provide on-going maintenance of constructed facilities.
- Carry out programs to maintain or enhance access in accordance with the access plan.
- Raise funds to support the DRA.

Much of the preliminary negotiation and planning for the above has been done during the community input process that led to this proposal.

4. Location of the proposed work:

(See attached map.)

This is a proposal for a new designation.

The DRA is located along the spine of the Rossland Range, between Red Mountain Resort's Controlled Recreation Area and Big Red Cats' commercial recreational tenure.

From Red Mountain Resort to near Nancy Greene Pass, the DRA's easterly boundary is Highway 3B. In the Nancy Greene Pass area, the DRA extends north and east of Highway 3B to include the slopes of Mount Crowe to the west of Big Red Cats' tenure.

The westerly boundary of the CRA is not critical in most areas. It should include the sub-Alpine zone to the west of the provincially-designated trails (7 Summits, Old Glory), and include enough of the north-west ridge of Mount Lepsoe to protect the 7 Summits Trail and the winter-use trails south and west of Nancy Greene Pass.

Local government jurisdiction over the DRA lands is shared between the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and the City of Rossland. The City's boundaries include almost all of the Hanna Creek drainage uphill of Highway 3A. (The City also holds licenses for municipal watersheds on Hanna Creek, South Murphy Creek and Elgood Creek.)

5. Expected dates on which the proposed work will begin and finish:

The DRA as a functioning entity is expected to be on-going.

Because the DRA is being overlaid on a long community history of recreational use, the principle of "grandfathering" will need to be applied. The rules and standards in the DRA should be seen as goals to be achieved over time, not formal prescriptions to be imposed immediately.

Development of plans is underway. On-the-ground activities will begin when the DRA is created.

6. Expected use:

The DRA is a community amenity for free use by the public.

In the consultation process leading to this proposal, the area included in the DRA was recognized as a major attraction, bringing both visitors and new permanent residents to surrounding communities.

Significantly increased use over the past 10 years is a major factor driving this proposal.

Visitors and the local community place very high value on the chain of small day-use shelters at Nancy Greene Pass. See the attached comments from the May 20, 2010 public workshop, and the attached article published in the Spring 2010 issues of British Columbia Magazine.

7. Standards or other provisions to ensure that the trail or recreational facility doesn't conflict with other resource values or uses, is safe environmentally sound, and durable, given the purpose and expected use:

These standards are intended as the core provisions of management plans under the DRA. Other standards will likely be created as the DRA is implemented.

A.) The standards have been chosen with these considerations in mind:

- a. Users appreciate the DRA for its informal, rustic character. Over-regulating the area, or requiring over-engineering of facilities, will decrease the area's appeal.
- b. The community has addressed the concerns behind many of the standards during the consultation process leading to this proposal, and there is a general appreciation of the rationale for the rules.
- c. The community has accumulated significant experience in managing the proposed DRA. For instance, the number of shelters suggested has proven to be approximately the number needed to prevent saturation during much of the winter season.
- d. There has never been a serious safety issue arising from winter use of facilities such as day-use shelters in the proposed DRA.
- e. Standards agreed to by the users, and adhered to through a culture of responsibility and respect, will work.

B.) General:

- a. All activities in the DRA should be carried out with consideration for the need to preserve natural values. Ecosystem health should take priority over recreational use.
- b. All recreational activities in the DRA must be compatible with good forestry and the rights of the forest tenure holder.

C.) Trail Corridors: Trail corridors should be managed for minimum impact on ecosystems, and on City of Rossland watersheds, by:

- a. Limiting the number of trails;
- b. Concentrating use in durable, less-sensitive areas;
- c. Avoiding trail development on ridge-tops;
- d. Locating trails away from watercourses and riparian areas;
- e. Constructing trails for durability, and for capacity to resist erosion;
- f. Educating trail users about sensitive environmental factors, e.g. bluebird habitat, Grizzly bears, Alpine plants, and in the City of Rossland watersheds,

about the existence of the watershed and the need to protect community drinking water;

- g. Controlling user concentration through techniques such as scheduling (e.g. “horse tour day”).

D.) Shelters (huts):

- a. Shelters are day-use only.
- b. Shelters are winter use only.
- c. Shelters are non-permanent. They should be small, and easily dismantled. Their foundations should be constructed so that they can be dismantled and returned to a natural state. Their locations are not fixed, and may change over time.
- d. Shelters should be located on gravel or sand soils, away from streams, wetlands, and rock outcroppings. In City of Rossland watersheds, shelters must be on high ground as far as possible from watercourses.
- e. Shelters should have a footprint of no more than 10-12 square meters.
- f. Design and construction should be compatible with high snow loads, e.g. A-frame.
- g. Roof material should be durable, ultraviolet-resistant, and fire-resistant.
- h. Floors should be of a material that can be swept;
- i. Shelters should not be attached to trees, either living or dead.
- j. Builders must not cut live trees, either for use in construction or to make room for construction.
- k. Number of shelters:
 - i. In the Nancy Greene Pass zone, no more than can be maintained to the DRA standards. (A reasonable maximum would be 4 to 5 shelters on each side of Highway 3B – 1 “near” hut, 1 – 2 “medium range” huts, and 1 – 2 “stretch destination” huts. Like their locations, the number of huts in the Nancy Greene pass hut zone is flexible, and may change over time with changes in demand or volunteer resources)
 - ii. In the City of Rossland watersheds, 1 hut in each drainage, i.e. Hanna Creek, South Murphy Creek, Elgood Creek.
- l. Managing shelters: Each shelter should have a person designated as responsible, and available as a contact. The shelters as a whole should be overseen and managed by a “hut crew” responsible for seeing that the shelters are in reasonable conformity with the standards.

E.) Stoves and stovepipes:

- a. Stoves must:
 - i. Be sound and whole;
 - ii. Contain no unsafe metals or paints, e.g. no galvanized, tinsplate, or cadmium-plated material, no solder, no finishes other than certified high-temperature stove paint;

- iii. Be designed to draw well, so that smoke and fumes do not leak into the shelter;
 - iv. Be equipped with a fireproof hearth of appropriate size.
- b. Stoves must be placed so that combustible material near the stove does not become hotter than merely warm to the touch. Where necessary, combustible material should be shielded with sheet metal with an air-space behind it.
- c. Stovepipes and elbows must be of heavy-gauge sheet metal sold as stovepipe, i.e. no furnace ducting.
- d. Stovepipes must exit the structure through a sheet metal collar of sufficient size that combustible material near the pipe does not become hotter than merely warm to the touch. Where clearance is marginal, additional sheet metal heat deflectors must be installed.

F.) Outhouses:

- a. All toilets must be located on dry gravel or sand soil, as far from watercourses as possible.
- b. Outhouses should be constructed to the same standards as day-use shelters, i.e. durable materials, designed to resist high snow loads, not attached to trees.
- c. Nancy Greene Pass day-use hut zone: Lower-use cabins may be served by pit toilets appropriately placed and with appropriately-sized pits. Higher-use cabins should be served by composting toilets.
- d. City of Rossland watershed zone: All huts must have composting toilets. (A major reason for allowing 1 hut in each drainage is to concentrate waste in a location where it can be effectively managed.)
- e. Experience to date suggests that a properly constructed pit toilet in dry sand/gravel soil is easily capable of decomposing the volume of waste that is typical of the Nancy Greene Pass huts. It is expected that a well-designed passive composting toilet will also perform effectively at the anticipated volumes. Volumes of waste that exceed the capacity of a composting toilet would be an indication of general over-use of the site, and call for reconsideration of the management plan.

G.) Firewood:

- a. The preferred source of firewood is windthrow or dead-and-down timber that:
 - i. Is not recoverable by the forest tenure holder;
 - ii. If removed, will improve the forest, e.g. remove "ladder fuel" for fire safety, or improve recreational access and safety; and
 - iii. Is not significant wildlife habitat.
- b. Higher-elevation standing dead trees must be preserved, as wildlife habitat and for aesthetic reasons. In general, standing dead trees should be left as wildlife habitat, unless it is clear that a particular tree is not significant habitat,

e.g. a tree in an area of insect-killed trees. Firewood cutters must recognize the high safety risk of felling standing dead trees.

- c. Live trees must not be cut.
- d. Firewood gathering should be done in a way that leaves the site aesthetically pleasing, e.g. no high stumps, projecting log butts, brush piles, etc.

- H.) Access: Recreational access should be developed in keeping with these principles:
- a. Access, and works to improve access, must be compatible with good forestry;
 - b. Access must not negatively affect sensitive ecosystems;
 - c. Access should not be over-developed; where possible, quality and quantity of access should be used to prevent over-use.

8. Demonstration of capacity and commitment to provide maintenance over the long term:

- A.) The Friends of the Rossland Range Society (FORRS) is a registered non-profit society with a significant history of stewardship of natural and community values in the Rossland Range. (See attached questionnaire, which includes the goals of FORRS.) FORRS has represented community interests and concerns in several commercial tenure application processes, and has achieved results that are supported by both the community and the commercial tenure applicants.
- B.) FORRS has a present membership of over 200. Many of our more recent members were inspired to join in order to support the creation of the DRA.
- C.) FORRS has a good relationship with Atco Wood Products, the forest tenure holder, and with Red Mountain Resorts and Big Red Cats, the commercial recreational tenure holders adjacent to the DRA, all of whom support the DRA proposal.
- D.) The DRA proposal is consistent with the goals in the City of Rossland's Official Community Plan, and is intended to be consistent with the policy goals of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary. [We anticipate the support of both the City of Rossland and the RDKB].
- E.) FORRS has a co-operative relationship with the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society (KCTS), which manages the provincially-designated trails within the DRA. KCTS supports our proposal, and expects to assist in implementing it.
- F.) Both the community input process for the proposal and our fund-raising efforts have received broad community support.

9. Actions or assistance requested of the Regional Manager. Please check the appropriate box(es):

- Consent to proceed with the proposal;
- Establishment of the proposal as a Recreation site.

10. Additional information or comments:

The proposal for a DRA builds on a very long history of community and provincial agency concern for multiple-value planning and management in the Rossland Range, beginning with the efforts of local residents such as Nancy Greene's father to have the core of the Rossland Range made into a park.

Much of the area included in the DRA proposal was designated as the Nancy Greene Recreation Area, and was expected to become a park. Unfortunately, the designation was lost during the CORE regional land use planning process. However, the community continues to strongly support some form of protection for the key areas of high recreational use in the Rossland Range.

Many of the values propelling the Nancy Greene RA were carried forward in the Nancy Greene Highlands Forest Management Plan, developed by the Ministry of Forests. The Management Plan continues to be a valuable resource, but it does not properly reflect the greatly increased recreational use in the Rossland Range high country since its creation.

For several years, FORRS has worked with agencies such as the Integrated Land Management Branch and the Ministry of Forests (now Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts) Recreation Branch towards the creation of a comprehensive recreation plan for the Rossland Range. Such a plan remains a long-term goal of FORRS. We intend our proposal for a DRA to be a potential piece of the larger plan.

The DRA proposal focuses on areas of the Rossland Range where non-motorized use is recognized as appropriate, i.e. higher-elevation, high-sensitivity, high-use areas. (Note: 1. The provincially-designated trails passing through the DRA have been specifically created and authorized for non-motorized use. 2. Tourism Rossland recognizes the high value of non-motorized use to the Rossland economy, and has made a Board-level decision to promote only non-motorized activities.) The various kinds of non-motorized use, both summer and winter, and the potential for over-use and conflicts, will present future management challenges in the DRA.

FORRS would like to see planning outside the area of the DRA that would support motorized use where appropriate. In addition, FORRS and the local snowmobile clubs have negotiated a shared-use corridor through the DRA along roads to the west of Mount Crowe, to respect traditional use of the area by touring snowmobilers. (See attached map.)

Snowmobilers use the cutblocks adjacent to Highway 3B south of Nancy Greene Pass, especially close to the Murphy Creek Road parking area, on a casual basis. At present, this use has no significant impact on the concerns and objectives informing the DRA.

Apart from the provincially-designated trails, there is no issue arising between recreational users due to summer-season motorized recreation in the DRA. Motorized use tends to be confined to forestry roads, and does not significantly affect other users, although it may affect the movement and activities of wildlife.

FORRS is concerned that all recreational use and planning throughout the Rossland Range be done with regard to the overarching importance of protecting ecosystems. Although this is a proposal for a recreational tenure, it must be seen in an appropriate environmental context.

To the greatest extent possible, management of the proposed DRA will respect the history of the area, and the expectations of those who worked to develop and look after it. For example, much of the groundwork for the creation of the provincially-designated trails was done by the Backcountry Horsemen, with an expectation that the trails would remain open to horse riders. Below the western slopes of Mount Crowe, some of the snowmobiling “old guard” have helped with hut construction, and have ridden the forestry roads in a way that keeps them pleasant for skiers. The shared-use corridor on the map is one reflection of that history.

The proposal has been developed through a process of consultation with users, stakeholders, local government, and the community. (See attached materials. All the comments from the public workshop held on May 20 2010 are posted on the FORRS website at www.rosslandrange.org.)

To the greatest extent possible, the proposal reflects the hopes and concerns of the people who will have to live with and implement it. It also is intended to reflect best management practices, and to build on the plans and policies that have been created by both the Province and local governments.

[Note - First Nations Land Claims: In other tenure applications in the Rossland Range, First Nations have apparently expressed no concerns. FORRS is in the process of researching which First Nations may have interests in the Rossland Range, so that the proposal can be referred to them.]