

Bulkley TSA Strategic Recreation Study

1.0 Introduction

Starting in the fall of 1999, the Bulkley-Cassiar Forest District began a strategic review of outdoor recreation activity on crown lands in the Bulkley portion of the Forest District. The purpose of the review is to assist the public in establishing a long-range community vision for forest recreation in the area and to assist in developing the strategies required to implement that community vision. The review to this point has included the following elements:

<i>Review items</i>	<i>Where found in this document</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional context of recreation features and opportunities in the Bulkley TSA and adjacent forest districts 	See section 2.0 Regional Context & Table 2.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation features most attractive to recreationists in the Bulkley TSA with in-depth examination of trails, alpine areas, lakes and recreation sites as well as an overview of recreation on area rivers 	See section 3.3 Attractiveness Ratings, Tables 5.1, 6.1, 7.1 and Appendix F - attractiveness rating data for trails, alpine areas, lakes and recreation sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends in outdoor recreation, tourism and society demographics 	See section 4.0 Trends, for more detailed discussion refer to Appendix A – trends for individual activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing outdoor recreation use on crown lands 	See Section 4.2 and sections 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3 as well as data base for alpine areas, trails and lakes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues, opportunities and community vision related to outdoor recreation 	See sections 5.1/Trails, 6.1/Alpine areas, 7.1/Lakes, 8.1 Recreation sites and 9.1 Rivers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities 	See tables 5.2, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3 and sections 5.5 and 6.5 for discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous management direction - relevant management direction from the 1998 Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and the 1997 Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) 	See data base for alpine areas, trails, lakes and recreation sites and sections 5.2/trails, 6.2/alpine areas, 7.2/lakes, 8.2/recreation sites and 9.3/rivers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of future forest development on recreation opportunities 	See Map 8 and section 3.2.2 d – map methodology as well as 5.5.5/trails, 6.5.3/alpine areas 7.5/Lakes

2.0 Regional context of recreation in the Bulkley TSA

When developing a community vision for outdoor recreation management it is useful to consider which recreation features and opportunities are the most significant in the planning area. To do this, recreation features and opportunities in the Bulkley TSA were compared to those in the surrounding forest districts: The Kispiox, The Morice, The Kalum and the Fort St James forest districts. Highlights of the review are contained in the table below:

Table 2.1 Regional context of recreation in the Bulkley TSA

Forest District	Significant Recreation Features	Significant Recreation Opportunities
Bulkley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56 recorded hiking trails, majority leading to alpine areas • 26 separate alpine areas, many accessible by trail or road • High quality river fisheries with 2 class I waters • Both whitewater and easier paddling rivers • Community Forest Ski trails • Hudson Bay Mountain downhill skiing • Numerous small to moderate sized lakes and one large lake • 14 Recreation sites • Spectacular views throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day hiking/picnicking • Walking • Snowmobiling • Canoeing/Rafting/Kayaking • River and lake fishing • Mountain biking • Sightseeing/wildlife viewing • Backpacking/camping • Motor boating • Downhill/Cross-country ski/ski touring • Hunting
Kispiox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality river fisheries with one class I and six class II waters • Many spectacular views • Extensive cultural history – Battle Hill, Ksan, Totem poles, village sites, Telegraph trail, mining • Wildlife - moose, goats, grizzly • 14 Recreation sites and 12 hiking trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River and lake fishing • Canoe tripping • Canoeing/Rafting and Kayaking • Cultural/Ecotourism • Sightseeing/wildlife viewing • Day hiking • Backpacking/camping • Snowmobiling • Climbing/ice climbing • ATV use
Ft. St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive pattern of large and small lakes and rivers • Extensive wilderness areas in the north • Many spectacular views • 60 recreation sites, mainly on lakes • 6 managed recreation trails • Murray Ridge downhill and cross-country skiing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake and river fishing • Power boating • Wilderness travel/camping • Snowmobiling • Canoe tripping • Hunting/Guided hunting • Sightseeing/wildlife viewing • Downhill/Cross-country skiing • Hiking • Sailing/Ice boating
Morice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive areas pocketed by lakes, wilderness lake chain • High quality river and lake fisheries • 25 recreation sites • Climbing areas at Owen Hat and Howson Range • Morice Mountain Cross-country ski trails • Scenic, especially in the coastal mountains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River and lake fishing • Power boating • Snowmobiling • Cross-country skiing/ski touring • Hunting • Sightseeing/wildlife viewing • Lake & river canoe tripping • Camping • Day hiking
Kalum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality river (2 class I waters & 4 class II waters) and ocean fisheries • Hot springs and volcanic features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River, Ocean and Lake fishing • Sightseeing • Marine & Terrestrial mammal viewing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ocean coastline, coastal rainforests, glaciated peaks and lush river valleys • Onion Lake cross-country ski trails • Shames Mountain downhill area • Area with numerous small lakes • 16 managed trails, 10 to alpine areas • Cultural heritage • 12 recreation sites • Numerous terrestrial & marine mammals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power boating • Camping • Canoeing/kayaking • Snowmobiling • Downhill/Cross-country/Ski touring • Day hiking • Mountain biking • Hunting • Beach activities and swimming
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The five forest districts have a number of recreation features in common:

- High quality river fisheries. All five districts have Class 2 waters and all but the Morice have at least one river with Class 1 waters
- Many areas which are considered very scenic
- Numerous opportunities for wildlife viewing, the Kalum offering marine mammal viewing as well
- All but the Kispiox and Morice have downhill ski areas

Features which are significant when the Bulkley is compared with the four adjacent forest districts:

- A regionally significant trail network
- Many trails close to area communities suitable for day use
- By far the best access to alpine areas of all five districts for both motorized and non-motorized users
- A cross-country ski facility in the Community Forest which is arguably the best in northern BC
- A high potential for backpacking and camping in accessible and attractive alpine areas
- Significant opportunities for lake based recreation although many fewer lakes than either the Morice or Fort St. James districts
- A similar number of recreation sites when compared to the Kispiox and Kalum Districts but significantly fewer than both the Morice and Fort St. James districts
- Provincially significant river recreation opportunities for whitewater rafting and kayaking
- Internationally significant angling opportunities

3.0 Methodology

After considering the regional significance of recreation features and recreation opportunities in the Bulkley planning area it became clear that five features were of paramount importance in this area:

- *Trails*
- *Alpine Areas*
- *Lakes*
- *Recreation Sites*
- *Rivers*

In order to develop a community vision for recreation it was necessary to assemble available information related to each of these features.

3.1 Information assembly

A database was prepared to record information on each trail, alpine area, lake and recreation site. (See Appendix C for database characteristics and data base summary tables). Effort was focused on obtaining information, which would allow an objective review of issues, opportunities and relevant management direction for the planning area. Rivers have been considered separately, for reasons which are discussed in [Section 9](#) of this study.

Information that is recorded in the database for trails, alpine areas, lakes and recreation sites:

- Management direction related to recreation in the 1998 Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and the 1997 Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP)
- Recreation significance and recreation sensitivity of various features as defined in the 1999 Recreation Features Inventory (RFI)
- Description of bio-physical setting based on local guidebooks, interviews with local experts, information from satellite photos & air photos and personal knowledge
- Recreation attractiveness of each feature as determined through an objective analysis which is further described in [section 3.3](#) below
- Current or potential issues related to each feature
- Fish and wildlife values and any particularly sensitive species
- How the recreation opportunity could be expected to change with further forest development
- Levels and types of existing use based on anecdotal evidence from users

Information found only in trails database:

- Travel time from Smithers to trailhead and length and time required to reach alpine where applicable ([See section 3.2.2 below](#))
- Existing trail condition, also is it a trail or an old road
- Level of difficulty as determined from guidebooks and personal knowledge

Information found only in alpine areas database:

- Travel time from Smithers by air, (road and trail) or (road and cross-country travel)

Information found only in lakes database:

- Proposed lakes classification developed approximately 1997 by the Ministry of Environment
- LRMP direction concerning access management
- Travel time from Smithers by air, road and trail or road and cross-country travel

Information found only in recreation sites database:

- Travel time from Smithers by road
- Site conditions

3.2 Maps utilized

A series of existing maps were used to gather data and additional maps have been prepared to present information in graphic formats.

3.2.1 Existing maps used

Existing maps used to assist in gathering and analyzing information included:

- Recreation Features and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum maps from the 1999 district recreation inventory
- Resource Management Zone and Ecosystem network maps from the 1998 Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP)
- Summer & winter maps from the 1997 Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP)
- Telkwa Caribou Recovery Area – Recreation Access Zones 1998

3.2.2 Maps prepared to assist in analysis

a) Travel time map (Map 7)

A travel time (from Smithers) map was prepared to help evaluate the range and quality of recreation opportunities within various travel times of Smithers. This was based on the following average travel speeds: 80 kilometres per hour (KPH) by vehicle on roads, 4 KPH by foot on trails, 2 KPH by foot traveling cross-country.

b) Alpine areas (Part of base map used for all report maps)

Alpine and subalpine areas were selected from the forest cover information files and printed onto a base map. All separate alpine areas were named for discussion purposes. Generally these were large areas that had distinct topographic characteristics and were separated from adjacent mountainous areas by major rivers or large valleys.

c) Base map A base map was prepared which had the following information:

- Major roads, towns, Forest District Boundary
- 54 lakes, 57 trails, 26 alpine areas, 14 forest recreation sites

d) How forest development may change recreation opportunities (Map 8)

The major recreation consequences of forest development are:

- Increased access to previously remote areas
- Increased use of areas in which access becomes easier
- A larger area of motorized use and
- Visual change in the landscape caused by harvesting.

These changes are measured and may be mapped by a classification system called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). *Essentially this system provides a measure of*

the “degree of primitiveness” which exists in a given area. Both the BC Ministry of Forests and the US Forest service use this system to measure how recreation experiences vary depending on the remoteness, naturalness and social experience which may be found in an area – See below and Appendix E – ROS Standards for the factors involved in mapping ROS classes.

Summary of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes

- Primitive:*** more than 8 km from a road, more than 5000 ha in area, **no motorized use**, very high naturalness
- Semi-Primitive non-motorized:*** more than 1km from a road, more than 1000ha, **very little motorized**, few encounters
- Semi-Primitive motorized:*** more than 1km from road, more than 1000ha, **low motorized use**, few encounters
- Roaded Natural:*** up to 1km from road, **moderate motorized use**, moderate chance meeting others
- Roaded Modified:*** **high level motorized use**, low degree naturalness, high chance meeting others
- Rural:*** farmland, settlement patterns
- Urban:*** townsites

map was developed to help envision how opportunities would change with forest development mandated by the LRMP. A number of assumptions were necessary to develop a working map, these included:

- The map would depict ***projected winter ROS*** because winter recreation use would show the maximum expansion of areas experiencing motorized use and because the imbalance between non-motorized and motorized recreation use areas would be much greater in the winter than in the summer. For information regarding how summer ROS will change with forest development please refer to the project database for trails.
- The mapping process would use the motorized/non-motorized designations given during the 1997 Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) process. Generally this meant that areas specified as Non-motorized in the RAMP became ***Semi-primitive non-motorized*** in the ROS. In some cases, such as the Harold Price area, the non-motorized area is less than 1000 Ha in area and therefore was not classified as semi-primitive non-motorized (See appendix E ROS standards and summary box above for ROS class definitions). All other designations in the RAMP including Un-resolved, Non-designated and Future Process became ***Semi-Primitive Motorized*** areas as that is the actual on-the-ground result of these designations
- Alpine areas currently un-roaded will stay un-roaded
- All Integrated Resource Management (IRM) areas (from the 1998 Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), with the exception of CORE ecosystems will become roaded areas over time. Even if roads are deactivated they are generally still accessible by either ATV or snowmobile and would therefore be classified as either ***Roaded Modified*** or ***Semi-Primitive Motorized*** areas.
- The CORE ecosystems are generally classified as ***Roaded Natural*** because they are too small (< 1000 hectares) to be classified as ***Semi-Primitive Non-motorized***.
- Landscape Corridors, which are part of the biodiversity network, may not become roaded but will likely still be classified as ***Roaded Modified*** or ***Semi-***

Primitive Motorized areas because of their generally linear nature within larger motorized areas.

- All alpine areas that become accessible to snowmobiles through the development of nearby cutblocks will become *Semi-Primitive Motorized* during the winter season. Although, more rugged portions of some alpine areas may not be accessible to snow machines, generally speaking those portions are less than 1000 ha and would therefore will not classify as *Semi-Primitive Non-motorized*
- Discussion on how recreation on trails, alpine areas and at lakes may be effected by forest development is contained in sections 5.5/trails, 6.5.3/alpine areas, and 7.5/lakes.

3.3 Development of recreation attractiveness ratings

The Bulkley LRMP directs that the resource (*the land base*) be managed “to maintain or enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses across the biophysical settings of the area”. The RAMP directs that “both motorized and non-motorized experiences should exist within a range of travel distances and settings, including urban, semi-primitive and primitive”. To help meet these management directions, a ranking system was developed to evaluate the relative recreation attractiveness of trails, alpine areas and lakes. This system helps to identify the features likely to be the most popular and will help to ensure that opportunities are distributed equitably between users. Summary tables including the factors which led to the individual attractiveness rating for each trail, alpine area, lake and recreation site are contained in Appendix F. Tables 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1 summarize attractiveness ratings for trails, alpine areas and lakes respectively. Generally, it was felt that certain features made trails, for example, more attractive to the majority of users or potential users. These factors are listed below.

For trail users, the following factors were considered the most important:

- The range of scenic views
- Water features including lakes, ponds, streams and waterfalls
- Flower meadows, Glaciers, Historic features, Camping potential
- Level of difficulty and return trip travel time from Smithers
- Area significance and sensitivity from 1999 Recreation Features Inventory

For users of alpine areas, the following additional factors were also considered important:

- Ease of travel through alpine
- Ease of access to alpine
- Potential for wildlife and bird viewing

For lake users, a slightly different set of factors were considered including:

- Lakeshore scenic factors
- Potential for wildlife and bird viewing
- Existing facilities, campsite, boat launch, dock
- Ease of access, road, trail, cross-country

The basic rationale behind this ranking system is that the more features found in a specific area, the more attractive it will be to users or potential users.

Wildlife viewing was generally ranked higher in more remote areas, in which large mammal populations are known to exist. Birding potential was ranked higher in valley bottom areas with mixed forests and in areas with extensive ponds or wetlands.

Existing use levels were not included as a factor in rating attractiveness because existing use can be either a positive or a negative value depending on the individual. We also didn't consider

conflict between motorized and non-motorized users as a factor because co-existing use is often perceived negatively by non-motorized users and neutrally by motorized users.

The Attractiveness rating process is necessarily a subjective one. We tried to develop a process that would identify which features would be attractive to the greatest number of people. We recognize that these features will not necessarily be equally attractive to everyone. Those who are looking for remote or wilderness experiences will not be attracted to areas that are popular with large numbers of people.

When it comes to directing Ministry and financial resources it makes sense to use the limited resources available to provide recreation opportunities for the most people possible. Also when considering equitable access to recreation opportunities it is useful to know which opportunities could be considered most attractive.

We would like to be clear that this ranking system does not measure quality of the resource but rather attractiveness. For instance, under this ranking system remote lakes with limited access and no facilities have an inherent lower ability to attract use. This should not be taken to mean that they are of lower quality, just that they have a lower ability to attract large numbers of users.

4.0 *Trends, participation rates related to outdoor recreation*

The following narrative is based on the surveys and reports described below and local knowledge regarding recreation activities in the Bulkley TSA:

(1) *Emerging Markets for Outdoor Recreation in the United States*, 1995. Two telephone surveys conducted in 1994 and 1995 on 12,000 and 5,000 households respectively, the sixth in a series of National (US) surveys conducted since 1965 by various government agencies. The authors of the report on the 1995 US survey speculate that the three most popular activities, walking, sightseeing and visiting a beach owe at least some of their popularity to their low cost as compared to other outdoor recreation activities. Note: Enthusiasts is a term that refers to the most active third of all participants in a particular activity.

(2) *Ecotourism Market Assessment* by the ARA Consulting Group Inc, October 1994. In collaboration with the provinces of Alberta, BC and the Federal Government the study was intended to: profile existing and potential Ecotourism demand and to provide insight for government and industry on product development, enhancement and marketing

(3) *Major Parks Plan Study* by Greater Vancouver Regional District, November 1995. This study covered the Greater Vancouver Regional District and a number of regional districts in the lower Fraser Valley

(4) *Outdoor Recreation is important to British Columbians*, BC Parks, 1998. This article provides an overview of major trends in outdoor recreation identified in the regular annual telephone survey conducted for BC Parks. The survey is based on a random sample of 500 BC residents selected from across the province.

(5) *The Importance of Nature to Canadians: Survey Highlights*, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1999. Available at: www.ec.gc.ca/nature/survey.htm. A 1997 Environment Canada/Statistics Canada survey commissioned by 16 federal & provincial agencies of 86,951 Canadians aged 15 and over. Approximately 5500 surveys were completed by residents of BC. This survey is the fourth in a series of surveys begun in 1981 that originally focused on "The importance of wildlife to Canadians." The 1997 survey was expanded to examine a broad range of recreation activities in a natural environment. These included camping, bicycling and hiking amongst others. Results are broken down by activity type and by province. Results include user group profiles, participation rates and expressed interest in participation as a measure of growth potential for various activities. It should be noted that participation rates for many activities are often lower by a factor of 2 or 3 compared to other surveys. A combination of rigorous survey design and elimination of people under the age of 15 are likely responsible for a large part of this discrepancy.

(6) *Tourism Inventory, Marketing Strategy & Development Directions for the Stewart-Hyder Merchants Assoc*, Meredith & Associates, 1998. This report contains a summary of trends and factors affecting tourism development in northwestern BC.

Although there is considerable discrepancy between observed participation rates in these various surveys, there is consistency in the relative levels of participation between various outdoor recreation activities. This helps determine which activities are most popular. Changes in participation rates are somewhat more problematic with significant differences between the US and BC Parks surveys. Some general trends are seen but the dependability of the data is suspect. The US survey because it may not be applicable to BC, the BC Parks survey because of small sample size.

It should be noted that only outdoor recreation activities that would be of interest to the Ministry of Forests Bulkley TSA have been included in this analysis. This excludes organized sports and activities related to ocean recreation as well as some others with limited potential participation in this area such as mountain climbing.

It should be noted that none of these reports reflect the specific situation in the Bulkley Valley and can only be used to indicate general trends in society that may have a variable rate of applicability to our situation here.

The following section provides an overview of trends affecting outdoor recreation. **Appendix A** provides a detailed view of the trends affecting **individual outdoor recreation activities**.

4.1 Overall socio-economic trends that may affect outdoor recreation in the Bulkley TSA

The factors or trends which appear to be of most interest for strategic planning in this area include:

- 1) Outdoor Recreation Activities that have the highest levels of participation as measured by the various surveys we have available to us (See figures 1,2,3,4 following)
- 2) Outdoor Recreation Activities in which participation is increasing most quickly as indicated in the surveys we have reviewed. (See figures 5,6 following)
- 3) The affects which the aging population will have on outdoor recreation use and demand (See section 4.1.1 following)
- 4) The general increasing demand for outdoor recreation, particularly in the area of ecotourism (See section 4.1.2 following)
- 5) Our evaluation of existing and projected recreation use in the Bulkley TSA

4.1.1 Aging populations will have a significant impact on outdoor recreation in the coming decades - The segment of the Canadian population which will grow the most during the period 1996 through 2011 will be the 55-64 year olds - it will expand 77%. During the next two decades baby boomers will become mortgage and kid free with resulting more money and time to spend on travel. There will be a decreased emphasis on sports type activities such as skiing and baseball and an increased emphasis on recreational activities such as bird watching and walking - a switch from rigorous to non rigorous activity. It should be noted that new seniors are likely to be more active and fitter than previous generations and will likely continue to participate in active lifestyles albeit somewhat less strenuous ones than those they participated in when they were younger. Implications include a greater need for higher standard; gentle gradient trails and easier access to potential bird and wildlife viewing areas. The US survey and report, suggests there may be some connection between an aging population and an increasing interest in nature centres, historic sites, visitor centres and other learning opportunities. This suggests an increased potential for guided activities in the future. It is also suspected that many seniors will be interested in retiring to attractive locations in the country. If this trend develops there will be increased demand to recreation opportunities associated with it.

4.1.2 Demand for outdoor recreation will increase for the following reasons:

- The national population is growing
- Tourism is continuing to grow
- Urbanization of the population leads to increases in outdoor activity in non-urban areas and
- Outdoor recreation fits well with the growing fitness trend (*Emerging Markets for Outdoor Recreation*).
- The indoor working life of many people leads them to seek natural, outdoor settings for their leisure activities
- The greatest demand will be near population centres

Conference Board of Canada research shows that there is a high degree of interest among Canadians in visiting the northern and coastal areas of the country. A 1997 survey by the Royal Bank indicated that 67% of Canadians indicated vacations were their top spending choice. *Emerging Markets for Outdoor Recreation in the United States* gives the following reason why participation in outdoor recreation will continue to increase:

We see a growing psychological need for recreation in natural settings. Increasingly, the professional and personal lives of Americans are dominated by images on computer monitors and television screens. We expect people increasingly to seek natural, outdoor settings for their leisure activities.

The implications here are that there will be an increasing demand for the facilities managed by government agencies & municipalities including trails and recreation sites. Higher use levels may require a higher level of maintenance and could require development of additional facilities in the future. Higher use levels also have the potential to increase conflict between various types of users.

4.1.3 Ecotourism trends reported in the *Ecotourism Market Assessment 1994*² include:

- The travel trade has experienced significant growth in Ecotourism and expects it to continue;
- Soft adventure is expected to have one of the highest growth rates, this is defined as trips which are active, involved with nature, adventure, education while offering a comfort level appropriate for an aging population;
- The market indicates a desire for low-impact tourism which does not adversely impact the environment;
- Specific activities of highest interest to ecotourists are: walking/hiking, wildlife viewing, rafting/canoeing/kayaking, learning about cultures, cycling;
- Trips with more than one of the above activities are more desirable, specifically a combination of physical activity and a learning experience is the most desirable - travellers are seeking new experiences from which they can learn;
- Learning is often a highly desired component of Ecotourism including history, natural history, 1st nations culture and culture generally, related to this, is the desire of Ecotourism travellers to have quality guides who can help facilitate learning opportunities;
- The top six motivators for Ecotourism travellers are: wilderness and undisturbed nature; lakes and streams; being physically active; mountains, national or provincial parks; and experiencing new lifestyles;
- The natural setting is the most important factor in a Ecotourism experience;
- Any type of accommodation is acceptable as long as it is clean and comfortable

Since the Bulkley TSA has resources attractive to Ecotourism and a growing number of operators involved in the Ecotourism industry it can be expected that Ecotourism will grow in this area. The rate of growth is not possible to predict. The implications of growth in this industry are similar to those for the growth of outdoor recreation generally. However there may be a greater concern for how the forest is being managed, especially how timber harvesting affects viewscapes.

4.2 Outdoor recreation activities expected to be of importance in the Bulkley TSA

Outdoor Recreation activities have been divided into three tiers based on an analysis of the above information; Activities with high, moderate, and lower rates of current and expected participation.

4.2.1 Activities with high expected participation

- Walking
- Day hiking
- Snowmobiling
- Canoeing/ Rafting/Kayaking
- Fishing and
- Cross-country skiing

There are a number of secondary activities which will likely be part of the experience involved with these primary activities. These include sight seeing, wildlife viewing and bird watching. It is quite possible that Commercial Eco-tourism operations involving these activities will increase in the Bulkley Valley as well.

4.2.2 Activities with moderate expected participation

- Backpacking/camping
- Mountain biking
- Motor boating
- Picnicking
- Camping in Forest Recreation Sites
- Ski touring and
- Hunting

4.2.3 Activities with lower expected participation

or activities likely to be concentrated on land other than crown land

- Visiting a beach
- Swimming
- Running/jogging
- Climbing/ice climbing
- Horseback riding
- Off road driving

These activities may have a fair number of participants but don't utilize the forest land base very much or they may be specialized activities with only a few participants. *Climbing* opportunities are rare in the Bulkley TSA as there are few suitable locations. There are some opportunities for *ice climbing* but this will always be an activity with a very limited number of participants.

Table 4.1 Implications of trends for specific outdoor recreation activities

<p><i>Walking and Day hiking</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Hiking will remain popular as it appeals to people of all ages • An aging population will likely prefer higher maintained trails, with low to moderate levels of difficulty • Very steep and/or rough trails will be less attractive to older participants • Walking will continue to be one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities • It can be expected that the greatest demand for walking and day hiking opportunities will be near urban areas such as the Telkwa and Smithers trails systems, the Tyhee Park trails and the Twin Falls trail • Walking trails which provide access to sightseeing, wildlife viewing and bird watching opportunities will be popular • New walking trails associated with Forest Recreation sites could make these sites more popular and increase their use levels • Near urban trails will likely continue to be used for running, jogging and bicycling activities • Demand for service and facilities can be expected to continue to grow
<p><i>ATV and Snowmobile use</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile use and ATV will continue to expand into new areas as access opportunities develop • Continuing increases in both motorized and non-motorized recreation will lead to an ongoing need for dialogue between the two user groups • There may be a conflict between LRMP direction to maintain the northern part of the district in “primitive conditions and the desire by an increasing number of snowmobilers to expand their area of use and experience new areas.
<p><i>Freshwater fishing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to preserve a variety of fishing opportunities for the large part of the population who participates in this activity; • This will require that lakes have a variety of access options, road, trail and cross-country or air • Angling use plans for area rivers are required to ensure sustainable use of fishing resources, Ministry of Forests input to these plans would include access management strategies
<p><i>Canoeing, Kayaking and rafting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a high anticipated growth in these water sports, along with high levels of fishing and some jet boat\jet ski use it is evident that there is a need for comprehensive river management plans which would address access and launching facilities, use levels, camping opportunities, and perhaps appropriate uses. These would require multi-agency participation along with participation from users and other interested stakeholder; • It is possible that the inherent desire of people to visit a beach (One of the most highly rated recreation activities), is a reflection of people’s desire to recreate near water and this could fuel growth of river and lake based recreation in the future
<p><i>Mountain biking</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing levels of mountain bike use has led to conflict between user groups in other areas. Maintaining communication between user groups will help reduce the potential for future conflict in this area. • Biking trails accessible from urban areas will receive the highest levels of use • The more “extreme” mountain biking trails will likely see decreasing use as the population ages

<p><i>Sightseeing, wildlife viewing and bird watching</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since these activities are all popular with all age groups, particularly seniors, participation will grow significantly in the future; • Any new trails should give a high priority to incorporating these types of opportunities; • Since bird watching has the greatest appeal to seniors, it can be anticipated that high standard trails near lakes, marshes and valley bottom mixed forests where bird populations are high, would be popular • Any trail upgrading or relocation should consider whether these activities can be incorporated; • If any walking trails are considered near a Forest Recreation site, locations offering these activities should have a high priority • Since sightseeing is a secondary activity for many if not most outdoor recreation activities it is understandable that a large part of the outdoor recreation population has a high degree of concern for the visual landscape. This suggests that visual landscape management will become even more important in the future • BC residents have one of the highest rates of participation in wildlife viewing in the country. This evidently high level of interest indicates that high quality viewing opportunities such as the Babine Weir area will likely receive growing levels of use. In the case of the Weir area this indicates a need to work with other agencies to develop management approaches which minimize bear/human conflict and ensure sustainable recreation resource use in the area
<p><i>Motor boating</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any new access to area rivers and lakes should be part of an overall lake or river management plan, as discussed above, to ensure that a variety of opportunities remain for both motorized and non-motorized recreation
<p><i>Back packing and primitive camping</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although good backpacking opportunities exist in the TSA and British Columbia residents have a high participation rate in this activity, there appears to be low use here. It is likely use will grow in the future and efforts should be made to ensure a range of primitive camping opportunities is maintained through the TSA • Areas which offer a wilderness backpacking experience are likely to become more popular
<p><i>Forest recreation site camping and picnicking</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreationists often look for a variety of opportunities, increased opportunities provided by docks, or trails at recreation sites would likely increase use

<p><i>Cross-country skiing and ski touring</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest levels of cross-country skiing use will likely continue to be on the set tracks in the Community Forest and on private land in the Bulkley Valley • The number of people ski touring in alpine back country areas is likely to grow in the short term but may decrease as the population ages • Management strategies are required to ensure a range of winter non-motorized back country recreation opportunities are maintained
<p><i>Ecotourism</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A growth in ecotourism will be accompanied by growing levels of concern for forest management activities, particularly those associated with visual landscape management • Eco-tourists will seek opportunities offering a wilderness atmosphere with rivers, lakes, mountains and opportunities to learn about natural and cultural heritage

5.0 Trails recreation management

5.1 Issues, Opportunities and community vision

- **Trails issue #1** Many recreation users feel a fair and equitable balance of recreation opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation users has yet to be established.
• **Opportunity:** An opportunity exists to review the existing situation and address any imbalances found through new management strategies.
A possible community vision: Informed choices now provide opportunities of similar quality for both motorized and non-motorized trail users.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See Section 7.5 Alpine strategies
- **Issue #2:** A growing number of ATV users are actively expanding their use of the land base. In some cases ATVs are being used in fragile environments and some damage is occurring.
Opportunity: The opportunity exists to develop an information and education program which will help ATV users find appropriate places to recreate and reduce the impact of ATV use on sensitive terrain
A possible community vision: ATV users access information which allows them to use attractive and appropriate areas. Environmentally damaging use of ATVs has decreased.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 6.5.2
- **Issue #3:** A number of trends point to a growing demand for additional near-urban trails which may be used for regular outdoor recreation activities such as walking, jogging, bicycling, birding, and nature study.
Opportunity: the opportunity exists to expand near urban trails and connections to nearby trails in provincial forests
A possible community vision: A network of near-urban and inter-urban trails provides a high quality of life for residents who appreciate accessible recreation opportunities near home. Agencies and user groups are working towards expanding near-urban trail opportunities and linking urban trails with nearby trails in provincial forests.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 6.5.3
- **Issue #4:** Canadian demographics indicate a large increase in the proportion of our population that is senior citizens. These active seniors will have a greater need for higher standard; gentle gradient trails and easier access to potential bird and wildlife viewing areas.
Opportunity: The opportunity exists to proactively plan for the trail recreation needs of a fast growing population of seniors.
A Possible community vision: Numerous well-maintained trails suitable for seniors are found within an hour's drive of Bulkley Valley communities. A high priority is placed on maintaining and upgrading trails suitable for seniors and new trails suitable for seniors have a higher priority than new trails un-suitable for seniors.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 6.5.4
- **Trails issue #5:** Forest development is going to proceed in areas near existing recreation trails and has the potential to negatively impact recreation experiences.
Opportunity: the opportunity exists to develop strategies which will minimize development impact on the recreation experience
A possible community vision: Forest development and timber harvesting has either a positive or neutral affect on the recreation use of trails.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 5.6.5

- **Issue #6:** The Bulkley TSA (formerly the Bulkley Forest District) has over 45 recreation trails on provincial forest land; many of these trails have had little maintenance in recent years.
Opportunity: The opportunity exists to safeguard this valuable resource by developing and funding a trails maintenance program.
A possible community vision: Well-maintained trails in the Bulkley TSA enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses. Funding priorities for trail inventory, maintenance and new trail development are established and ensure that all available resources are used wisely.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 6.5.6
- **Issue #7:** Demand for new trails has the potential to utilize scarce resources required for maintenance or up-grading of highly used existing trails.
Opportunity: The opportunity exists for local user groups and government agencies to establish accepted priorities for trails that funding agencies would use to evaluate where to allocate limited resources.
A possible community vision: Proposals for new trails are evaluated against the needs for funding on-going maintenance and up grading of existing trails as well as over-all socio-economic benefits.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 6.5.7
- **Issue #8:** Current information on trail conditions, trailhead locations, trail features and trail distances is often not easily available for trail users.
Opportunity: The opportunity exists to continue up-dating the database prepared for this project to maintain current information.
A Possible community vision: Local people and area visitors can easily access current information regarding a trail they are interested in using.
Potential strategies to meet this community vision: See section 6.5.8

Conflicts between user groups have occurred and future conflicts can be anticipated as the numbers of users and types of recreation use continues to grow.
For detailed discussion of this issue see Issue #2 in the Alpine section of this study.

5.2 Background information

5.2.1 LRMP direction regarding trails

“Managing recreational access is important to provide a variety of experiences and to minimize the impact of human disturbance on fish, wildlife and other environmental resource”

“In sensitive terrain, ATV (use) will be permitted on identified hard surface roads and trails only - sensitive terrain may include land in the alpine and subalpine, sensitive wetlands and designated recreational trails”

“ Road deactivation to minimize off-road vehicle damage to fragile ecosystems may be necessary in some circumstances”

“ Snowmobiles are permitted except where otherwise specified in the RAMP”

“ Tourism and outdoor recreation is a growing industry in the Bulkley Plan Area (previously the Bulkley Forest District). It is thus very important to manage this resource to maintain or enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses across the biophysical settings of the area”

Planning unit objectives in the LRMP often give specific management direction for individual trails or for groups of trails within a plan unit. These specific management directions are recorded in the project database. Database characteristics are recorded in **Appendix C** and a sample table has been printed showing trail data which may be of interest to the general reader.

5.2.2 RAMP direction regarding trails

A set of sixteen principles regarding recreational access management were developed by the LRMP Consensus Management Direction - Recreational Access User Sub-Committee (1997), to help guide decision-making with respect to the creation, management and deactivation of access used for recreational purposes (For a complete copy of these principles see **Appendix D**)

The principles which relate directly to trail use include:

- Motorized vehicles do not belong in some areas
- Restrictions on motorized recreational use in some areas should be qualitatively balanced with assured motorized vehicle access in other areas
- Planning must reflect that motorized use can have an impact (negative) on non-motorized users
- Both motorized and non-motorized experiences should exist within a range of travel distances and settings, including urban, semi-primitive and primitive
- Snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles must be registered and identifiable
- Where existing trails are negatively impacting a sensitive area or ecosystem, trails should be re-routed or upgraded

The RAMP process also designated a number of trails for either motorized or non-motorized access in both summer in winter (See tables 6.2 & 6.3 on the following pages). A number of additional trails are non-designated, left to be decided in future processes, or in the case of Seaton Basin, un-resolved as to use designation. All of these designations are noted in the sample trails table found in Appendix C.

Important note: non-motorized trail designation does not exclude motorized mineral exploration and development nor forestry development unless the trail is in a Provincial Parks.

5.2.3 Trail characteristics and attractiveness ratings

As described in section 3.3 (recreation attractiveness ratings), trails in the Bulkley TSA have been rated according to how attractive they are judged to be.

- Trails to attractive alpine areas are one of the most important recreation features of the Bulkley TSA. More than two thirds of all trails lead to alpine/subalpine areas. Eleven of sixteen trails in the **very high** Attractiveness rating and nine of sixteen trails in the **high** Attractiveness rating either lead to alpine or provide easy access to alpine at their end points (For individual trail attractiveness ratings see table 5.1 on the following page, for a summary table showing individual factors for each trail see Appendix F). No other district in the Prince Rupert Forest Region offers the number and variety of trails to alpine that the Bulkley TSA has.
- Trails and roads which allow motorized access to scenic areas are also very important to area users: (*numbers are trail numbers used on project maps and in database*)
 - 18) Winfield Plateau/Microwave (summer and winter)
 - 50) Onion Mountain (winter)
 - 25) Telkwa Pass Road (summer and winter)
 - 38) McDowell Lake (summer)
 - 7) Toboggan Creek Road (summer and winter)
 - 55) Dome Mountain Trail (summer and winter)
 - 35) Harold Price Snowmobile Route (winter)
 - 31) Boulder Creek Road (summer and winter)
 - 54) Guess Lake Road (summer and winter)
 - 29) Rocky Ridge Road (summer and winter)
- A third group of trails are highly valued because they are in the valley bottom and close to the major population centers. These include:
 - 1) Twin Falls
 - 41) Smithers Perimeter trail
 - 42) Telkwa Community trails
 - 40) Malkow Lookout
 - 39) Call Lake trails
 - 28) Toboggan Creek Hatchery
 - 27) Jack Mould Lake

- Finally the Chris Dahlie Ski trails (trail # 4) in the Community Forest in combination with the Bookfink Cross-Country Lodge likely provide the best cross-country skiing resource in northern British Columbia.

Table 5.1 Trail Attractiveness Ratings

Very High Attractiveness		Rating Points	Moderate Attractiveness		Rating Points
# from database	Trail Name		# from database	Trail Name	
47)	Silver King Basin	26*	35)	Harold Price – snowmobile trail	15
18)	Winfield Plateau	26	14)	Mt Leach	15
3)	Crater Lake	25	24)	Dominion Basin	15
50)	Onion Mountain	23	56)	French Peak	15
25)	Telkwa Pass Road	23	11)	Caribou Mountain South	15
46)	McCabe	22*	12)	Caribou Mountain North	15
1)	Twin Falls	21	54)	Guess Lake Road	15
52)	Higgins Creek	21*	31)	Boulder Creek Road	14
44)	Lyon Creek	21*	22)	Camel Humps	14
8)	Silvern Lake	21	33)	Seaton Basin	14
51)	Cronin Creek	20*	15)	Louis/Bud/Sandstone	14
42)	Telkwa Community Trails	20	9)	Elliot Creek	13
41)	Smithers Perimeter Trail	20	10)	Passby Creek	13
2)	Glacier Gulch	19	20)	Webster Lake	13
49)	Little Joe Lakes	19*	29)	Rocky Ridge Road	13
4)	Community Forest Ski Trails	XX			
High Attractiveness		Rating Points	Low Attractiveness		Rating Points
# from database	Trail Name		# from database	Trail Name	
48)	Fletcher/ Gardiner	18*	34)	Moricetown to Cronin	12
38)	McDowell Lake	18	26)	Goat horn east	12
36)	Harold Price – Meed route	18	6)	Simpson Creek Road	11**
27)	Jack Mould Lake	18	32)	Seaton Ridge	11
21)	Hankin Plateau	17	13)	McDonnell Lake	11
45)	Harvey Mountain	16	30)	Corya Creek	10
43)	Duckwing Lake	16	16)	Hankin Lookout	10
40)	Malkow Lookout	16	37)	Fort Babine Trail	6
39)	Call Lake trails	16*	53)	Canyon Creek Ski Trails	XX
23)	Mooseskin Johnny	16			
19)	Hunter Basin	16			
17)	Ashman Ridge	16			
7)	Toboggan Creek Road	16			
28)	Toboggan Creek Hatchery	16			
55)	Dome Mountain Trail	16			
5)	Community Forest Nature Trail	16			

*Trails within Provincial Parks

** This ranking would change to moderate or High if the Hudson Bay Mountain trail initiative joins this old road to a number of other trails in the area

XX Single purpose ski trails do not rank properly with the rating system used, so these two trails have been ranked based on our personal knowledge of their attractiveness

Summary tables including the factors which led to the individual attractiveness rating for each trail, alpine area, lake and recreation site are contained in [Appendix F](#)

5.3 Existing trail use

5.3.1 Summer recreation use of trails

The major non-motorized summer uses of trails in the Bulkley TSA are day hiking, walking and mountain biking. Although back packing and camping occur, they are definitely of lower use levels. The main motorized uses are ATV and 4x4 use for pleasure driving.

5.3.2 Winter recreation use of trails

In the Bulkley TSA major winter recreation uses of trails include:

- Snowmobiling
- Cross-country skiing and ski touring
- Low levels of snow shoeing also occurs

5.4 Trends in outdoor recreation related to trails

- Day Hiking will remain popular as it appeals to people of all ages
- An aging population will likely prefer higher maintained trails, with low to moderate levels of difficulty
- Very steep and/or rough trails will be less attractive to older participants
- Walking will continue to be one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities
- It can be expected that the greatest demand for walking and day hiking opportunities will be near urban areas such as the Telkwa and Smithers trails systems, the Tyhee Park trails and the Twin Falls trail
- Walking trails which provide access to sightseeing, wildlife viewing and bird watching opportunities will be popular
- Near urban trails will likely continue to be used for running, jogging and bicycling activities
- Demand for service and facilities can be expected to continue to grow
- Continuing increases in both motorized and non-motorized recreation will lead to an ongoing need for dialogue between the two user groups
- Growing levels of mountain bike use has led to conflict between user groups in other areas. Maintaining communication between user groups will help reduce the potential for future conflict in this area.
- Biking trails accessible from urban areas will receive the highest levels of use
- The more “extreme” mountain biking trails will likely see decreasing use as the population ages

5.5 Discussion of issues

5.5.1 Balance of motorized & non-motorized opportunities in summer

One way of evaluating whether opportunities are equitably distributed between motorized and non-motorized users is to consider trail attractiveness rankings (See Table 5.1 above and Map 2 Summer Recreation trails).

Although a majority of the most attractive trails are in the Non-motorized category, two of the top five are motorized and a third (Crater Lake), allows people to drive to the alpine to start their hike so it could be said that three of the top five destinations are accessible by motorized travel.

Of the thirty-two trails in the “very high” and “high” attractiveness rankings, eight are in parks, two are community trail networks, and three are single purpose trails (Dahlie Ski trails, Comfor Nature trail, Toboggan Creek Hatchery). Counting these trails and nine

others given summer non-motorized status during either the RAMP process or the Caribou Recovery Plan, twenty-two trails exclude motorized use. Two trails in the North Telkwa Range (Hunter Basin and Hankin Plateau) currently exclude all uses except hiking which is only allowed between July 15 and September 15. Four trails received no summer use designation (non-designated) under the RAMP, one trail has motorized and non-motorized use in different areas and four allow motorized use. The four trails that allow motorized use are actually all roads: (*Number & names from database*)

- 7) Toboggan Creek Road
- 18) Winfield Plateau/Microwave
- 25) Telkwa Pass Road
- 55) Dome Mountain Road

Of the four trails that were not designated for either motorized or non-motorized use under the RAMP process, none are suitable for designating for motorized use:

- 1) Twin Falls
- 2) Glacier Gulch
- 17) Ashman Ridge
- 43) Duckwing Lake

In summary, there are few trails offered for summer-motorized use. This may be partially countered by the extensive network of logging roads that reaches many areas of the TSA and is available for ATV and 4x4 use.

In the summer, motorized users have fewer opportunities to access alpine areas than non-motorized recreation users. Virtually all motorized access occurs on old mining roads. The LRMP states that **ATV use will be permitted on identified hard surface roads and trails only in sensitive terrain** – this would include the many alpine/subalpine areas where slow growing vegetation is very sensitive to motorized use. For this reason it would seem inappropriate to create new opportunities for summer motorized access to alpine areas.

In discussion with Ministry of Environment staff it appears that ATV use in the Bulkley area is growing. It seems that some riders searching for new terrain are viewing wet riparian areas and bogs as a challenging environment to operate their machines in. Also, despite direction to the contrary in the LRMP, some ATV use is occurring in alpine areas away from hard surface roads. Examples of this cited by MOE staff include the Bait Range, Goathorn Meadows, Seaton Basin, Gosnell Meadows and Hunter Basin. This points to the need for an educational program and possibly some action to enforce the LRMP prohibition against operating ATV’s in “sensitive environments.”

Suggested Action – Initially, a map of areas for ATV use accompanied by educational materials designed to discourage ATV use in sensitive areas. See section 5.5.2. In the longer term allocation of recreation opportunities across the land base would provide a more concrete resolution of this issue (section 6.5)

Table 5.2 Existing Summer motorized & non-motorized trail recreation opportunities
Sorted by attractiveness rating

Trail Trail name & number from project database	Attractiveness rating & points	RAMP SUMMER	Travel time to trailhead
47) Silver King Basin	Very High – 26	NM	< 30 minutes

18) Winfield Plateau	Very High – 26	MO	30 minutes to 1 hour
3) Crater Lake	Very High – 25	NM	< 30 minutes
50) Onion Mountain	Very High – 23	NM-LRMP**	30 minutes to 1 hour
25) Telkwa Pass Road	Very High – 23	MO	< 30 minutes
46) McCabe	Very High – 22	NM	< 30 minutes
1) Twin Falls	Very High – 21	ND	< 30 minutes
52) Higgins Creek	Very High – 21	NM**	30 minutes to 1 hour
44) Lyon Creek	Very High – 21	NM	
8) Silvern Lakes	Very High – 21	NM	< 30 minutes
51) Cronin Creek	Very High – 20	NM**	30 minutes to 1 hour
42) Telkwa Community trails	Very High – 20	NM	< 30 minutes
41) Smithers Perimeter trail	Very High – 20	NM	< 30 minutes
2) Glacier Gulch	Very High – 19	ND	< 30 minutes
49) Little Joe Lakes	Very High – 19	NM	30 minutes to 1 hour
4) Chris Dahlie ski trails	Very High – XX	NM	< 30 minutes
48) Fletcher Gardiner	High – 18	NM	< 30 minutes
38) McDowell Lake	High – 18	MO/NM	< 30 minutes
36) Harold Price	High – 18	NM	30 minutes to 1 hour
27) Jack Mould Lake	High – 18	NM	30 minutes to 1 hour
21) Hankin Plateau	High – 17	*No access	30 minutes to 1 hour
45) Harvey Mountain	High – 16	NM	< 30 minutes
43) Duckwing Lake	High – 16	ND	30 minutes to 1 hour
40) Malkow Lookout	High – 16	NM	< 30 minutes
39) Call Lake trails	High – 16	NM	< 30 minutes
23) Mooseskin Johnny	High – 16	*Upper end of road NM	30 minutes to 1 hour
19) Hunter Basin	High – 16	*No access	30 minutes to 1 hour
17) Ashman Ridge	High – 16	ND	30 minutes to 1 hour
7) Toboggan Creek Road	High – 16	MO	< 30 minutes
28) Toboggan Hatchery	High – 16	NM	< 30 minutes
55) Dome Mountain	High – 16	MO	30 minutes to 1 hour
5) Comfor Nature Trail	High – 16	NM	< 30 minutes

* From 1998 Caribou Recovery Plan – voluntary requirements

5.5.2 Balance of motorized & non-motorized opportunities in winter

Much of winter trail use is by recreationists intent on reaching open subalpine forest and alpine areas which provide ideal areas for snowmobiling and ski touring. The most important issue is competition between motorized and non-motorized users for trails which provide access to the alpine.

One way of determining whether opportunities are equitably distributed between motorized and non-motorized users is to consider trail attractiveness rankings. Of the twenty-eight trails considered to be most attractive to winter recreation users: (See Table 6.3 below and Map 3 - Winter recreation trails)

- 3 trails are designated Motorized
- 12 trails are designated Non-motorized
- 6 received no designation under the RAMP process
- 2 are designated Future Plan
- 1 is both Motorized and Non-motorized
- 1 is unresolved
- 3 are included in the Caribou Recovery Plan voluntary use exclusion area

It would appear at first that there is greater opportunity for non-motorized winter recreation but this is not the case. All six of the non-designated trails receive motorized use, as well as the unresolved Seaton Basin area. In addition the Caribou Mountain trails will likely receive snow machine use as cut blocks in the Serb valley reach close to treeline. When these additional areas are taken into consideration, the numbers seem to indicate that an approximate balance would exist between motorized and non-motorized opportunities.

However, the non-motorized areas are concentrated in a few areas: the Babine Mountains Provincial Park; portions of the Hudson Bay Mountain Range; Ashman ridge and the southern parts of the Telkwa Ranges which are Non-motorized as part of the Caribou Recovery Plan. Ski tourers feel there is no high-quality alpine touring available to them within day trip distance of Smithers. Areas for motorized winter recreation are spread through the Bulkley TSA.

In the future, additional alpine areas will become accessible through cutblocks occurring close to treeline. Given status quo management direction these new areas will become motorized use areas if they are appealing to snowmobilers.

In section 6.0 (Alpine areas), a calculation of actual area available for motorized and non-motorized use is presented and further discussion of possible management of opportunities is outlined.

Suggested Action: Since winter trail use is so strongly linked to use of alpine areas, suggested strategies for dealing with the competition between motorized and non-motorized users are detailed in that section of this study (See section 6.5.2).

Table 5.3 Existing winter motorized & non-motorized trail recreation opportunities (Sorted by trail attractiveness ratings)

Trail name & number from data base	Attractiveness rating	Travel time to trailhead	RAMP Winter
3) Crater Lake	Very High	< 30 minutes	NM
18) Winfield Plateau/ Microwave	Very High	30 minutes to 1 hour	M0
50) Onion Mountain	Very High	30 minutes to 1 hours	M0
46) McCabe*	Very High	< 30 minutes	NM
52) Higgins Creek*	Very High	30 minutes to 1 hour	NM except permits
44) Lyon Creek*	Very High	30 minutes to 1 hour	NM
51) Cronin Creek*	Very High	30 minutes to 1 hours	NM except permits
47) Silver King Basin*	Very High	< 30 minutes	NM
49) Little Joe Lakes*	Very High	30 minutes to 1 hour	NM
8) Silvern Lakes	Very High	< 30 minutes	ND
17) Ashman Ridge	High	30 minutes to 1 hour	NM
16) Hankin Plateau	High	30 minutes to 1 hour	Exclusion CRP**
19) Hunter Basin	High	30 minutes to 1 hour	Exclusion CRP**
7) Toboggan Creek Road	High	< 30 minutes	ND
55) Dome Mountain Trail	High	30 minutes to 1 hour	M0
35) & 36) Harold Price	High	30 minutes to 1 hours	MO & NM
14) Mt Leach	Moderate	< 30 minutes	ND
33) Seaton Basin	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	UR
29) Rocky Ridge Road	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	ND
56) French Peak	Moderate	> 1.5 hours	ND
31) Boulder Creek Road	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	ND
9) Elliot Creek	Moderate	< 30 minutes	NM
20) Webster Lake	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	Exclusion CRP**
24) Dominion Basin	Moderate	> 1.5 hours	NM – CRP**
11) Caribou Mountain South	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	FUTURE PLAN
12) Caribou Mountain North	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	FUTURE PLAN
22) Camel Humps	Moderate	> 1.5 hours	Exclusion/NM – CRP**
10) Passby Creek	Moderate	30 minutes to 1 hour	NM

* Trails in Babine Mountains Provincial Park ** Caribou Recovery Plan 1998

5.5.3 Growing recreation use of near-urban trails

The trends analysis points out that walkers, hikers, joggers, bicyclists and physical fitness enthusiasts all desire trails close to their community for regular outdoor recreation activities. There is specific direction in the LRMP which could help meet this need:

*“Where possible, provide opportunity to establish new trails that link the Settlement Zone and the Agriculture/Wildlife Zone to IRM Zone” and
“Encourage a network of hiking trails” on Hudson Bay Mountain*

The Bottom Up (Hudson Bay Mountain) trails planning group obviously recognizes this need and is trying to assist the community by developing a trails network on the slope of the range that faces the town (*in the years 1999, 2000, 2001*).

At the present time, the following trails are close enough to local communities to be useful for daily or regular outdoor recreation activities: (*Trail name & number from database*)

- 1) Glacier Gulch - steep and rough
- 4) ComFor Ski trails - used by many skiers either daily or regularly
- 5) ComFor Nature - within 10-15 minutes of town
- 7) Toboggan Creek Road - good for walking, running on lower part
- 39) Call Lake - used regularly by neighborhood residents
- 41) Smithers Perimeter - good for walking, running, cycling, birding
- 42) Telkwa Community - good for walking, running, cycling, birding

With the possible exception of the Glacier Gulch trail, these trails all have high levels of local use. Extensions or connections between these trails would also receive high levels of use. Such trails would be even more popular if they offered opportunities for bird watching, wildlife viewing, sightseeing and picnicking – activities which all have very high rates of participation in the BC population.

Suggested action:

- Trails near urban areas, on crown lands, will have a high priority for maintenance work when funds are available. Setting maintenance priorities will be done once trail inventory is completed (See Section 5.6.6) In the event that funds are available before inventory work is completed, the priority list for completing inventory (See Appendix B) can be used as a guide for identifying high priority trails requiring maintenance.
- Various groups have raised the concept of multi-use connector trails between communities in the valley from time to time. Such trails would be of great benefit to area residents, they would attract new residents to the valley through improved quality of living and they could encourage many tourists, who often travel with bicycles, to stay longer in the valley.

5.5.4 Trails most suitable for an aging population

The following table is intended to identify the trails within an hours travel time of Smithers that will likely attract the highest levels of use by older people. Generally, these trails are:

- In well maintained condition
- Easy to moderate difficulty
- Ranked very high or high in our trail Attractiveness ratings

Twenty trails or 35% of all trails in the plan area are very suitable for an aging population (See Map 1 - Trails suitable for an aging population and Table 5.4 - Trails suitable for an aging population below). All twenty of these trails are within one hours travel time of Smithers, most of them within 30 minutes. Eight of these trails provide access to alpine areas. Of those eight, four are in the Babine Mountains Provincial Park. Of the four that remain, two provide driving access

to alpine (Crater Lake and Winfield Plateau) and two provide hiking access (Silvern Lakes and Harold Price Meed route).

A number of other routes to alpine could be as attractive as these with brushing, water diversion or boardwalks in wet areas, and relocation of trails to reduce steep grades. Trails in this category include Hankin Plateau, Hunters Basin, Ashman Ridge, French Peak, Mt Leach, and Seaton Basin. Other trails could be more attractive to older people if the distance to alpine was reduced by future forest development work and maintenance/upgrading were carried out. These include Toboggan Creek Road, Caribou Mountain trails, Boulder Creek Road, Elliot Creek and Passby Creek.

Suggested action:

- Trails listed in table 5.4 below should have a high priority for maintenance when funds are available. Setting maintenance priorities will be done once trail inventory is completed (See Section 5.5.4) In the event that funds are available before inventory work is completed, cross-referencing Table 5.4 below, with the priority list for completing inventory (See Appendix B) should help identify high priority trails.

Table 5.4 Trails suitable for an aging population

Sorted by a combination of travel time & attractiveness rating

Trail Name	Travel time to trailhead	Condition	Difficulty	Attractiveness
1) Twin Falls	<30 minutes	Good, flat, dry	Easy	Very High
3) Crater Lake	<30 minutes	Good, some mud, often snow banks	Easy (steep start unless drive to top of T bar)	Very High
4) Chris Dahlie Ski trails	< 30 minutes	Well groomed	Variety	Very High
8) Silvern Lakes	< 30 minutes	Generally good, some sections steep grade	Easy to Moderate	Very High
25) Telkwa Pass Road	< 30 minutes	4x4 access	Easy	Very High
41) Smithers Perimeter trail*	< 30 minutes	Good	Easy	Very High
42) Telkwa Trails*	< 30 minutes	Good	Easy	Very High
44) Lyon Creek trail*	< 30 minutes	Some mud, short sections steep grade	Easy to Moderate	Very High
46) McCabe trail*	< 30 minutes	Good	Easy to Moderate	Very High
47) Silver King Basin*	< 30 minutes	Good, old road	Easy	Very High
5) Comfor Nature Trail	< 30 minutes	Good	Easy	High
28) Toboggan Ck. Hatchery*	< 30 minutes	Good, some mud	Easy	High
38) McDowell Lake	< 30 minutes	Old roads, good	Easy	High
39) Call Lake*	< 30 minutes	Generally good	Easy	High
40) Malkow Lookout	< 30 minutes	Good, some mud	Easy	High
18) Winfield Plateau	30 minutes to 1 hours	4x4 access	Easy	Very High
49) Little Joe Lakes*	30 minutes to 1 hour	Good, some steeper sections	Easy to Moderate	Very High
27) Jack Mould Lake	30 minutes to 1 hour	Good, flat	Easy	High
36) Harold Price Meed trail	30 minutes to 1 hour	Good, some wet areas	Easy to Moderate	High
43) Duckwing Lake	30 minutes to 1 hour	Short distance	Easy	High

* Roughly one third of these trails are managed by agencies other than the Ministry of Forests – These agencies include: BC Parks, The Town of Smithers, The Village of Telkwa and the Toboggan Creek Hatchery. It is therefore important that these organizations are in agreement with the strategies that will be expressed in the final version of this plan.

5.5.5 Forest development & trail recreation opportunities

The most important affect of forestry development on trail recreation opportunities is a reduction in the number and size of primitive areas available for recreation activity (Compare maps 8 – Projected ROS and 9 – ROS 1999). The total area classified as Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized is reduced and the total area classified as Semi-Primitive Motorized and Roded Modified is increased. (For definition of Semi-primitive, Primitive etc. see Appendix E)

A small number of trails or roads will revert to a more natural state due to directions contained in the LRMP. These include:

- Trails in the community forest currently classified as Roded Modified (RM) will become Roded Natural (RN) due to direction that development plans should *minimize visual impact on other users*
- The portion of the Boulder Creek road which remains above harvested areas currently classified as RM will become RN as time passes and the evidence of mining activity becomes less visible.

Undisturbed settings decrease significantly in total area as forest development occurs. Ways to counter this trend include identifying further areas to classify as non-motorized, developing an agreement between motorized and non-motorized users to use areas at different times or using Recreation Opportunity classes as the basis for zoning recreation opportunities throughout the land base. This is discussed further in the strategies for alpine areas.

More Accessible alpine areas

Another consequence of forest development will be the possibility that currently inaccessible alpine areas will be within reach of new trails of relatively short length (See Map 8). The areas involved include: (*Numbers from the database*)

- 1) The Sicintine Ranges
- 2), 4), 5) The Bait Ranges
- 8) Netalzul Peak and the adjoining ridge system
- 13), 14) Parts of the Rocher Deboule Range including Rocky Ridge at the south end
- 15) The Upper Mulwain and Red Canyon Creek area
- 21) The Sinclair Range

Managing the impacts of forest development on trail recreation

The lower elevation portion of about 26 trails will see forest development in nearby areas. In trails to alpine areas this may shorten the trail length if access becomes possible at a higher elevation. This could be beneficial for users whose main desire is to reach alpine quickly. Other users may appreciate the undisturbed forest on the lower parts of the trail and would see harvesting nearby as negative. Access development may also allow snowmobile access to currently inaccessible alpine areas. This is further discussed in [section 6.5.3](#)

A draft trail management strategy was developed for the Bulkley TSA in January of 1999 to reduce the impact of harvesting on trail recreation opportunities. Generally the strategy was intended to:

- Develop objectives and strategies for recreation trails in the Bulkley TSA that reflect broad and specific direction given in the Bulkley LRMP
- Meet the intent of the Forest Land Use Liaison Committee (FLULC) “Consensus Statement on the Management of Recreational Trails Recognized by the Ministry of Forests in Active Logging Areas” (Revised March 1991)

- Be consistent with the Forest Practices Code of BC Act
- Follow, where applicable, the Protocol Agreement on the Management of Cultural Heritage Resources and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and Heritage Conservation Branch regarding management of Heritage Trails on Crown Forest Lands
- Develop objectives and strategies that provide direction to operational plans

As part of the draft trail strategy, an analysis of known recreation trails in the Bulkley TSA was conducted which classified trails as either **general** trails or **cultural/historic** trails. A series of management strategies for the two trail classes was drafted in consultation with a committee of recreation users, Licensee representatives and Ministry of Forests staff. These strategies described how forest harvesting would occur in the vicinity of each class of trails. It was judged that the trails classified as cultural/historic required more restrictive forest harvesting practices to ensure their recreation and cultural values were protected.

During this strategic recreation study a further review of trails was conducted and several additional cultural/historic trails were identified. Part of, or all of the following trails were classified as cultural/historic (*numbers correspond to trail numbers on report maps & in project database*).

Cultural/historic trails:

37) Fort Babine – (the Suskwa to Fort Babine trail, 34) Moricetown/Cronin, 13) McDonell Lake, 23) Mooseskin Johnny, 22) Camel Humps – also known as Glacis Creek, 19) Hunter Basin, 14) Mt Leach, 10) Passby Creek, 15) Louis/Bud/Sandstone

It should be noted that an inventory of First Nations trails has been completed for the Bulkley TSA. Some of these First Nations trails have been included in this study and are identified here as cultural/historic trails. However, this study does not include a number of First Nations trails that are no longer being used for recreation purposes. There has been some interest expressed by the Wetsuweten people in re-opening some of these trails for cultural/tourism purposes.

During the review process it became apparent that some of the trails which had originally been classified as general in the draft trail management plan had very high or high recreation values. It is suggested that these trails be included with the trails classified as cultural/historic in a re-named “**High recreation values**” category which requires the use of more restrictive forest harvesting procedures. The following trails have been rated as having Very High or High Attractiveness ratings for recreation users and have been grouped with Cultural/Historic trails proposed to have more restrictive forest development strategies: (Numbers correspond to trail numbers on report maps and in project database).

The following trails have Very High or High attractiveness ratings:

1) Twin Falls, 2) Glacier Gulch, 3) Prairie/Crater Lake, 7) Toboggan Creek Road, 8) Silvern Lakes, 17) Ashman Ridge, 18) Microwave Road/Winfield Ck, 21) Hankin Plateau, 27) Jack Mould Lake, 36) Harold Price-Meed Creek, 49) Little Joe Creek, 50) Onion Mountain, 51) Cronin Creek, 52) Higgins Creek

It should be noted that the Dahlie Cross-country ski trails and the Community Forest Nature trails have Very high and high attraction ratings, however, forest development is directed by the Community Forest Committee and doesn't require management direction from this plan.

All other trails are classified as **General**.

Suggested action:

- For action regarding guidelines for timber harvesting in areas adjacent to trails See section 5.6.5
- For action regarding the maintenance of a range of opportunities across the recreation opportunity spectrum see section 6.5

5.5.6 Trails most suitable for backpacking & camping

The opportunity for backpacking & camping was examined because current trends in outdoor recreation indicate increasing numbers of participants can be expected to take part in these activities.

Backpacking & camping potential was judged by a combination of attractiveness ranking (See section 3.3), availability of campsites and potential for extended trips or circuit travel (See list in Table 5.5 below and Map 4 – Potential backpacking trails). Many backpacking/camping opportunities are concentrated in Babine Mountains Provincial Park (including the Harold Price area just north of the Park). Another area with a significant concentration of backpacking opportunities is the Northern Telkwa Range. At this time (February 2001) hiking is only allowed in the Northern Telkwa Range between July 15 and Sept 15 as part of the Caribou Recovery project. The northern part of the Hudson Bay Range including Silvern Lakes, Passby and Elliot Creek has some use and potential for increasing use with establishment of better links between trails in this part of the range. Limited opportunities for backpacking exist in the Rocher Deboule Range, Caribou Mountain South and French Peak.

As they become more accessible the Upper Mulwain/Red Canyon Creek area, the Sinclair Range, the Northern Bait Range and the Sicintine Range all offer significant potential for extended backpacking trips.

At the present time there seems to be a fairly low demand for backpacking opportunities, with most summer recreation consisting of day use activities. Future growth can be anticipated in back packing; however there appear to be enough existing opportunities to accommodate any expanded backpacking activity in the near future.

One area of future demand may be eco-tourism backpacking in which visual landscape management may be very important.

Suggested action:

Allocation of recreation opportunities through the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum as outlined in section 6.5.3 would ensure that a range of backpacking opportunities is maintained to meet future demands.

Table 5.5 Potential backpacking trails

Sorted by a combination of travel time, attractiveness rating and camping rating

Trail	Time from Smithers	Circuit potential	Camping Rating	Attractiveness Rating
47) Silver King Basin	< 30 minutes	Yes to McCabe and Cronin	High	Very High – 26
50) Onion	< 30 minutes	Yes to McCabe and Little Joe	High	Very High – 23
46) McCabe	< 30 minutes	Yes to Silver King, Lyon Creek and Little Joe	High	Very High – 22
44) Lyon Creek	< 30 minutes	Yes to McCabe and Little Joe	Moderate	Very High – 21
48) Fletcher Gardiner	< 30 minutes	No	Moderate	High – 18
18) Winfield Plateau	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to McDonnell Lake trail and Dennis/Mt Leach trail	High	Very High - 26
8) Silvern Lakes	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Toboggan Ck. road, Passby Creek and Elliot Creek	High	Very High - 21
52) Higgins Creek	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Little Joe	High	Very High – 21
51) Cronin	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Silver King	High	Very High 20
36) Harold Price/Meed	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes potential in future to continue to Cronin	High	High – 18
21) Hankin Plateau	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to other trails in Telkwa Range	High	High – 17
49) Little Joe Lakes	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to McCabe, Lyon and Higgins	Moderate	Very High – 19
19) Hunter Basin	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to other trails in Telkwa Range	Moderate	High – 16
11) Caribou Mountain South	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Caribou Mountain north	High	Moderate - 15
23) Mooseskin Johnny	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Dominion Basin and other trails in Telkwa	Moderate	High – 16
9) Elliot Creek	< 30 minutes	Yes to Silvern Lakes and Passby Creek	Moderate	Moderate – 13
31) Boulder Creek Road	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Juniper Creek road in Kispiox	Moderate	Moderate – 14
10) Passby Creek	30 minutes to 1 hour	Yes to Elliot Creek and Silvern Lakes	Moderate	Moderate – 13
24) Dominion Basin	> 1 ½ hours	Yes between Mooseskin Johnny and more northern trails in range	Moderate	Moderate – 15
56) French Peak	> 1 ½ hours	No	Moderate	Moderate - 15
22) Camel Humps	> 1 ½ hours	Yes between Hunter Basin and Mooseskin Johnny	Moderate	Moderate – 14

5.6 Possible community vision statements and trail strategies

5.6.1 Informed choice regarding allocation of opportunities for motorized and non-motorized use of trails

Possible community vision Informed choices now provide opportunities of similar quality for both motorized and non-motorized trail users.

Possible strategies:

See Alpine strategies in section 6.6

5.6.2 Opportunities for ATV use

Possible community vision: ATV users access information which allows them to use attractive and appropriate areas. Environmentally damaging use of ATVs has decreased.

Recommended strategy:

Government agencies, ATV dealers and ATV users work together to develop a map showing good ATV trails and use areas, while at the same time providing educational material aimed at discouraging ATV use in sensitive terrain.

5.6.3 Near-urban trails and trails linking urban & forest lands

Possible community vision: A network of near-urban and inter-urban trails provide a high quality of life for residents who appreciate accessible recreation opportunities near home. Agencies and user groups are working towards expanding near-urban trail opportunities and linking urban trails with nearby trails in provincial forests.

Recommended strategy:

Trails near urban areas will have a high priority for maintenance work when funds are available. Setting maintenance priorities will be done once trail inventory is completed (see section 6.5.6). In the event that funds are available before inventory work is completed, the priority list for completing inventory (See Appendix B) can be used as a guide for identifying high priority trails requiring maintenance.

5.6.4 Trails for active seniors

Possible community vision: Numerous well-maintained trails suitable for seniors are found within an hour's drive of Bulkley Valley communities. A high priority is placed on maintaining and upgrading trails suitable for seniors and new trails suitable for seniors have a higher priority than new trails un-suitable for seniors.

Recommended strategy:

Trails listed in table 6 should have a high priority for maintenance when funds are available. Setting maintenance priorities will be done once trail inventory is completed (See section 6.6.6). In the event that funds are available before inventory work is completed, cross-referencing Table 6 with the priority list for completing inventory (See Appendix B) should help identify high priority trails.

5.6.5 Guidelines for timber harvesting near trails

Possible community vision: Forest development and timber harvesting has either a positive or neutral affect on the recreation use of trails.

5.6.5.1 Recommended strategies for “General Trails” (These include all trails not specifically listed as “High recreation value trails” below):

- Roads will be designed and engineered so that the number of trail crossings are kept to the essential minimum
- Trail crossings will be located in such a manner as to minimize damage caused to the trail by run-off
- Access from a crossing road to trail entry and exit points must be maintained and kept free of debris
- Signs, clearly visible from a crossing road are to be erected at trail entry and exit points
- Poles and saplings will be maintained within 25m on either side of the trail centerline
- If a trail bed is disturbed as a result of logging, the licensee must restore or relocate the trail bed
- The licensee will place signs at trail entry and exit points
- The Licensee will mark the trail after logging at visible intervals using highly visible permanent markers
- Signing, marking and restoration/relocation of trails shall be coordinated and monitored by the Ministry of Forests
- The above directions may be modified where consultation with the Ministry of Forests and user groups determines that a new trailhead is acceptable

5.6.5.2 Recommended strategies for “High recreation value trails”

These include: 1) Twin Falls, 2) Glacier Gulch, 3) Prairie/Crater Lake, 7) Toboggan Creek Road, 8) Silvern Lakes, 10) Passby Creek, 13) McDonell Lake, 14) Mt Leach, 15) Louis/Bud/Sandstone, 17) Ashman Ridge, 18) Microwave Road/Winfield Ck, 19) Hunter Basin, 21) Hankin Plateau, 22) Camel Humps – also known as Glacis Creek, 23) Mooseskin Johnny, 27) Jack Mould Lake, 34) Moricetown/Cronin, 36) Harold Price-Meed Creek, 37) Fort Babine – (the Suskwa to Fort Babine trail 49) Little Joe Creek, 50) Onion Mountain, 51) Cronin Creek, 52) Higgins Creek

- All above strategies will apply except;
- 25m of undisturbed forest will be retained on either side of the trail centerline
- Poles and saplings will be retained for an additional 25m on either side of the undisturbed forest
- Within the undisturbed forest, operations will be allowed to a maximum of 10% of operable land for every 5 km of trail
- Within development areas, poles and saplings will be retained
- When developed areas have met a 5m Visually Effective Green-up (VEG) requirement, another 10% of operable land may be developed

The above directions may be modified where consultation with the Ministry of Forests and user groups determines that a new trailhead is acceptable

5.6.6 Trail maintenance program

Proposed community vision:

Well-maintained trails in the Bulkley TSA enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses. Funding priorities for trail inventory, maintenance and new trail development are established and ensure that all available resources are used wisely.

Recommended strategies:

- Complete an inventory of existing trail conditions and determine the maintenance requirements of each trail. A proposed priority for inventory has been developed through a combination of attraction rating and travel time to trailhead. (See Appendix B - Priority for trails Inventory) For instance, highest priority for inventory will be trails with very high attraction ratings with a trailhead within 30 minutes from Smithers
- Develop a priority for maintenance once trail inventory work is completed. Priorities would be developed through consideration of trail conditions, attractiveness rating, suitability for an aging population, travel time to trailhead, existing trail conditions, risk of environmental deterioration, hazards for trail users and level of use. It is suggested that the relative weighting of these factors be developed with recreation user groups.
- Develop a five year maintenance plan which will identify highest priority trails and the resources necessary to complete the maintenance work
- Pursue funding to allow implementation of the five year maintenance plan

5.6.7 Funding proposals for new trails

Possible community vision: Proposals for new trails are evaluated against the needs for funding on-going maintenance and up grading of existing trails as well as over-all socio-economic benefits.

Recommended strategy:

- Much of the criteria used for determining priority for maintenance (see 6.5.6 above) can also be applied to new trail proposals. This would allow a comparison of the benefits of either new trail construction or maintenance of an existing trail. As with section 6.6.6 above it is suggested that the relative weighting of these factors be developed with the assistance of recreation user groups.

5.6.8 Trail Information

Possible community vision: Local people and area visitors can easily access current information regarding a trail they are interested in using.

Possible Strategy:

- A combination of user groups, government agencies and the Chamber of Commerce maintains a current database on all trails in the Bulkley Plan area. This could be based on an up-dated version of the database created during this study.

6.0 Alpine Area management

The alpine section of this strategic recreation study is intended to review a number of issues or opportunities and consider trends in outdoor recreation related to use of alpine areas and closely associated subalpine forests. Management strategies are suggested to implement LRMP management direction for recreation and tourism. These strategies follow the principles set out in the Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP, 1997). Strategies are suggested to provide local residents and tourists with a range of outdoor recreation opportunities in alpine areas for both motorized and non-motorized use.

6.1 Issues, opportunities and community vision

6.1.1 Issue #1 – Few high quality opportunities for alpine ski touring close to Smithers

The ski touring community feels there are few high quality, non-motorized alpine areas suitable for a day's outing from the community of Smithers. The RAMP resolved some disputes over individual areas but did not arrive at an equitable balance of opportunities across the Bulkley Planning area (former Bulkley Forest District).

Opportunity: As forest development occurs, new alpine areas will be accessible for winter recreation. The opportunity exists to develop agreements for equitable use of these areas and to review opportunities for use in other areas.

Possible community vision:

- Informed choices are made to allocate opportunities of similar quality for both motorized and non-motorized recreation in alpine areas
- All areas considered desirable to snowmobilers and ski tourers are encompassed in the accepted management solution
- Other user groups affected by designations or agreements are consulted in the development of a management solution

Potential scenarios

- **Maintain the status quo where all areas not previously designated are available to all users**
- **Manage harvesting to leave natural barriers with the intent of keeping some areas non-motorized**
- **Negotiate a new sharing agreement between snowmobilers and skiers**
- **Designate further non-motorized areas**

For a discussion of this issue please see **section 6.5.2**

6.1.2 Issue #2: Opportunities for non-motorized wilderness recreation may be significantly reduced over time (primitive and semi-primitive ROS classes)

[for definitions of primitive & semi-primitive ROS classes please see text box under **Table 6.4**]

In the wilderness end of the recreation opportunity spectrum not only is the amount of area classed as primitive/semi-primitive being reduced but also there is no process in place to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of motorized & non-motorized opportunities on the wild lands remaining. Failure to manage this issue will lead to the loss of non-motorized wilderness recreation opportunities which will be difficult if not impossible to regain. There are a number of reasons why it is very important this doesn't **happen (refer to section 6.5.3.1)**.

Some allocation of recreation opportunities has occurred across the planning area (the RAMP process). Continuing contention between skiers and snowmobilers for opportunities is a result of only partial allocation of opportunities during the RAMP process. While solutions are suggested (**section 6.5.2.1**) which may relieve the competition for skiing and snowmobiling opportunities these solutions do not address the underlying problem which is the lack of an overall allocation of the land base for different types of recreation/tourism opportunities.

In other words, the problem may be addressed by deciding which types of recreation are acceptable in what parts of the planning area and also which types of recreation or tourism may not be acceptable.

Future contention regarding use areas is likely to be between motorized and non-motorized users but competition for recreation resources may also occur between local residents and commercial recreation interests, between horseback riders and hikers, between mountain bikers and other trail users or between current users and users with new types of technology such as powered scooters. The most difficult opportunities to maintain will be primitive/wilderness type opportunities and semi-primitive non-motorized opportunities.

Opportunity: An opportunity exists to maintain a fair & equitable distribution of **primitive** and **semi-primitive** recreation opportunities across the plan area through management actions

A possible community vision: Both **primitive** and **semi-primitive non-motorized** recreation opportunity classes continue to exist in the planning areas and user opportunities are distributed in a fair and equitable fashion. Definitions of these opportunity classes describe the types of recreation which are appropriate in each class.

Potential scenarios

- **Scenario 1 – designate percentages of the land base as primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized**
- **Scenario 2 - designate particular areas as primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized**
- **Scenario 3 – designate particular areas on an interim basis**
- **Scenario 4 – continue with status quo management**

For a discussion of this issue please refer to [section 6.5.3](#)

A number of issues discussed in [section 5.0](#) of this study (Trails) also affect recreation use in alpine areas.

- Refer to trails issue #2 and related strategies regarding ATV use in alpine areas.
- Refer to trails issue #8 and related strategies regarding information on recreation opportunities

6.2 Background Information

6.2.1 LRMP Direction related to alpine areas

- Managing recreational access is important to provide a variety of experiences and to minimize the impact of human disturbance on fish, wildlife, and other environmental resources
- **Specific direction to the RAMP:** The RAMP will address motorized and non-motorized access for both on-road and off-road vehicles, especially in terrain sensitive to site degradation; it will consider regulated motorized access in areas containing resource values that will be negatively impacted in the absence of regulation; conflicts such as those between snowmobiling and back-country skiing will be resolved, for example, by designating some areas for exclusive use
- **In sensitive terrain:** snowmobiles are permitted except where otherwise specified in the RAMP; ATV (use) will be permitted on identified hard surface roads and trails only; road deactivation to minimize off-road vehicle damage to fragile ecosystems may be necessary in some circumstances
- **Outdoor Recreation and Tourism:** Tourism and outdoor recreation are growing industries in the Bulkley Plan Area (previously the Bulkley Forest District). It is thus very important to manage this resource to maintain or enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses across the biophysical settings of the area
- **Sicintine Range and North Bait Range:** Maintain the primitive setting and experience while permitting sensitive mineral exploration and development

The LRMP document provides strategies for individual planning units, for instance, specific direction regarding types of recreation to be encouraged and the need to manage access to safeguard wildlife resources. These specific management directions are recorded in the project database. Database characteristics are recorded in [Appendix C](#) and a sample table has been printed showing alpine area data, which may be of interest to the general reader.

6.2.2 RAMP direction related to alpine areas

Implementation of a Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP) was a requirement of the LRMP Consensus Management Direction in 1997. Sixteen principles regarding Recreational Access Management are found in the RAMP document (For a complete copy of these principles see [Appendix D](#)).

The principles which relate directly to alpine areas include the following:

- Sensitive fish and wildlife habitat values will be recognized in recreational development and management decisions
- Sensitive fish, wildlife and habitat values will provide direction when identifying motorized and non-motorized recreational areas
- Motorized vehicles do not belong in some areas
- Restrictions on motorized recreational use in some areas should be qualitatively balanced with assured motorized vehicle access in other areas
- Planning must reflect that motorized use can have an impact (negative) on non-motorized users
- Both motorized and non-motorized experiences should exist within a range of travel distances and settings, including urban, semi-primitive and primitive

- Snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles must be registered and identifiable

The RAMP process dealt mainly with high-use trails and areas. Many alpine areas and some trails were left undesignated, unresolved or noted to be dealt with in a future process.

6.2.3 Alpine characteristics and attractiveness rating

The Bulkley LRMP directs that the resource (*the land base*) be managed “to maintain or enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses across the biophysical settings of the area”. The RAMP directs that “both motorized and non-motorized experiences should exist within a range of travel distances and settings, including urban, semi-primitive and primitive”. To help meet these management directions, a ranking system was developed to evaluate the relative recreation attractiveness of trails, alpine areas and lakes. This system helps to identify the features likely to be the most popular and will help to ensure that opportunities are distributed equitably among users. Summary tables including the factors which led to the individual attractiveness rating for each trail, alpine area, lake and recreation site are contained in **Appendix F**.

For alpine areas, the better the camping opportunities, the easier the travel and the easier the area is to access, the higher the rating it receives. As pointed out in the comments on trail attractiveness ratings, it can be seen that this process identifies areas which are most attractive to the maximum number of people. People who appreciate solitude may rank remote areas as being relatively more attractive than we have. People who feel negatively affected by motorized use may rate motorized areas less attractive than we have.

Alpine areas are one of the most important recreation features in the Bulkley TSA (formerly the Bulkley Forest District). As noted in the section on regional recreation context, the Bulkley TSA offers the most accessible and attractive alpine areas in the Prince Rupert Forest Region. The four alpine areas that have been ranked **very high** have a range of attractive features. They typically have multiple access routes, easy access, easy traveling in the alpine, extensive views, alpine meadows, several ponds or lakes and camping opportunities.

Fourteen alpine areas ranked as having **high attractiveness**. Typically they may have one or two access trails and access is generally somewhat longer than for areas with **very high attractiveness**. In comparison to areas ranked as **very high**, these areas usually have fewer scenic views, smaller meadow areas, few water features and traveling is usually more difficult.

Many of the areas ranked as **high** have no trail access. A number of these areas would quite likely be ranked as **very high** if better access were available. This suggests that there is considerable ability to sustain growth in alpine recreation use in the Bulkley TSA, either through providing trail access to some of these areas or by encouraging wilderness recreation in areas with no trails. Attractive areas with no trail access include:

- ❖ 1) The Sicintine Range
- ❖ 2) North Bait Ranges
- ❖ 5) South-west extension of Bait Range
- ❖ 8) Netalzul Peak and ridge system
- ❖ 15) The Upper Mulwain/Red Canyon area
- ❖ 21) The Sinclair Range
- ❖ 25) Grouse Mountain (private road, not open to public)

Alpine areas rated as having **Moderate** or **Low attractiveness** are typically smaller areas and/or areas with fewer attractive features and/or areas which are more remote and difficult to access.

Table 6.1 below summarizes the results of the ranking process. The factors which led to the individual attractiveness rating for each trail, alpine area, lake and recreation site are presented in table form in Appendix F.

Table 6.1 Alpine Attractiveness Rating

Very High Attractiveness # From main Alpine Table) Alpine area Name	Rating Points	Moderate Attractiveness # From main Alpine Table) Alpine area name	Rating Points
12) Babine Mountains	22	26) Mt McKendrick	12
18) Hudson Bay Range	20	6) Mt Horetzky	11
19) Winfield Plateau (Microwave)	20	17) Hankin Lookout	11
24) Telkwa Range North	19	11) Goat Mountain (Keulsh)	10
		14) Rocky Ridge/The Nipples	10
High Attractiveness # From main Alpine Table) Alpine area name	Rating Points	Low Attractiveness # From main Alpine Table) Alpine area name	Rating Points
21) Sinclair Range	18	5) Kotsine Mountain	9
1) Sicintine Range	17	22) Howson Range	9
13) Rocher Deboule Range	17	4) South Bait Range	7
15) Upper Mulwain/Red Canyon	17		
23) Telkwa Range South	17		
7) French Peak	16		
8) Netalzul	16		
20) Caribou Mountain	16		
9) Mt Seaton/Blunt Mountain	15		
10) Harold Price subalpine	15		
16) Ashman Ridge	15		
25) Grouse Mountain	15		
2) North Bait Range	13		
5) Southwest Extension Bait Range	13		

6.3 Existing use of alpine areas

6.3.1 Summer recreation use of alpine areas

Summer use consists of day hiking, backpacking, camping, mountain biking and 4x4/ATV driving. Most users are involved in other activities along with their primary one. These include sightseeing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and for some, birding and photography.

6.3.2 Winter recreation use of alpine areas

The major winter alpine recreation activities in the Bulkley Plan Area (previously the Bulkley Forest District) are snowmobiling, cross-country track skiing, backcountry ski touring, telemark skiing and downhill skiing.

6.4 Trends in Outdoor Recreation related to Alpine area use

- ❖ Demand for outdoor recreation in alpine areas will continue to grow because the population is increasing, tourism is increasing, outdoor recreation fits well with a growing fitness trend and the indoor working life of many people leads them to seek natural, outdoor settings for their leisure activities.
- ❖ An aging population will show a preference for alpine areas which are accessible by road or well-maintained trails of easy to moderate difficulty; however, a large proportion of these seniors will be fit and capable of accessing even remote areas with no trails.
- ❖ Many retiring baby boomers are planning to retire in attractive rural areas which likely will mean an increase in retired residents in the Bulkley Valley.
- ❖ About 30% of BC residents participate in mountain biking. A growing number of mountain bikers will seek opportunities to bicycle in alpine environments.
- ❖ Ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism market. Alpine areas with lakes, wildlife, scenic views and an un-disturbed environment will be most attractive to ecotourists.
- ❖ 60% of BC residents participate in day hiking. A 1995 national survey of the US population shows day-hiking as being one of the fastest growing outdoor activities. Day hiking is popular with all age groups. Alpine areas that can be reached by day-hiking will likely continue to be popular with local residents and tourists.
- ❖ Nearly one-quarter of BC residents participate in backpacking. US survey results show the number of people participating in backpacking and primitive camping activities are growing nearly as fast as day hiking. Backpacking and primitive camping are likely to become more popular, particularly in more remote, less heavily used areas.
- ❖ The number of people backcountry skiing is likely to continue to grow and there will be a continuing demand for additional non-motorized areas for backcountry skiing.
- ❖ Snowmobile use will continue to grow and snowmobilers will seek new opportunities, particularly as currently used areas become more heavily used.

6.5 Discussion of alpine areas related issues

6.5.1 The balance of motorized and non-motorized opportunities in the summer:

- Five roads provide motorized access to alpine areas; one of these (Ski Hill Road) provides access to the edge of the alpine. Motorized use is allowed to the end of the road in all of these areas.
- Five alpine areas are designated “summer non-motorized” under the 1997 Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP).
- Summer motorized use is also excluded in Babine Mountains Provincial Park and the Telkwa Range (under the Caribou Recovery Plan)
- Fourteen alpine areas are “non-designated”; parts of three other alpine areas are also “non-designated” (For a list of summer motorized and non-motorized opportunities see Table 6.2 on the following page).

Clearly there are few opportunities for summer-motorized recreation in alpine areas. Given the LRMP direction regarding no motorized use in sensitive alpine areas except on hard surfaced roads, this situation is unlikely to change.

Discussions with Ministry of Environment staff indicate that some ATV activity occurring in non-roaded alpine areas despite the LRMP direction outlined above. This phenomenon is discussed further in section 5.5.2.

How summer recreation opportunities are changing

Forestry roads and cutblock development at higher elevations will allow shorter access routes to alpine areas for summer recreation users (when active logging can be avoided). Currently ½ of the TSA’s alpine areas have no trail access. More than one half of the alpine areas without trail access are classified as having a *high attractiveness rating*. The potential exists to create better access through new trails or to discourage access through careful road layout, cutblock planning and road deactivation.

How can a full range of recreation opportunities be maintained?

Please refer to section 6.5.3 which addresses the question of how a range of recreation opportunities can be maintained over the land base during both summer and winter recreation seasons

Table 6.2 Existing alpine/subalpine recreation opportunities for motorized and non-motorized uses (SUMMER)

Sorted by travel time and attractiveness rankings

Travel time to destination*	Motorized	Non-motorized	ND - Non-designated UR - Un-resolved FP - Future Plan UE - Use Exclusion**
2 – 4 hours			
Very High Attractiveness	18) Hudson Bay Range – Toboggan Creek Road 19) Winfield Plateau	12) Babine Mountains Park 18) Hudson Bay Range – Crater Lake & Peak, Passby Creek Trail, Silvern Lakes Trail 24) Telkwa Range North/ Core area, hiking allowed July 15 to September 15 only	18) Hudson Bay Range – All areas not in the 2 columns immediately to the left - ND
High Attractiveness	7) French Peak	9) Mt Seaton & Blunt 10) Harold Price subalpine	16) Ashman Ridge – ND
Moderate Attractiveness	14) Rocky Ridge Road 17) Hankin Lookout****		14) Rocky Ridge/the Nipples except for Rocky Ridge road - ND 26) Mt McKendrick ND
Low Attractiveness			
4 – 6 Hours			
Very High Attractiveness			
High Attractiveness	13) Rocher Deboule – Boulder Creek Road	13) Rocher Deboule – Corya Creek 21) Sinclair Range	8) Netalzul – ND 13) Rocher Deboule except for areas shown to left – ND 20) Caribou Mtn – FP 25) Grouse Mtn - ND
Moderate Attractiveness			6) Mt Horetzky – ND 11) Goat Mtn - ND
Low Attractiveness			
> 6 Hours			
Very High Attractiveness			
High Attractiveness		15) Upper Mulwain 23) Telkwa Range S – (Interim NM under Caribou Recovery Plan)	1) Scitine Range FP 2) Bait Range N – FP 5) Bait Range SW ND
Moderate Attractiveness			22) Howson Range ND
Low Attractiveness			5) Kotsine Mtn – FP 4) Bait Range S - ND

*Travel time to the alpine destination = travel time to trailhead plus hiking time to the destination for an average hiker. This has been used rather than travel time to the trailhead because we believe it provides a refined measure of attractiveness for non-motorized recreation users and likely has a neutral impact on attractiveness for motorized users. We believe this is confirmed by the fact that the high interest areas designated under the RAMP process are mainly in the 2 – 4 hour travel time class.

** ND = Non-designated, UR = Un-resolved, FP = Future Plan (These are all categories produced as a result of the RAMP process), UE = Voluntary use exclusion under the Telkwa Caribou Recovery Plan

*** Use Exclusion and Non-motorized areas in Telkwa Ranges are interim measures as part of the Caribou Recovery Plan – Hunter Basin & Hankin Plateau trail previously zoned motorized

**** This appears to be an error in the RAMP document because this trail is unsuited for motorized use.

6.5.2 The balance of motorized & non-motorized recreation opportunities in winter

In the 1997 Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP), four alpine areas were designated for motorized use. BC Parks has designated a snowmobile area in Babine Mountains Provincial Park and allows some snowmobile use in other parts of the park under permit.

Five alpine/subalpine areas have been designated for non-motorized use with two more remote parts of the Telkwa Ranges designated interim non-motorized under the Telkwa Caribou Recovery Plan (See Table 6.3 on the following page and Map 3 – Winter Recreation trails).

Under the RAMP process eighteen additional alpine areas are either non-designated, designated for future planning work because of wildlife concerns or un-resolved for motorized or non-motorized use because of conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users.

Uses of *alpine areas* in the Bulkley TSA in January 2001

- Designated for winter motorized use 16%
- Designated for winter non-motorized use 24%
- Non-designated for either use 47%
- Caribou Recovery CORE area (no winter use) 8%
- BC Parks snowmobile permit area 4%

Both Snowmobiling and ski touring occur in areas which are not designated as either motorized or non-motorized at present. Both snowmobilers and ski tourers prefer the same types of areas, typically a larger alpine area with good views and a mix of slopes, including rolling plateaus and steeper slopes. Ski tourers prefer using areas where snowmobile use is uncommon or doesn't exist. The number of areas where snowmobile use is uncommon or doesn't exist is likely to decrease as forest road and cut-block development proceeds at higher elevations.

Backcountry skiers state they have no large alpine plateau type areas where they can ski without motorized traffic within day trip distance of Smithers and that they would like the use of at least one area which was non-motorized.

Snowmobilers have indicated they feel they should have access to all areas not currently designated non-motorized. Trends indicate that the numbers of both snowmobilers and backcountry skiers are likely to continue to grow.

Failure to fairly allocate recreational opportunities for both groups may have significant economic opportunity costs for both local communities and the province. Conflict will inhibit tourism and in-migration of new businesses and retirees who are seeking a range of ways to experience beautiful natural landscapes (see section 6.5.3.1 for additional reasons why equitable allocation is important).

**Table 6.3 Existing alpine/subalpine recreation opportunities
For motorized and non-motorized uses (WINTER)**

Sorted by travel time and attractiveness ranking

Travel Time to destination*	Motorized <i>Alpine Area names & numbers are from the project database</i>	Non-motorized	ND - Non designated UR – Un-resolved FP – Future Plan UE – Use Exclusion**
2 – 4 hours			
Very High Attractiveness rating	12) Babine Mountains – the Onion 12) Babine Mountain Park – Four Lakes area – 8permits/year, Cronin area – 3permits/year Permits are issued to the Smithers Snowmobile Club	18) Hudson Bay Range – Owen, Elliot, Passby Creeks, Crater Lake & Peak 24) Telkwa Range North outside of use exclusion area 12) Babine Mountain Park – all areas except those noted in the adjacent column to the left	24) Telkwa Range N – UE 18) Hudson Bay Range – Toboggan Creek Road & Silvern Lakes – ND
High Attractiveness rating	10) Harold Price - snowmobile route	16) Ashman Ridge 10) Harold Price – Meed trail & lower meadows	9) Mt Seaton/ Blunt – UR 7) French Peak – ND
Moderate Attractiveness rating			17) Hankin Lookout – ND 26) Mt McKendrick – ND 14) Rocky Ridge & the Nipples – ND
Low Attractiveness rating			
4 – 6 hours			
Very High Attractiveness rating	19) Winfield Plateau		
High Attractiveness rating	21) Sinclair Range		8) Netalzul – ND 13) Rocher Deboule – ND 20) Caribou Mtn – FP 25) Grouse Mtn – ND
Moderate Attractiveness rating			6) Mt Horetzky – ND 11) Goat Mtn – ND
Low Attractiveness rating			
> 6 hours			
Very High Attractiveness rating			
High Attractiveness rating		23) Telkwa Range S – (Interim NM under Caribou Recovery Plan)	1) Sicine Range – FP 2) Bait Range N – FP 5) Bait Range SW – ND 15) Upper Mulwain – ND
Moderate Attractiveness rating			22) Howson Range – ND
Low Attractiveness rating			4) Bait Range S – ND 5) Kotsine Mtn – FP

*Travel time to the alpine destination = travel time to trailhead plus skiing time to the destination for an average skier. This has been used rather than travel time to the trailhead because we believe it provides a refined measure of attractiveness for non-motorized recreation users and likely has a neutral impact on attractiveness for motorized users. We believe this is confirmed by the fact that most of the high interest areas designated under the RAMP process are in the 2 – 4 hour travel class.

** Use Exclusion and Non-motorized areas in the Telkwa Range are interim measures as part of the Telkwa Caribou Recovery Program

6.5.2.1 Scenarios to provide fair & equitable opportunities for ski tourers and snowmobilers

With continuing growth of both ski touring and snowmobiling in the Bulkley Valley it can be anticipated that there will be more competition for recreational use of alpine/subalpine areas in the future.

Some options for establishing equitable opportunities include:

- 1) Maintain the status quo
- 2) Manage harvesting to leave natural barriers with the intent of keeping some areas non-motorized
- 3) Negotiate a new agreement between snowmobilers and skiers
- 4) Designate certain areas as non-motorized

None of these options would be easy to implement. Following is a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each option:

Scenario #1 Maintain the status quo- all areas not designated under the RAMP process are available to all users. Under this scenario, snowmobile use would continue to expand into alpine areas as they become accessible through the development of the forest road network and cutblocks. As time passes, larger portions of the land base will receive motorized use. This option would see expanded opportunities for snowmobile use. For skiers however, a situation already regarded as inequitable would grow worse.

Scenario #2 Manage harvesting to leave natural barriers with the intent of keeping some areas non-motorized. This option would be relatively easy to incorporate into harvest development plans. It wouldn't require new non-motorized designation and no enforcement activity would be required. However, the chances of success with this approach are questionable. It relies on natural barriers rather than negotiated agreements between users and managers of the land base. If an un-authorized trail were cut to provide access for motorized use, motorized users would have non-regulated access to areas which were intended to be non-motorized.

Scenario #3 Negotiate a new sharing agreement between snowmobilers and skiers. Many snowmobilers feel they will lose current or potential snowmobiling opportunities by re-entering discussions on areas of use.

However, we believe there is very good potential to develop a time-sharing arrangement between skiers and snowmobilers. In such an agreement, all the alpine areas which are not currently designated for either motorized or non-motorized use would be separated into two groups each year. For that year, one area would be for motorized use and one area would be for non-motorized use. Areas would be selected which:

- Allowed for a range of opportunities for each group
- Provided for varying skill levels in each group
- Provided for different weather conditions
- Considered the relative numbers of participants expected
- Considered which roads would be open each year
- Considered the travel time required to reach various areas
- Considered wildlife concerns

With such an agreement both user groups would be able to use all the areas, but at different times. This option would require annual consultation between the two groups and a higher on-going administrative requirement. However, it would also have the potential to create a positive relationship between the two user groups. For instance the

two groups would have an incentive to work together on developing shelters for both their uses in new areas.

Scenario #4 Designate new non-motorized areas. This measure would be controversial and very un-popular with the snowmobiling community. It could be difficult and expensive to enforce. It should be used if other agreement is not possible. However, if all other measures are unsuccessful, it may be the only way of maintaining an appropriate range of recreation opportunities for non-motorized winter recreationists.

This scenario has been implemented by the Invermere Forest district where 21 separate areas have been designated for three different types of winter use: heli-skiing; snowmobiling; and ski touring. Ministry of Forest staff report that after an initial period of unrest the new status quo appears to be generally accepted by all users. A concern that snowmobilers from Alberta might not conform to local this agreement appears unfounded, as out of province snowmobilers generally seem prepared to respect the new status quo.

6.5.2.2 Some suggestions:

Following are some suggestions for both motorized and non-motorized designation if that option were to be chosen.

There are some areas that have good potential for winter non-motorized designation:

- 1) The Sicintine primitive area (not practical for day use)
- 12) A small plateau between Passby and Silvern Creeks (Hudson Bay Range)
- 15) The upper Mulwain and Red Canyon Creek subalpine area (not practical for day use – could be a fly-in area as it is relatively close to Smithers)(Summer NM – Special Management Zone 2)
- 20) Caribou Mountain (close to maximum travel distance for day use)

It should be noted that none of these areas might meet the definition of a high quality alpine area within a day's outing of Smithers.

There are also some non-designated areas and routes that are currently being used by snowmobilers and that could be designated for winter-motorized use:

- 7) French Peak
- 11) Goat Mountain north of Harold Price
- 12) Toboggan Creek Road
- 14) Rocky Ridge Road
- 19) Mt Leach – trail from McDonnell Lake Road to Winfield Plateau

Action required: See Section 6.6.1 for strategies

6.5.3 Why opportunities for non-motorized wilderness recreation opportunities may be significantly reduced over time

The present situation - Currently there is a full range of primitive/wilderness and semi-primitive recreation opportunities. These opportunities are concentrated in alpine/subalpine areas and more remote regions of the planning area. However, without management action the situation is likely to change.

At present, people are free to undertake any kind of recreation they wish, wherever they wish. There is no allocation of opportunity (except for the RAMP). The recreation resources of the land base are used by whoever wishes to do so. If anyone wishes to avoid other recreation users or types of recreation use they simply go somewhere else.

How a problem occurs - The first sign of a problem with this first-come first-served allocation of recreation opportunities starts to occur when certain types of activities negatively affect other users and there are no longer equivalent alternative areas available. This is happening with ski tourers now because they feel there are no suitable alpine plateaus with high-quality ski touring opportunities within day trip distance of Smithers which are not already being used by snowmobilers.

Allocation of opportunity is also the underlying problem in the issue of maintaining various types of lake access over time (see section 7.5). Unless management action is taken to ensure some lakes remain less accessible, most lakes within the Bulkley TSA will have a road within 200 metres over time.

Consequences - Typically what happens with non-regulated recreation use is that motorized activities tend to displace non-motorized users over time. In some cases mechanized use (e.g. mountain bikes) can displace non-mechanized use (hiking and backpacking). In the future it is conceivable that conflict could occur between hikers and heli-hikers or between local resident hikers and backpackers and tourists being led by commercial recreation companies.

Less Wilderness - The most difficult type of recreation opportunity to maintain is the opportunity for wilderness recreation. As the road network expands, so do motorized uses of the landscape. Over time there becomes less area which can be truly called wilderness. For this reason we feel the highest priority for addressing this issue is at the wilderness end of the recreation opportunity spectrum (Primitive and semi-primitive ROS classes)

6.5.3.1 How forest development may reduce wilderness non-motorized opportunities (primitive and semi-primitive ROS classes)

The effect of forest development on the range of recreation opportunities in alpine areas is very similar to the effect it has on trail recreation opportunities:

- Easier access to currently remote areas
- Increased use of areas in which access becomes easier
- More areas accessible for winter motorized use
- More areas where significant timber harvesting is visible.

Changes in Winter Recreation Opportunities

<i>Recreation opportunities in 1999 as a percentage of the total land base</i>		<i>Recreation opportunities in the future* as a percentage of the total land base</i>	
Primitive	4%	Primitive	0%
Semi-primitive non-motorized	24%	Semi-primitive non-motorized	6%
Semi-primitive motorized	16%	Semi-primitive motorized	21%
Some level of road access	50%	Some level of road access	66%
Parks	4%	Parks	5%

*Future opportunities reflect the kind of winter recreation opportunities which may be expected with implementation of the LRMP

The single greatest effect on recreation use of alpine/subalpine areas will be an increased number of areas accessible for snowmobile use in the winter:

- The three alpine areas currently classed as **primitive** (large remote areas with no snowmobile use) will become largely **semi-primitive motorized** (low levels of snowmobile use)
- Nine alpine areas currently classed as **semi-primitive non-motorized** (areas with no snowmobile use) will become largely **semi-primitive motorized** (low levels of snowmobile use) (for more complete definition of Primitive/semi-primitive see box below table 11)
- Four alpine areas currently experiencing low levels of snowmobile use will likely see increased use due to better access
- Eight alpine areas will not change classification; these are mainly areas which are already experiencing winter use and are classed semi-primitive motorized
- The Telkwa Range which was previously semi-primitive motorized in the winter, is now largely semi-primitive non-motorized (measures introduced as part of the Telkwa Caribou Recovery project)
- Some areas currently classified as semi-primitive non-motorized can be expected to continue with that classification, including parts of Babine Mountain Park, parts of the Hudson Bay Mountain Range and parts of the Telkwa Range within the Caribou Recovery project.

It is also possible that new commercial tourism ventures could introduce new motorized uses to alpine areas for instance, heli-hiking, snow mobile touring, atv touring, cat skiing, heli-drops for snowmobiles and other, as yet unanticipated, activities.

Table 6.4 below provides a summary of the more significant recreation opportunity changes which can be expected with status quo management. Maps 8 and 9 show how the Recreation Opportunity changes between the present and the future as determined by LRMP management zones.

**Table 6.4 Projected changes in winter recreation experience
in alpine/subalpine areas**
(With status quo implementation of LRMP)

<i>Alpine/subalpine Area</i>	<i>1999 ROS</i>	<i>Projected change</i>
1) Sicintine Range	Primitive	Mainly Semi-primitive motorized
2) Bait Range North	Primitive	Mainly Semi-primitive motorized
3) Kotsine Mountain	Primitive	Mainly Semi-primitive motorized
4) Bait Range South	Semi-primitive motorized	No Change
5) Bait Range SW	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Semi-primitive motorized
6) Mt Horetzky	Natural	Natural Roaded
7) French Peak	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Semi-primitive motorized
8) Netalzul	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Semi-primitive motorized
9) Mt Seaton & Blunt	Semi-primitive motorized	No Change
10) Harold Price	Semi-primitive motorized	No Change
11) Goat Mountain	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Semi-primitive motorized
12) Babine Mountains	Semi-primitive non-motorized & Semi-primitive motorized	No Change
13) Rocher Deboule Range	Semi-primitive non-motorized & Semi-primitive motorized	< Semi-primitive non-motorized > Semi-primitive motorized
14) Rocky Ridge and the Nipples	Semi-primitive non-motorized & Semi-primitive motorized	< Semi-primitive non-motorized > Semi-primitive motorized
15) Upper Mulwain and Red Canyon Creek	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Mainly semi-primitive motorized
16) Ashman Ridge	Semi-primitive non-motorized	No Change
17) Hankin Lookout	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Semi-primitive motorized
18) Hudson Bay Range	Semi-primitive non-motorized Semi-primitive motorized Natural road	< Semi-primitive non-motorized > Semi-primitive motorized
19) Winfield Plateau	Semi-primitive motorized	No Change
20) Caribou Mountain	Semi-primitive non-motorized	Semi-primitive motorized
21) Sinclair Range	Semi-primitive motorized	No Change
22) Howson Range	Semi-primitive non-motorized	No Change
23) Telkwa Range South	Semi-primitive motorized	Semi-primitive non-motorized - interim under caribou recovery
24) Telkwa Range North	Semi-primitive motorized	Semi-primitive motorized & non- motorized – interim under caribou recovery
25) Grouse Mountain	Semi-primitive non-motorized ROS map incorrect	Semi-primitive motorized
26) McKendrick Mtn	Semi-primitive motorized	No Change

Summary of Recreation Opportunity Classes (ROS)

Primitive: more than 8 km from a road, more than 5000 ha in area, **no motorized use**, very high naturalness. It could be argued that an area doesn't need to be 8km from a road to be considered primitive. Rather that, to be considered primitive there be no evidence or sound of motorized activity. This may be accomplished when a significant ridge or mountain range separates areas where motorized use occurs from more remote areas.

Semi-Primitive non-motorized: more than 1km from a road, more than 1000ha, **very little motorized use**, few encounters

Semi-Primitive motorized: more than 1km from road, more than 1000ha, **low motorized use**, few encounters

6.5.3.2 Reasons why it is important to maintain wilderness recreation opportunities: (Primitive & Semi-primitive ROS classes)

- 1) The LRMP directs that a range of recreation opportunities be maintained.
- 2) Recreation opportunities must meet the needs of a broad spectrum of society if recreation managers wish to have political support for their activities
- 3) Recreation opportunities in remote and undisturbed areas have potentially high economic value - providing ecotourists and adventure tourists with the opportunity to experience wilderness.
- 4) Until recent times wilderness opportunities have been plentiful. This is changing, wilderness areas are becoming scarcer, as scarcity increases, the economic and social values of wilderness to society will increase.
- 5) The mere existence of wilderness is important to most Bulkley Valley residents, even if they don't wish to use it or are unable to do so.
- 6) Grand fathering of existing use patterns seems to be acceptable in many land based planning processes. This means that once land becomes non-wilderness through motorized use, it is almost impossible for it to be returned to a wilderness state. If motorized use continues to expand, reduction in wilderness is likely irreversible. This in turn means that if or when a point comes when wilderness recreation use could provide a greater social or economic benefit, it will be extremely difficult to change use types.
- 7) A given wilderness land base can provide a wilderness experience to a much higher number of non-motorized users than it can motorized users - by a factor of as much as several hundred. If status quo management allows a large portion of potential wilderness areas to become motorized, a large future economic benefit may be lost.
- 8) Many people have actually moved to the Bulkley Valley because of the opportunity it provides to experience wilderness. This includes working people who in this wired age are often bringing jobs with them and will include, in the near future, a growing number of retiring baby boomers looking for a home in the country. They bring their accumulated wealth, their incomes and their economic skills with them (Power 1996). When one considers that a given wilderness area can support many more non-motorized than motorized users (#7 above), it is clear that non-motorized wilderness areas have the potential for attracting much larger numbers of new residents than motorized areas would.

6.5.3.3 Suggestions:

It is suggested that one way of developing tools to deal with growing recreation use and future conflicts would be to zone the planning area in a fashion similar to the resource management zones utilized by the LRMP. These zones would define the kind of recreation opportunity which would be available in every part of the planning area. The definitions would make it clear what types of recreation/tourism would be appropriate in all areas (and which would not).

Such a zoning system already exists. It is called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). In any outdoor recreation activity, a user can expect to experience some degree of wilderness and solitude. For a given area, this experience can be measured through ROS. ROS provides a measure of the "degree of primitiveness" which exists in a given area. It *rates* the remoteness, naturalness and social experience which may be found in an area. It describes the level and type of human activity in the area and describes the level of motorized use which occurs.

Up until this time ROS has been used mainly as a tool for recording existing conditions and tracking how changes in opportunities occur over time. However, it could also be utilized as a planning tool to zone the planning area for different types of opportunities. It is likely some amendment of the zone definitions would be required to ensure that they are appropriate to the local situation but such zoning has significant promise for reducing future conflicts.

This is a tool which could allow planned development of recreation opportunities, a tool which has the potential for reducing future conflicts over recreation opportunities. However, it is also a tool which requires some restrictions on what has always been viewed as a public resource, open for all. It remains to be seen whether it would have wide public acceptability. The alternative at present seems to be a continuing erosion of the opportunities for non-motorized users.

6.5.3.4 Reaching a fair and equitable distribution of recreation opportunities

There are no accepted standards regarding what percentage of the land base should be maintained in the various levels of “primitiveness”. Manning, 1999 provides a summary of principles that have been developed to assist in allocation of recreation resources. He describes a theory of “distributive justice” in which individuals obtain recreation opportunities based on fairness. Four criteria are used to define what is fair:

- Equality – all individuals or user groups have an equal right to a benefit, even those with small numbers of participants have the right to an opportunity.
- Equity – opportunities to be allocated to those who earn them through some investment of time, money or effort
- Need – opportunities to be allocated on the basis of un-met needs or competitive disadvantage (for instance if a group of users feels there a few areas which meet their recreation needs, that group would have a priority in allocation or re-allocation of available opportunities)
- Efficiency – opportunities to be allocated to those who place the highest value on them (for instance users who seek wilderness qualities would have a higher priority in using wilderness than those who wish to be in a natural environment but don't really mind if there is considerable evidence of people)

There are other factors which also need to be considered in any allocation of recreation opportunity, these include:

- Social capacity – how many users of various types can a particular area accommodate, how do various recreation users affect each others' ability to obtain the recreation experience they are looking for
- Environmental capacity – what environmental/wildlife limits are there to numbers and types of users
- Social & economic sustainability – how many users are there in each different user group, what are the social and economic implications of a given allocation over the long term? Will there be sufficient opportunities for anticipated future users of various user types?
- Principles identified in the Recreation Access Management Plan (RAMP)
- Consideration of the attractiveness ratings developed through this study

One way of allocating recreation opportunities would be to arrive at a determination of how much or what parts of the land base should be

- Primitive (remote/large area/no motorized uses)
- Semi-primitive non-motorized (more accessible/smaller area/no motorized uses)
- Semi-primitive motorized (more accessible/smaller area/motorized uses)

Potentially allocating opportunities in this way could be done in the public consultation process which attends circulation of this study. It will be important to consult with as broad a range of residents as possible -as mentioned above, even residents who don't physically use the resource often have an interest in knowing that wilderness areas exist nearby. Because opportunities change

significantly between summer and winter it would be necessary to allocate the land base separately for summer and winter opportunities.

Allocations could be made in a number of different ways:

- **Scenario 1 – designate percentages of the land base** – The advantage of designating percentages, is that individual parts of the land base could have different ROS designation over time as long as the overall percentage in each category remained the same. This scenario could allow rotation of recreation opportunities and could work well as forest development occurs followed at a later date by road deactivation. The disadvantage is that it would require more administrative work.
- **Scenario 2 – designate particular areas** – Designating areas would settle the issue for the long term and would require little administrative workload, however it is not as flexible as the first scenario.
- **Scenario 3 – designate particular areas on an interim basis** – This scenario would protect the opportunity to make a fully informed allocation of recreation opportunities at a future date.
- **Scenario 4 – continue with status quo management** – The largest problem with this scenario is that wilderness recreation and semi-primitive non-motorized opportunities will be difficult if not impossible to regain once they have been lost.

6.5.3.5 Some Suggestions related to scenarios 1, 2 and 3

The least number of problems would be encountered if areas selected to be maintained as primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized areas currently had little or no motorized use. Selecting such areas would avoid removing existing opportunities from motorized users. Candidate areas should have high or very high attractiveness ratings to ensure that they have high recreation values and time required to access these areas (in summer and winter) should also be a consideration.

However, it is quite possible that this process would not fully meet the need to maintain a full range of opportunities. In that case a change in use designation may be required for some areas.

With these considerations in mind, following is a list of potential alpine/subalpine areas that could be maintained as primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized (Listed from north to south):

- 1) Sicitine Range & 2) North Bait Range - part of the only area in the Bulkley TSA with a primitive ROS class. It also has a high attractiveness rating. There is currently a low level of snowmobile use at the southern end of this range.
- 3) Kotsine Mountain has a ROS class of primitive with a low attractiveness rating. Some snowmobile use is reported through Kotsine Pass.
- 5) Bait Range SW - currently has a ROS class of semi-primitive non-motorized but some snowmobile use is occurring, high attractiveness rating.
- 8) Netalzul Mtn - currently has a ROS class of semi-primitive non-motorized with a high attractiveness rating.
- 12) Babine Mountains, 13) Rocher Deboule Range, 18) Hudson Bay Range 23) Telkwa Range South, 24) Telkwa Range North - all have areas with ROS classes of either semi-primitive motorized or semi-primitive non-motorized and high or very high attractiveness ratings.
- 15) Upper Mulwain and Red Canyon Creek - currently has a ROS class of semi-primitive non-motorized and has a high attractiveness rating. BC Parks is interested in maintaining this as a non-motorized area because it is adjacent to wilderness areas of Seven Sisters Provincial Park.
- 20) Caribou Mountain - is classed as semi-primitive non-motorized although it may be receiving some snowmobile use and has a high attractiveness rating

There are two areas which would appear to be the best choices for primitive area designation. The first priority would be the Sicintine Range (the widest range of recreation opportunities) and the second would be the North Bait Ranges.

There are two areas which would appear to be the best choices for designation as semi-primitive non-motorized areas. The first priority would be the Upper Mulwain and Red Canyon Creek area (also desired to be kept with non-motorized access by BC Parks) and second would be Netalzul Mountain.

6.6 Possible strategies for alpine areas

6.6.1 An optimum allocation of motorized and non-motorized winter recreation opportunities

Possible community vision:

- Informed choices are made to allocate opportunities of similar quality for both motorized and non-motorized recreation in alpine areas
- All areas considered desirable to snowmobilers and ski tourers are encompassed in the accepted management solution
- Other user groups affected by designations or agreements are consulted in the development of a management solution

Potential scenarios

- **Maintain the status quo where all areas not previously designated are available to all users**
- **Manage harvesting to leave natural barriers with the intent of keeping some areas non-motorized**
- **Negotiate a new sharing agreement between snowmobilers and skiers**
- **Designate further non-motorized areas**

We believe the most desirable option would be to assist skiers and snowmobilers in reaching a time-sharing agreement for all alpine areas which have not been previously designated either motorized or non-motorized (discussion in 7.7.1.2).

If this were not possible the next choice would be to designate some additional non-motorized areas.

6.6.2 Maintaining an optimum allocation of wilderness and semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities

The Bulkley Plan Area (previously the Bulkley Forest District) currently has a large primitive area in the upper Nilkitkwa and many alpine areas, which are semi-primitive non-motorized. The opportunity exists to maintain some of these areas with primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities.

A possible community vision:

Both **primitive** and **semi-primitive non-motorized** recreation opportunity classes continue to exist in the planning areas and user opportunities are distributed in a fair and equitable fashion. Definitions of these opportunity classes describe the types of recreation which are appropriate in each class.

Potential scenarios

- **Scenario 1 – designate percentages of the land base as primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized**
- **Scenario 2 - designate particular areas as primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized**
- **Scenario 3 – designate particular areas on an interim basis**
- **Scenario 4 – continue with status quo management**

Possible Strategies for Scenarios 1, 2, or 3

These strategies are listed in order of most to least effective in terms of resolving use conflicts over time (in the consultant's view).

- Zone the entire land base with recreation opportunity classes to ensure that a complete range of both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities continue to exist over time
- Zone only alpine/subalpine areas and any areas currently classed as either primitive or semi-primitive classes to ensure non-motorized opportunities continue to exist in primitive/wilderness and semi-primitive areas
- Designate the Sicintine Range as a "Primitive" area with no motorized uses and no new trail access. If possible include the North Bait Range to ensure as large an area as possible and to reflect the area zoned as Special Management Zone 1 in the LRMP and designate the Upper Mulwain, Red Canyon Creek area, (Special Management Zone 2 in the LRMP) as a semi-primitive non-motorized area with no motorized uses and no new trail access.

7.0 Lakes recreation management

Purpose of a lake recreation management strategy

The lake section of this strategic recreation study is intended to review current access to lakes, designate a range of future access types and provide strategies for ensuring a balance of access types continues to exist as forest development occurs. This section also discusses visual landscape management around high value lakes and provides suggested strategies for visual landscape management of forest development in these areas.

7.1 Issues, opportunities and community vision

7.1.1 Issue 1 - Loss of wilderness lakes: On reviewing future development as mandated in the LRMP, it is anticipated that only sixteen lakes would be more than 200 metres from a road and four of those are in parks. Some of the best lake angling opportunities are found at remote lakes. Remote lakes provide wilderness recreation opportunities sought after by local residents and adventure tourists including hiking, wildlife viewing, scenic viewing and undisturbed natural settings. Eco-tourists are not likely to be as interested in more accessible lakes.

Opportunity: Many lakes in the Bulkley TSA do not have road access (see table 7.2). Decisions can be made regarding what type of access is desirable and what other management actions are required to maintain a range of recreation opportunities at these lakes.

Possible community vision statements:

- Permanent roads will be laid out to maintain maximum possible distance from all lakes in the **Backcountry Trail, Backcountry and Wilderness** lake classes (see definitions in section 7.5.2.1)
- No trail access will be up-graded to allow new motorized use to any lakes
- Roads currently providing access to lakes will not be deactivated

Potential Strategies to meet this community vision: Suggested strategies are detailed in section 7.5.2.2

7.1.2 Issue #2 - Visual landscape management around wilderness lakes: Undisturbed views are one of the most valued features of backcountry and wilderness lakes. At the present time there are no visual landscape management objectives for many remote lakes and much of the recreation value of these lakes will be lost if logging or mining activity disturbs the viewscape.

Opportunity: At the present time eighteen of the twenty lakes in the Backcountry and Wilderness Classes— all with Moderate to Very High attractiveness ratings, (See columns 3-5 in table 7.3), have little or no modification to the forest cover caused by industrial activity within their viewscape. The opportunity exists to minimize the visual impact of harvesting on the viewscapes seen from these lakes.

Possible community vision: Visual landscape qualities at remote lakes will be maintained in near natural conditions

Possible strategies for managing viewscapes from remote lakes:

Suggested lakes to apply the following strategies to are: Farewell North, Little Joe, McQuarrie, Farewell, Four Lakes, Reiseter Lakes, Silvern Lakes, Mooseskin Johnny, Touhy, Netalzul, North, Mulwain, Coppermine, South, Nilkitkwa North, Un-named lakes south of Sicintine, Onerka and Hillary

- Complete visual landscape inventories on these lakes with highest priority going to lakes where visual impact could occur soonest.
- Develop Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs), which minimize the visual impact of harvesting on these lakes.
- Incorporate the approved VQO's into forest development plans.

7.2 Background Information

7.2.1 LRMP Direction regarding access

“A full spectrum of access possibilities to lake resources, ranging from no access to full access is required across the Bulkley Plan Area. The general management direction is that recreational opportunities of currently accessed lakes will be maintained. The Landscape Unit planning process will identify lakes that should remain in semi-primitive or primitive settings based on Resource Management Zone objectives; biophysical attributes and the Lake Classification Guidebook (FPC).”

“Managing recreational access is important to provide a variety of experiences and to minimize the impact of human disturbance on fish, wildlife and other environmental resources.”

Planning unit objectives in the LRMP often give specific access objectives for lakes in a unit. They may state no roads to remote lakes, or some lakes to remain unroaded in a unit or they may state trail access only to a particular lake. The lakes table includes all management direction specified for individual lakes.

7.2.2 LRMP direction regarding visual landscape management

“Scenic quality is a major factor in recreational use, and forest landscapes often provide the scenic backdrop so highly valued by the public and tourism industry. Since timber harvesting is usually the primary factor causing visual quality changes to the landscape partial cutting and creative block design will be used to minimize the impacts to the timber supply”

“Agencies will identify and consider areas of scenic values in landscape unit plans”

“ Objectives to manage the scenic resources will be identified in the landscape unit plan, with special attention given to the following areas...recreation focus points”

7.2.3 RAMP Direction regarding access

Although the RAMP document does not provide any direction specifically applied to lakes, sixteen principles for Recreation Access Management were developed which may help guide this review (See Appendix 1).

Principles that can be applied to this discussion include:

- Except where land use objectives have established otherwise, roads will be permanently or semi-permanently deactivated
- Lakes offering potential for wilderness recreation will remain without roads until completion of a district-wide lake classification that includes the setting of management objectives for these lakes
- Where fish and wildlife habitat values are determined to be sensitive to access development and use, these sensitivities will be recognized in recreation development and management decisions
- Motorized vehicles do not belong in some areas
- Restrictions on motorized recreational use in some areas should be qualitatively balanced with assured motorized vehicle access in other areas
- Both motorized and non-motorized experiences should exist within a range of travel distances and settings, including urban, semi-primitive and primitive

7.2.4 Lake characteristics and attractiveness ratings

Main Lakes Table

Available information on each lake was compiled into a table. Effort was focused on factors related to access and factors that would allow an assessment of relative attractiveness of lakes across the TSA.

Information included:

- Lake classification work previously completed in the district
- Lake inventory reports on a limited number of lakes
- A review of the large scale satellite photo for the district
- Review of air photographs for some areas
- Data from the 1999 Recreation Features Inventory and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
- Data and direction from the LRMP
- Discussion with MOE staff and personal knowledge.

Lake Attractiveness Ranking

In order to follow LRMP direction to provide a full spectrum of access opportunities, a ranking process was developed to evaluate the relative attractiveness of lakes to recreation users across the TSA (See table 7.1 below). The system was intended to identify which lakes had the ability to attract the highest numbers of users. Lakes were ranked according to:

- Their diversity of physical features
- Range of possible recreation opportunities
- Existing facilities and
- Ease of access.

A weighting was also given for the Management Class assigned during the recent Recreation Features Inventory as it represents a ranking of relative recreation value. It should be noted that this ranking system is intended to provide a basis for determining relative attractiveness of lakes. Under this system remote lakes with limited access and no facilities have an inherent lower ranking. This should not be taken to mean that they are an inherent lower quality, just that they have a lower ability to attract large numbers of users. A Summary table, including the factors which led to the individual attractiveness rating for each lake is contained in Appendix F

Table 7.1
Lake Attractiveness Ratings

Very High Attractiveness # From main lake table - Lake name	Rating Points	Moderate Attractiveness # From main Lake table - Lake name	Rating Points
48) Babine	25	52) Lake near Moricetown	14
45) Tyhee	24	51) Un-named 3 (Sicintine area)	14
29) Chapman	22	37) Farewell	14
40) MacDonnell	21	36) Coffin	14
26) Taltzen	21	32) Starvation	14
25) Kitsequecla	21	28) Call	14
47) Nilkitkwa	20	16) McQuarrie	14
43) Kathlyn	20	7) Louise	14
3) Mooseskin Johnny	20	57) Crater	13
46) Round	19	53) Little Joe Lakes	13
41) McDowell	19	49) Un-named 1 (Babine lake area)	13
		44) Seymour	13
		39) Hillary	13
		38) Nilkitkwa North	13
		14) South	13
		13) North	13
		2) Farewell North	13
		42) Toboggan	12
		35) Bristol	12
		19) Netalzul Meadows	12
		17) Touhy	12
		15) Coppermine	12
		10) Duckwing	12
High Attractiveness # From main lake table - Lake name	Rating Points	Low Attractiveness # From main lake table - Lake name	Rating Points
31) Torkelson	18	33) Holland	11
27) Dennis	18	24) Camp	11
30) Morin	17	21) Boucher	11
56) Silvern Lakes	16	20) Clota	11
34) Aldrich	16	9) Cerber	11
23) Sandstone	16	5) Acorn	11
22) Hankin	16	50) Un-named 2 (Mid Nilkitkwa)	10
12) Jack Mould	16	11) Duckbill	10
6) Onerka	16	18) Wan	7
1) Mulwain	16	4) Netalzul	7
55) Reiserer Lakes	15		
54) Four Lakes	15		
8) Bud	15		

Note 1: These values are an amalgamation of factors affecting recreation attractiveness and don't necessarily reflect fisheries, wildlife and biodiversity values.

Note 2: As with the trail and alpine attraction rating systems, these values are intended to rank lakes according to their appeal to the highest numbers of people. People who value wilderness experience and solitude most highly would likely rank these lakes in a different order.

7.3 Existing use of lakes

7.3.1 Summer use of lakes

Existing summer uses include fishing, motor boating, water skiing, jet skiing, canoeing, sailing, wind surfing, swimming, beach activities, wildlife viewing and birding. Use is typically concentrated where there are road access points, beaches, boat launches and good fishing opportunities. This means highest use is on lakes near population centres as well as Babine Lake. No user numbers are available except for overnight use at various provincial parks which happen to be on lakes.

7.3.2 Winter use of lakes

Existing winter use of lakes includes ice fishing, cross-country skiing, Snowmobiling and dog sledding. Ice fishing is likely to be concentrated where people feel the best opportunities occur, while Snowmobiling and skiing are typically concentrated on lakes in the Bulkley Valley which are close to population centers. As with summer use, no numbers are available regarding actual levels of use.

7.4 Trends in Outdoor Recreation related to Lake use

- An aging population will look for high quality recreation lakes with either road access or access via well maintained trails with a low level of difficulty
- Sightseeing, bird watching, wildlife viewing, picnicking and walking are all activities that have high numbers of participants. Lakes having these opportunities will likely experience higher use levels
- A BC parks survey indicates that nearly 2/3 of BC residents participate in outdoor swimming while over ¾ of BC residents enjoy “going to the beach”. This high level of participation is demonstrated in this area with the high level of use at the Tyhee Provincial park beach
- Day Hiking, backpacking and camping in primitive areas are all growing at a high rate according to the US National Recreation Survey. These are all activities where a more remote lake is highly desirable, either for a lunch stop or overnight camping. Day hiking is very popular in the Bulkley TSA
- Approximately 24% of BC residents participate in motor boating. Road accessible lakes with boat launches are important for this part of the population
- 30 - 37% of BC residents are active in freshwater fishing. A range of access to fishing lakes is desirable, from road access for families to cross-country access to remote, high quality fishing lakes for the enthusiast
- Around 1 in 5 BC residents participates in canoeing
- Eco-tourists will be interested in visiting lakes which have undisturbed views, scenic views, opportunities to view wildlife, canoe and hike

7.5 Discussion of issues & potential strategies

7.5.1 Loss of wilderness values caused by changing access

The level of public access may affect the recreation values of a lake at least as much as forest harvesting or silviculture activities. Easy public access often results in a decrease in solitude, lower fishing quality, fewer wildlife sightings – in general, a loss of the wilderness character provided by a lake.

Riparian reserves and lakeshore management zones often won't address these concerns. Addressing access management in forest development plans will ensure that the construction and deactivation of roads in the vicinity of lakes is conducted in accordance with LRMP direction to provide a full spectrum of access possibilities.

The LRMP states that “recreational opportunities at currently accessed lakes will be maintained”. The assumption was made that this meant roads currently providing access will not be deactivated. Therefore this review is meant to determine if status quo management will provide an appropriate range of trail and air or bush walking access to the rest of the lakes within the TSA.

Current lake access opportunities - A table was compiled which compared lake attraction ranking with existing road, trail or air access and the LRMP management zone (See table 8.2 below). At the present time there appears to be an adequate range of different lake access opportunities.

How lake access opportunities may change – An analysis of current access, access management direction from the LRMP, Resource Management Zones from the LRMP and ecosystem mapping from the LRMP was completed to determine how lake access opportunities would change as forest development proceeds. Table 8.3, below outlines the kinds of access lakes would have as forest development proceeds. This was analyzed to determine if any gaps or opportunities could be predicted in the spectrum of access.

Implementing the LRMP as it stands would see close to three quarters of all lakes either on road systems or within 200 metres of a road. Only sixteen of the fifty-seven lakes evaluated would be more than 200 metres from a road and four of those are in parks.

Using recreation trends to evaluate future access - The main tool for assessing this situation is a review of trends in recreation and tourism, which could be related to lake access.

A growing number of birdwatchers and walkers will likely find good birding & walking opportunities on the easily accessible lakes. Opportunities for swimming or visiting a beach are relatively rare in the Bulkley TSA and those that occur are mainly on road accessible lakes. Many people enjoy using area lakes for canoeing but again most use can be expected to be concentrated on road accessible lakes or lakes close to roads. Motor boating is a popular growing activity, accommodated by road accessible lakes.

Fishing is a popular activity in the Bulkley TSA. There are contradicting indications in various public surveys regarding whether the number of anglers is increasing or decreasing. However, in the Bulkley TSA it is generally apparent that river fishing is increasing while levels of stream and lake fishing are less well known. It is widely recognized that more remote lakes often have better fishing due to lower fishing pressure. Lower fishing pressure often means larger fish are available to catch. This provides a strong argument for maintaining a number of lakes that are more difficult to access.

More remote lakes have many of the wilderness recreation opportunities sought after by both residents and adventure-tourists. These opportunities include hiking, wildlife viewing, canoeing, and scenic viewing in an undisturbed natural setting. Eco-tourists are not likely to be as interested in more accessible lakes.

Table 7.2
Existing lake access vs. attractiveness
and LRMP management zone

Low Lake Attractiveness				
Low – Road Access		Low – Trail Access		Low – Air Access
24) Camp	IRM	18) Wan *	IRM/LC	4) Netalzul
		11) Duckbill *	IRM	5) Acorn
		50) Un-named 2 *	IRM/LC	20) Clota
		9) Cerber*	IRM/LC	21) Boucher
				33) Holland
				IRM
Moderate Lake Attractiveness				
Moderate – Road Access		Moderate – Trail Access		Moderate – Air Access
35) Bristol	IRM	12) Duckwing*	IRM/LC	15) Coppermine
42) Toboggan	Rural	2) Farewell North	CORE	17) Touhy
44) Seymour	Rural	49) Un-named 1 *	IRM	19) Netalzul Meadow
32) Starvation	IRM/LC	53) Little Joe	Park	CORE
36) Coffin	IRM/LC	57) Crater	CORE	13) North
52) near Moricetown	Rural	7) Louise *	IRM/LC	14) South
		16) McQuarrie	CORE	38) Nilkitkwa North
		28) Call	Park	39) Hillary
		37) Farewell	CORE	51) Un-named 3
				IRM
High Lake Attractiveness				
High – Road Access		High – Trail Access		High – Air Access
22) Hankin	IRM	8) Bud*	CORE	1) Mulwain
30) Morin	IRM/LC	54) Four Lakes	Park	6) Onerka
27) Dennis	SMZ-2	55) Reisetter Lakes	Park	
31) Torkelson	Core	34) Aldrich*	IRM/LC	
		12) Jack Mould*	CORE/LC	
		23) Sandstone*	CORE	
		56) Silvern	IRM	
Very High Lake Attractiveness				
Very High – Road Access		Very High – Trail Access		Very High – Air Access
41) McDowell	IRM	3) Mooseskin Johnny	SMZ2	
46) Round	Rural			
43) Kathlyn	Rural			
47) Nilkitkwa	IRM/LC			
25) Kitsequecla	IRM			
26) Taltzen	IRM/LC			
40) McDonnell	SMZ-2			
29) Chapman	IRM/LC			
45) Tyhee	Rural			
48) Babine	IRM/LC			

* Lakes with roads within a few hundred metres

Table 7.3

Projected lake access

(with implementation of the LRMP)

(Each column arranged from low to very high attractiveness rankings)

Road Access	Front Country Trail less than 200 metres or permanent road within 200 metres	Backcountry trail Trail longer than 200 metres	Backcountry No trail & greater than 200 metres from a road	Wilderness No trail and greater than 1 km from a road
24) Camp (L)	18) Wan (L)	2) Farewell North (M)	17) Touhy (M)	39) Hillary (M)
35) Bristol (M)	11) Duckbill (L)	53) Little Joe (M)***	19) Netalzul Meadows (M)	6) Onerka (H)
42) Toboggan (M)***	50) Un-named 2 (L)	57) Crater (M)	13) North (M)	
44) Seymour (M)***	9) Cerber (L)	16) McQuarrie (M)	1) Mulwain (H)**	
32) Starvation (M)	4) Netalzul (L)	28) Call (M)***		
36) Coffin (M)	5) Acorn (L)	37) Farewell (M)		
52) Lake near Morictown (M)***	20) Clota (L)	54) Four lakes (H)***		
22) Hankin (H)	21) Boucher (L)	55) Reisetter (H)***		
30) Morin (H)	33) Holland (L)	56) Silvern (H)		
27) Dennis (H)	12) Duckwing (M)	Mooseskin J (VH)		
31) Torkelson (H)	49) Un-named 1 (M)			
41) McDowell (VH)	7) Louise (M)			
46) Round (VH)***	15) Coppermine (M)*			
43) Kathlyn (VH)***	14) South (M) *			
47) Nilkitkwa (VH)	38) Nilkitkwa north (M)*			
25) Kitseguecla (VH)	51) Un-named 3 (M)*			
26) Taltzen (VH)	8) Bud (H)			
40) McDonnell (VH)	34) Aldrich (H)			
29) Chapman (VH)	12) Jack Mould (H)			
45) Tyhee (VH)***	23) Sandstone (H)			
48) Babine (VH)				

*The Access Objective & strategies below state that there should be no permanent roads within 500 metres of Coppermine/South/Nilkitkwa North and the un-named lakes south of the Sicintine and moves them from the **Front country** (less than 200 metres from a road) to the **Backcountry** category of access (greater than 200 metres from a road and no trail)

**It should be possible to have no permanent roads within 1 km of Mulwain Lake; this is reflected in the Access Objective & strategies below as well

*** Lakes not within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forests

Note 1: The figure of 200 metres was chosen to divide front country and backcountry lakes because there was a grouping of lakes accessed by trails of less than 200 metres while the next grouping of lake access distances was 500 metres and longer. It was felt that these longer trails made the lake experience different, particularly because it is much more difficult to pack a boat into lakes accessed by trails of over 500 metres. Also, a large number of CORE ecosystems (From LRMP zoning) surround lakes by approximately 200 metres of un-roaded land.

7.5.2 Making sure backcountry and wilderness lake recreation opportunities remain *(Primitive and semi-primitive ROS classes)*

It is apparent that there will be adequate numbers of road accessible lakes and lakes which have roads within 200 meters as forest development occurs. Backcountry and wilderness lake recreation opportunities will only be available if management actions are taken.

Given expected recreation demand for back country fishing opportunities as well as resident and tourist desires to experience wilderness type lakes we believe it is reasonable to maintain access to approximately one third of the more attractive lakes in the Bulkley TSA in two different categories of access: **Backcountry or Wilderness**. Management conditions for these categories are defined below.

7.5.2.1 Suggestions

To ensure that a range of lake access opportunities continues to be available, each lake would be classified into one of the following four types of access and separate management strategies would be applied to each category:

- **Wilderness Lakes** - Lakes *more than 1 km* from a road with no trail and Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings
- **Back country lakes without trails** - Lakes *more than 200m* from a road with no trail and Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings
- **Backcountry lakes with trails** - Lakes *more than 200 m* from a road with a trail with Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings
- **Front country lakes** - (Lakes *less than 200 m* from a road with Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings)

The figure of 200 metres was chosen to divide front country and backcountry lakes because there was a grouping of lakes accessed by trails of less than 200 metres while the next grouping of lake access distances was 500 metres and longer. It was felt that these longer trails made the lake experience different, particularly because it is much more difficult to pack a boat into lakes accessed by trails of over 500 metres. Also, a large number of CORE ecosystems (From LRMP zoning) surround lakes by approximately 200 metres of un-roaded land.

Suggested community vision statements

Based on current and anticipated demand for remote lake recreation opportunities the following principles and objectives will apply.

- Permanent roads will be laid out to maintain maximum possible distance from all lakes in the **Backcountry Trail, Backcountry and Wilderness** lake classes (see definitions above)
- No trail access will be up-graded to allow new motorized use at any lakes
- Roads currently providing access to lakes will not be deactivated

7.5.2.2 Potential access strategies for lakes

Wilderness Lakes - Lakes greater than 1 km from a road with no trail and Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings)

Possible lakes include: Onerka, Hillary, Mulwain

Potential strategies:

- No forest roads to be located within one kilometer of these lakes
- Any harvesting within one kilometer will be designed to avoid increasing accessibility to these lakes
- Any mineral development roads will be permanently deactivated as soon as possible
- No new trail permits will be issued for trails to these lakes
- No new recreation site development will be permitted.

Backcountry Lakes without trails - Lakes greater than 200m from a road with no trail and Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings

Possible lakes include: Touhy, Netalzul Meadows, North, South, Coppermine, Nilkitkwa North & Un-named lakes south of Sicintine Range

Potential strategies

- No permanent forest roads will be located within 500 metres of these lakes
- Any roads required for resource access within 500 metres of these lakes will be temporary and will be permanently deactivated as soon as practical
- No new trail permits will be issued for trails to these lakes
- Mineral exploration work to be accomplished with air access

Note – Coppermine, South, are inside, but on the very edge of a CORE Ecosystem. Nilkitkwa North & Un-named lakes south of Sicintine are in a Landscape Corridor and IRM zone, respectively - LRMP management direction says no roads to remote lakes in this unit.

Backcountry Lakes with trails - Lakes greater than 200 m from a road with a trail with Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings)

Possible lakes include: Farewell North, Crater, McQuarrie, Farewell, Silvern, Mooseskin Johnny

Possible strategies

- No trail permits allowing upgrading for motorized access
- No permanent forest roads will be located within 500 metres of these lakes
- Any roads required for resource access within 500 metres of these lakes will be temporary and will be permanently deactivated as soon as practical
- Mineral exploration work to be accomplished with air access

Front country Lakes - Lakes less than 200 m from a road with Moderate & Higher Attraction Ratings)

Possible lakes include: Duckwing, un-named 1, Louis, Bud, Aldrich, Jack Mould, and Sandstone

Possible strategies

- No trail permits allowing upgrading for new motorized access

7.5.3 Managing the views from back country & wilderness lakes

Discussion

People seeking backcountry or wilderness lakes value the undisturbed atmosphere of these lakes highly; they often rate the undisturbed view as the most important recreation feature. At the present time there are no strategies to protect the viewscapes for many remote lakes and much of the recreation value of these lakes will be lost if logging or mining development creates excessive disturbances in the view.

At the present time eighteen of the twenty lakes in the Backcountry and Wilderness Classes– all with Moderate to Very High attractiveness ratings, (See columns 3-5 in table 8.3), have little or no modification to the forest cover caused by industrial activity within their viewcape. The opportunity exists to minimize the visual impact of harvesting on the viewscapes seen from these lakes.

In order to evaluate the impact of various visual management strategies on timber harvesting or mineral development within viewscapes of these lakes, visual inventories must be completed for them.

7.5.3.1 Possible strategies for managing viewscapes from remote lakes:

Suggested lakes to apply the following strategies to are: Farewell North, Little Joe, McQuarrie, Farewell, Four Lakes, Reisetser Lakes, Silvern Lakes, Mooseskin Johnny, Touhy, Netalzul, North, Mulwain, Coppermine, South, Nilkitkwa North, Un-named lakes south of Sicintine, Onerka and Hillary

- Complete visual landscape inventories on these lakes with highest priority going to lakes where visual impact could occur soonest.
- Develop Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs), which minimize the visual impact of harvesting on these lakes.
- Incorporate the approved VQO's into forest development plans.

8.0 Recreation site management

8.1 Issues, opportunities and community vision

8.1.1 Issue #1 - Recreation site maintenance uses scarce funds. There are no objective criteria in place to evaluate whether these expenditures are the “best value” that can be had. Another way of putting this - does maintaining recreation sites provide greater benefits than improving maintenance on highly used trails?

Opportunity: The opportunity exists to consult with recreation users to determine what priorities they would set for resource expenditures for outdoor recreation in the Bulkley TSA.

Possible community vision: Funds available for forest recreation maintenance and development are used in ways that provide the greatest benefit to forest recreation users.

Potential strategies:

- Seek community input on funding priorities

Possible outcomes:

- All forest recreation sites continue to be maintained to current standards
- Some recreation sites are allowed to revert to nature and the recaptured funding is spent on higher priorities

8.1.2 Issue #2 - Babine Weir area: Anglers using the new recreation site away from the river reportedly feel the site requires improvements. This site was developed primarily to reduce potential for negative grizzly bear/human interaction in the weir area. Many people who used to camp along the river wish to stay along the river and it is more difficult to get them to move to a new site if that new site is of a lower quality.

Opportunity: The opportunity exists to make an easier transition to camping away from the river if the new recreation site is improved through development of a water source and more attractive camping sites.

Possible community vision: People enjoy the quality of camping at the new recreation site near the Babine Weir.

Potential strategies:

- Pursue joint funding by various agencies to ensure the new recreation site provides a good quality camping experience.

8.1.3 Issue 3 - There are relatively few recreation sites in the Bulkley area. Compared to the adjacent forest districts of Fort St. James, Morice and Lakes there are relatively few recreation sites, although the number of sites is roughly equivalent to those found in the Kispiox and Kalum district.

Opportunity: Opportunities exist to develop additional recreation sites on lakes in the Bulkley TSA – Hankin Lake was mentioned as a lake where a new site could be developed in the 1998 LRMP document. With increasing angling use of the Bulkley River and increasing kayaking use on many area rivers, recreation sites which function as put-in, take-out points and picnic locations may become desirable (This is discussed further in [section 9.0](#) – River recreation management).

Possible community vision: Demands for additional recreation sites are evaluated through objective criteria which determines the best use of available funding.

Potential strategies:

- New sites will only be developed when increased demand justifies them and their cost/benefit has been objectively evaluated along side other potential development and maintenance projects

8.2 Background information

8.2.1 Direction from LRMP related to recreation sites

General

- Objectives to manage the scenic resources will be identified in landscape unit plans, with special attention given to the following areas: major corridors, ***recreation focus points*** and specific viewpoints. Recreation sites would be considered recreation focus points.
- Tourism and outdoor recreation is a growing industry in the Bulkley Plan Area. It is thus very important to manage this resource to maintain or enhance opportunities for a diverse range of recreational values and uses across the biophysical settings of the area.
- Agencies, affected tenure holders, and local user groups will be requested to provide input and assist in the management of existing and new recreations sites and trails.
- The LRMP recognizes the importance of archaeological resources and will ensure that agencies will minimize the impact of development on both archaeological and traditional use sites (Consensus Management Direction – Cultural Heritage Resources).

Site Specific

- ***Babine River Weir area:*** An emphasis will be placed on grizzly bear management, focusing on the importance of maintaining grizzly bear habitat, especially that required for travel and denning (Babine River Planning Unit).
- ***Mercury Landing:*** Maintain public boat access at Mercury Landing or an alternate suitable location on Babine Lake (Babine River Planning Unit).
- Special attention will be paid to the sensitive viewscapes as seen from Recreational lakes, no formal VQOs required in most cases (Torkelson Planning Unit).
- An opportunity noted for a recreation site at Hankin Lake for a unique “boat-in” experience (Copper planning unit).

8.2.2 RAMP direction related to recreation sites

None

8.3 Existing use

Limited knowledge exists regarding the levels of use at forest recreation sites in the Bulkley Plan Area (previously the Bulkley Forest District). It is likely that sites with good opportunities for fishing and boating get higher levels of use in the summer period. Most sites receive their heaviest uses during mid-summer and during the hunting season in the fall.

The existing range of recreation sites includes:

- 2 on rivers
- 7 on lakes
- 2 at old fire lookout towers
- 1 at a major scenic attraction – Twin Falls
- 1 with two popular backcountry cabins – Harold Price

Visitor surveys completed at these sites indicate users are generally satisfied with the quality and maintenance of the existing sites. There has been no attempt to evaluate whether the public is satisfied with the range of sites types and the numbers of sites available. However, there have been few requests for the development of new sites.

8.4 Trends related to recreation sites

- ***Camping:*** Surveys indicate between 47% and 53% of BC residents participate in Auto and RV camping. The 1998 BC Parks survey indicated that close to half of all campers

use forest recreation sites. The 1995 US survey indicated the camping in developed areas increased 38% in the thirteen years between 1982 and 1995 while camping in primitive areas increased 58% over the same period.

8.5 Strategies related to recreation sites

Babine Weir area: Anglers using the new recreation site away from the river reportedly feel the site requires improvements.

Suggested strategy:

- Evaluate the new site and facilitate any improvements which are viewed necessary to encourage anglers to use it.

Proposed Hankin Lake Site: The LRMP suggested a potential boat in site at Hankin Lake. At present there is no indication that there is a demand for such a site.

Strategy:

The Ministry of Forests will investigate the potential for a future recreation site on Hankin Lake. If good potential exists, a map reserve will be established which would allow future development of a site when demand and budgets warrant.

9.0 River recreation management

9.1 Issue and opportunity

The Bulkley River is seeing large increases in the numbers of users. With this increase, conflict is beginning to occur between boaters, anglers and other users. Land owners who have previously allowed public access to the river across their lands are starting to consider whether they wish to continue doing so. Also, there are currently no mechanisms in place to limit use levels (except for anglers). If use continues to grow, users may no longer be able to have the kind of recreation experience they would like to have on the river. Other rivers may see conflicts appear in the future but they are not reported as significant at the present time (2001).

River recreation activities are undertaken by many different user groups including: anglers, rafters, kayakers, tubers, canoeists and others. Management of these activities is conducted by many different government agencies including: The Ministry of Forests, BC Parks, BC Fish and Wildlife, The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, BC Crown assets and Lands, The Department of Transport and likely some others. Coordinating the large number of user groups and management agencies in a way that positive action can be taken is a large task. The most significant opportunity is that existing conflicts between users are relatively low.

9.2 Possible community vision for the Bulkley River

A Bulkley River recreation management plan minimizes conflict between users and user groups, access points are identified and secured and river users feel that use on rivers is within social carrying capacity.

9.3 LRMP direction related to rivers

Sustainability

- Human activities should not impair the capability of the resource base to provide a specified yield of resource products in perpetuity (LRMP Central concepts). This relates directly to fisheries management.
- Developments should enable people of the community to maintain their quality of life without compromising the needs of future generations (LRMP Management principles). This relates to levels and types of river recreation use which may be appropriate.

Access

- Managing recreation access is important to provide a variety of experiences and to minimize the impact of human disturbance on fish, wildlife and other environmental resources (Consensus Management Direction).

Visual Quality

- The scenic resources of the Bulkley Plan Area (previously the Bulkley Forest District) are critical to the viability of the tourism/recreation sector and to the quality of life of area residents. Objectives to manage the scenic resources will be identified in the landscape unit plan, with special attention given to the following areas: major corridors, recreation focus points and specific viewpoints (Consensus Management Direction)
- Consider visual quality in community and resource development planning, especially travel corridors: Highway 16, ***Bulkley River*** and Telkwa High Road (Bulkley Valley Planning Unit).

- Development will pay special attention to the views from the **Bulkley River** and Highway 16 (Sinclair Creek subunit - Telkwa Planning unit).

User Conflicts

- Agencies will provide management to address recreation user conflicts, including the Bulkley River (Bulkley Valley planning unit).

Fisheries

- Agencies will focus management on winter habitat for ungulates, migratory birds, and fisheries in the Bulkley and Telkwa Rivers and their tributaries (Bulkley Valley Planning unit).

9.4 RAMP direction regarding rivers

None

9.5 Trends related to river recreation

- ***Motorboat Activities:*** Approximately one quarter of BC residents participate in motorboat activities, the 1998 BC parks survey shows a decline in number of participants from the previous year, while the 1995 US survey showed at 40% increase in participants over a thirteen year period. An un-known amount of this motorboat use occurs on rivers. In our area it seems that most motorized river use is by jet boats on the Bulkley and Babine Rivers.
- ***Freshwater Fishing:*** Various surveys show between 30 and 37% of BC residents participate in freshwater fishing, much of this on rivers. Both the BC Parks surveys of BC residents and the US National survey show an on-going decline in the number of people fishing. It would appear that this trend is not occurring locally where levels of river fishing seem to be increasing. The number of non-resident angling parties is also increasing. Management which maintains the quality of the fishery will be important to sustaining fishing opportunities.
- ***Canoeing:*** Various surveys show that between 20 and 25% of BC residents participate in canoeing activities. Likely a large percentage of these people canoe on rivers. BC Parks surveys find that the number of people canoeing is increasing faster than most other activities - + 19% between 1995 and 1998. Locally both commercial and private groups canoe the Bulkley and Babine rivers.
- ***Rafting:*** The 1995 US national survey found approximately 8% of the population participated in rafting. Rate of participation increased around 16% over the thirteen-year period between US Surveys. No estimation of rafting use was found for BC. Locally, commercial rafting companies offer rafting trips on the Bulkley and Babine rivers. Use seems to be slowly increasing
- ***Kayaking:*** The 1998 BC Parks survey indicates that 10% of BC residents participate in Kayaking. Kayaking is the fastest growing outdoor activity in the BC parks survey with the number of participants tripling between 1991 and 1998. Locally an active kayaking club makes weekly use of the Telkwa, Babine, Bulkley and Copper Rivers as well as several smaller streams.
- ***Eco-tourism:*** Eco-tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism market. Rafting/Kayaking and canoeing are all popular activities in this market. These activities in conjunction with the opportunities to view undisturbed natural scenery, mountains, birds and wildlife meet many of the desires of eco-tourists. While the local market is

relatively small at present it has potential to grow much larger through good marketing and the provision of quality service.

9.6 Discussion

River use is growing throughout the planning area. With the growing use comes conflict for resources among various user groups. For instance commercial rafters may wish to see portions of some rivers non-motorized while river boaters would like increased access to currently inaccessible waters. Access points have become a contentious issue in some areas. Private property owners may not continue to allow public access through their land to a growing number of users. In addition the question arises as to how much use river resources can sustain. How much commercial and private recreation use can occur before the impact on camping areas becomes unacceptable to users? How many other users must be seen on the river before the majority of people think there is too much use on the river? No single agency is responsible for managing all aspects of river use and the attendant resources.

Various aspects of resource management have been addressed including:

- Angling - through an angling use plan (On the Bulkley River only) and angling regulations
- Visual Landscape Management – Ministry of Forests Landscape Unit Plans
- Access – Ministry of Forests – LRMP direction
- Recreation Sites – Ministry of Forest Sites, Babine River Provincial Park, UREP's

Many aspects of river resource management cannot be effectively managed in isolation. For instance it is not possible to decide where access locations are appropriate without considering Fishing opportunities and popular kayaking/canoeing reaches. The types of available access also have a significant impact on the range of motorized and non-motorized opportunities available. It can not be decided which river viewsapes are most important without knowing what reaches and sites on a river are highly used for recreation activities including fishing, camping and boating.

Managing river resources effectively will require a substantial inter-agency effort with full participation by interested user groups. The issues that must be dealt with will depend on the objectives of the agencies and user groups involved. They could include:

- Appropriate types of use
- Levels of use or limits to use for various types of recreation
- Recreation site designation for important camping, fishing, access locations
- Designation of access locations and protection from alienation
- Methodology for resolving user conflicts
- Location of travel corridors and utility corridors near rivers
- Identification of high priority viewsapes and development of visual quality objectives
- Wildlife management issues related to river recreation use

9.7 Possible strategy

Possible community vision for river recreation:

A Bulkley River recreation management plan minimizes conflict between users and user groups, access points are identified and secured and river users feel that use on rivers is within social carrying capacity.

Possible strategies:

- Management agencies work with user groups to develop a river recreation plan when they are requested to do so
- No direct management of river recreation is put in place
- Investigation is done to find out what kinds of management strategies could be utilized to minimize future conflicts on the river and maintain future public access to the river

Appendix A

Trends in various

Outdoor recreation activities

*The superscript numbers in the following text
Refer to the sources found on page 9 in the Trends section of this study*

1 Walking participation rates in the US increased by nearly 43% between 1982 and 1995¹. Walking has the highest ranking in participation rates with over two thirds of the US population participating in walking -133.7 million. Enthusiasts who walk over 110 days per year account for three quarters of walking activity and comprise 21% of the total US population. Walking is most popular with those over 60 years in age, least popular with those in their twenties. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 92% of lower mainland residents walk for pleasure³. Locally, community trail networks in Telkwa and Smithers are heavily used for walking by area residents.

2 Hiking. Nearly 19% of Canadians over 15 participated in hiking and backpacking in 1996⁵. The participation rate in BC was nearly 24%. BC, Alberta and the Yukon all had much higher participation rates than the national average^{1bid}. In the US hiking had the 2nd highest rate of participation increase with almost 94% more hikers in 1995 than there were in 1982¹. Almost 24% of the US population went on hiking trips in 1995 - 47.8 million. People who hiked more than 10 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts accounted for 83% of total hiking activity. Over 25% of hikers were found in each of the 16-24 and 30-39 age groups. The other two age classes under 50 years had about 17% each while the 50+ age classes represented about 16% of total US hikers. Hiking is between one and half to two times more popular in the western US than any other part of the country^{1bid}. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 43% of lower mainland residents participate in “**day hiking**”, which is likely very similar to “**hiking**” as discussed here. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 60% of BC residents participate in “**day hiking**” a decline from 65% in 1995⁴. Day hiking, particularly in alpine/subalpine areas, is one of the most important recreation activities in the Bulkley TSA. Approximately 50 hiking trails provide a wide range of opportunities.

3 Snowmobiling. In 1996, only 2.5% of Canadians participated in Snowmobiling. Only 1% of BC residents participated in Snowmobiling, the lowest rate in Canada⁵. When one considers how much of the provincial population is concentrated in the lower mainland this statistic becomes believable. Snowmobiling is an activity with a high rate of participation increase in the US, nearly 34% more participants in 1995 than in 1982. In 1995 a relatively small proportion of the US population participated at only 3.5% - 7.1 million people. Snowmobilers who went out 5 days a year were classified as enthusiasts; they amounted to about 1% of the total US population and accounted for around 84% of total snowmobile use. Snowmobiling is most popular with the 30-39 year age group. Those 50 years of age and older are relatively less likely to be involved in snowmobiling¹. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 8% of BC residents participate in Snowmobiling. On a provincial basis this is a drop from 10% in 1995⁴. Participation rates are likely higher in the north where Snowmobiling conditions last for a longer period each year and opportunities are much more accessible than they are in the lower mainland. The Bulkley Valley has a very active snowmobile club and Snowmobiling opportunities in the Bulkley TSA attract snowmobilers from across the northwest. Snowmobiling has one of the highest numbers of outdoor winter recreation participants in the local area. Many quality areas are currently accessible throughout the TSA with further areas becoming accessible as the Forest road network continues to be developed.

4 Canoeing. In 1996 nearly 10% of Canadians over 15 participated in canoeing, kayaking or sailing activities in a natural environment. The participation rates in BC were very close to the national average⁵. In the US, canoeing participation rates increased around 17% between 1982 and 1995. Canoeing is relatively popular, with 7% of the US population taking a canoe trip in 1995 - 14.1 million participants. People who canoed four or more days a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts represent just fewer than 2% of the total US population and accounted for 73% of total canoeing use. Canoeing was most popular in the 16-24 and 30-39 age groups, least popular in the 25-29 and 60+ age groups. Canoeing is only half as popular in the western US as it is in other parts of the country¹. The 1995 GVRD Survey indicates that 25% of

lower mainland residents participated in either canoeing or kayaking³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 21% of BC residents participated in canoeing an increase from 19% in 1995⁴. Locally, limited canoeing occurs on area rivers and lakes.

5 Rafting in the US had participation rate increases to similar to canoeing and slightly higher participation levels with close to 8% of the US population taking a rafting trip in 1995 - 15.2 million people. People who rafted over 4 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts represent just fewer than 2% of the population and accounted for 75% of total rafting use. Over 92% of rafters are under 50 years in age with nearly 40% under 24 years in age¹. In the Bulkley TSA most rafting is conducted as a guided activity. The Bulkley and Babine Rivers offer the best opportunities in the area. The Babine River offers what is considered to be world class rafting opportunities.

6 Kayaking. In 1996 nearly 10% of Canadians over 15 participated in canoeing, kayaking or sailing activities in a natural environment. The participation rates in BC were very close to the national average⁵. In the US kayaking participation increased by around 17% with around 1% of the US population participating in 1995 - 2.6 million. People who kayaked over 5 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. They represented less than one half of one percent of the US population and accounted for 78% of total kayaking use. Over 77% of kayakers are under 39 years of age with only 6% in the 50+ age groups. Kayaking is nearly twice as popular in the western US as it is in other parts of the country. The 1995 GVRD survey indicated that 25% of lower mainland residents participated in either canoeing or kayaking³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 10% of BC residents participate in kayaking up from 7% in 1995. The BC Parks survey also indicated that the number of BC residents kayaking has tripled since 1991⁴. An active local group of kayakers exist in the Bulkley Valley. Regular outings occur on area rivers including the Telkwa, Bulkley and Babine. The quality of opportunity is high and accessible within a relatively short distance for most residents.

Freshwater fishing. In the 1996 Statistics Canada survey “fishing” included both saltwater and freshwater fishing, however, the report stated that nationally over 94% of the fishing is done on freshwater. Approximately 17.5% of the Canadian population over fifteen participated in fishing in 1996 – 4.2 million people. In BC, it is estimated that 537,000 residents went fishing in 1996. Nearly twice as many men as women fished. More than 75% of fishermen were between 25 and 55 years of age. Fishing is more popular among rural Canadians than it is among their urban counterparts (perhaps because of opportunity). Canadians fishing in 1996 spent an average of 17 days at this activity and made an average of slightly over twelve trips to do so. Nearly 43% of BC residents expressed themselves as being somewhat or strongly interested in fishing which indicates a potential for growth in this activity⁵. Freshwater fishing is one the activities which had fewer US participants in 1995 than in 1982, with nearly 4% fewer people fishing at the end of the thirteen year period. It is however, still a popular activity with close to 25% of the US population taking part in 1995 - 48.8 million people. People who fished over 15 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. These people represented slightly over 7% of the total US population and accounted for 79% of total freshwater fishing. Fishing was the most popular in the 30-39 year age group at about 25% of the total fishing participants. The balance of fishing use was relatively evenly spread through all the other age groups¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 30% of lower mainland residents participated in freshwater fishing³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 37% of BC residents participate in fishing. This survey showed that fishing had the single biggest drop in participation since 1995 when 46% of respondents participated in fishing⁴. On the contrary, Price Waterhouse and ARA Consulting Group (1996) found the freshwater recreational fishery in BC had a compound annual growth rate of 2 per cent between 1994 and 1996. Locally K.L. Morten conducted a survey of steelhead anglers on the Upper Babine in 1997. Among the findings were the following data:

- Place of residence – 17% Skeena Region, 26% other BC, 9% other Canadian, 46% non Canadian
- 97% anglers male, 3% female
- Average experience steelhead angling 11.7 years

In the Bulkley TSA excellent salmon and steelhead fisheries exist on the Bulkley, Babine and Copper Rivers. Trout fishing opportunities exist on approximately 50 lakes with types of opportunities ranging from roadside access to remote hike-in or fly-in type access. Local perception is that fishing effort for salmon and steelhead is increasing, many think too quickly, perhaps related to the quality of opportunity available here.

8 Bicycling. Canadians who cycled in “natural areas” in 1996 made up 8.6% of the population over fifteen⁵. Bicycling in the US remained very close to the same levels from 1982 to 1995 with less than 2% increase over the thirteen-year period between studies. However bicycling remains a very popular activity with nearly 28% of the US population riding during 1995 - 57.4 million people. Around 7% of the US population cycled at least 30 days in 1995 - these enthusiasts accounted for 80% of total biking use. Over 80% of bicyclists are under 50 years of age, with participants spread relatively evenly through the four age classes between ages 16 and 49¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 52% of lower mainland residents bicycle on roads and 29% bicycle on trails in BC³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 32% of BC residents participate in mountain biking⁴. Locally, an active group of Mountain Bike enthusiasts exists in the Smithers area. This group has developed a network of trails on the slopes of Hudson Bay Mountain near the town of Smithers. A large number of hiking trails, mining trails and forestry roads provide a very wide range of opportunities for mountain biking in the Bulkley TSA. A guide to area mountain biking trails has been printed.

9 Bird watching. Birding was included as part of “Wildlife viewing” by the 1996 Statistics Canada survey, however it is noted in the survey highlights that 900,000 Canadians participated in birding⁵. In the US, bird watching had the highest rate of participant increase - 155% between 1982 and 1995¹. It also ranked a respectable 6th in total participants - 27% of the population participated in 1995 - 54.1 million. Enthusiasts who bird watch over 50 days a year account for over 90% of bird watching activity and 9% of the US population. Bird watching is nearly twice as popular with those over 60 years in age as with those in any other age group. Those between 30 and 60 years in age are also active participants while those between 16 and 30 had relatively low participation rates. The 1995 GVRD study indicated that 20% of lower mainland residents participate in birding activities. Local lakes provide good water bird viewing opportunities from spring to fall and during the spring, the mixed forests of valley bottoms provide good opportunities for viewing perching birds. Locally, the Bulkley Valley Naturalists conduct a Christmas bird count each year and provide a forum for naturalists to share their interests. Many local residents feed birds during the long winters here. This experience undoubtedly encourages some people to take up more active bird watching. The aging population trend will likely be reflected with large increases in the numbers of birders over the next 10 – 20 years.

10 Sightseeing. In 1996 approximately 31% of Canadians over 15 participated in sightseeing⁵. Thirty five percent of BC residents participated in sightseeing, one of the highest participation rates in Canada^{ibid}. Sightseeing participation rates in the US increased nearly 40% between 1982 and 1995 and ranked 2nd in terms of overall participation with nearly 57% of the US population taking part in sightseeing - 113.4 million¹. Enthusiasts who spent at least 12 days a year sightseeing accounted for 78% of the activity and around 17% of the US population. All age groups seem to participate relatively equally in sightseeing^{ibid}. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 89% of lower mainland residents participate in sightseeing³. In the Bulkley TSA, the exceptional local scenery means that sightseeing is a secondary activity for many primary

activities including: hiking, backpacking, off road driving, Snowmobiling, canoeing, kayaking, rafting and walking. Sightseeing is also an important secondary activity in the eco-tourism industry, pointing out the on-going need for visual landscape management in high-use recreation and tourism areas.

11 Wildlife viewing. In 1996 Eighteen point six percent of Canadians over 15 participated in wildlife viewing⁵. In the same year nearly 640,000 BC residents participated in wildlife viewing, over 3% above the national average and one of the highest rates in Canada. Wildlife viewing is most popular amongst 20 –55 year old Canadians, those with incomes of \$30,000 or greater per annum and those with an education beyond secondary school. The average wildlife viewing participant spent over 17 days engaged in this activity and made an average of 12.5 trips specifically to view wildlife. Nearly 61% of Canadians indicated they were somewhat or very interested in watching, studying, feeding or photographing wildlife which indicates a strong potential for growth in this activity^{ibid}. US participation rates in 1995 were 31% or 62.6 million participants¹. Enthusiasts who spend at least 12 days a year in this activity made up nearly 10% of the US population and were responsible for 92% of wildlife viewing activity. Nearly half of the enthusiasts were between 30 and 49 years of age with the balance fairly evenly split between all the other age classes^{ibid}. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 32% of lower mainland residents participated in wildlife viewing and 47% of residents participated in A other nature study@. Thirty nine percent of the respondents to a 1994 Ecotourism study gave wildlife viewing the most important rating possible when asked how important it was to them². Locally, wildlife viewing is a secondary activity for many outdoor recreation activities including: hiking and backpacking, off road driving/ATV use, driving for pleasure, canoeing, kayaking and rafting. Important wildlife viewing sites include the Babine Fish weir for salmon runs and grizzlies and the Moricetown canyon for Native fishing/salmon runs.

12 Back packing. Hiking and back packing were a combined activity in the 1996 survey completed by Statistics Canada. In 1996, eighteen point five percent of Canadians over 15 participated in this activity⁵. The participation rates in BC, Alberta and the Yukon were all nearly 5% higher than the national average^{ibid}. In the US, backpacking increased at a high rate between 1982 and 1995 with nearly 73% more participants in 1995¹. Overall participation rates are high with about 24% of the US population participating in 1995 -15.2 million people. People who back packed over 5 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. About 2.5% of the US population fell into this category and represented 81% of total back packing use. Backpacking was significantly more popular with the 16-24 age group than any other, with over one third of the participants in this group. The other age groups under 50 years ranged between 15 and 20% in each group while only 11% of hikers are older than 50 years. Backpacking is nearly twice as popular in the western US than it is in any other part of the country. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 13% of lower mainland residents participate in backpacking³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 22% of BC residents participate in overnight backpacking. Backpacking was one of the few activities which had increased from 1995 when 19% of BC residents participated⁴. In our experience backpacking and camping in primitive areas is currently quite low in the Bulkley TSA although a wide range of good or excellent opportunities exists for these activities.

13 Camping in primitive areas. In 1996 nearly 19% of Canadians participated in camping in natural areas⁵. BC, Alberta and the Yukon all had camping participation rates nearly 5% above the national average.^{ibid} In the US camping in primitive areas increased about 58% between 1982 and 1995¹. Fourteen percent of the US population camped away from highway camping areas in 1995 -28 million people. People who camped over 7 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. Slightly over 4% of the US population fell into this category and they accounted for around 76% of this type of camping use. Most camping activity of this type was relatively evenly split amongst the age groups between 16 and 50 years. Only 16% of this type of camping occurred amongst the

50+ age groups. Camping in the west was significantly more important than in other parts of the US with 7-11% higher rates than other areas^{ibid}. In our experience backpacking and camping in primitive areas is currently quite low in the Bulkley TSA although a wide range of good to excellent opportunities exist for these activities.

14 Motor boating. In 1996 slightly over 9% of Canadians participated in motor boating activities⁵. Rates of participation in BC were slightly higher^{ibid}. In the US, motor boating increased almost 40% between 1982 and 1995 and ranked 10th in terms of overall participation by the US population with about 24% of the population motor boating during 1995 - 47 million people¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates 26% of lower mainland residents participated in motor boating activities³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 24% of BC residents participated in motor boating a marked decline from 31% in 1995⁴. In the Bulkley TSA the opportunities for motor boating are limited to a few large lakes and some sections of the Bulkley and Babine Rivers. The limited opportunity and relatively short boating season will not encourage a high participation level in this activity.

15 Picnicking by Canadians over fifteen had a participation rate of 26% in 1996. BC, Alberta and the Yukon all had higher participation rates – around thirty percent⁵. In the US, picnicking increased only 16% over the thirteen year period between 1982 and 1995 but as an outdoor recreation activity it rates 3rd in terms of over all participation by the US population with around 49% of the population going on picnics during 1995 - 98.3 million people. People who went on picnics at least 7 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts comprised 15% of the total US population and accounted for 73% of total picnicking. Almost one third of the participants are in the 30-39 year age group. The next highest age group participating in picnicking is the 40-49 with nearly 20% of total participants. The balance of use is evenly spread through the other age groups¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 70% of lower mainland residents participated in picnics³. In the Bulkley TSA picnicking is likely a secondary activity for hikers, swimmers and others undertaking day use activities. The most significant facilities for picnicking are provincial parks and forest recreation sites.

16 Camping in developed areas. The 1996 Statistics Canada Survey asked questions about “camping in natural areas” as opposed to camping in developed or primitive areas. In 1996 nearly 19% of Canadians participated in camping in natural areas. BC, Alberta and the Yukon all had camping participation rates nearly 5% above the national average⁵. In the US, camping in developed areas increased around 38% and as an outdoor recreation activity it rated 11th in terms of overall participation by the US population with about 21% of the population going on camping trips to developed camp grounds - 41.5 million people. Slightly over 6% of the US population camped at least 8 days a year and were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts accounted for about three quarters of all camping use. Camping was most popular in the 30-39 year age group. The other age groups all had lesser but significant numbers of campers. Camping was significantly more important in the west than any other part of the US. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 47% of lower mainland residents participate in Auto and RV camping, which is likely a similar category to the above one. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 53% of BC residents participated in camping, a decrease from 55% in 1995. Of these, 53% camped in a provincial park campsite, 47% in private campgrounds, 42% in Forest Recreation sites and 29% in National Park campsites. In the Bulkley TSA a range of road accessible camping opportunities exist. Tyhee Provincial Park and private campgrounds in Smithers, Telkwa and Moricetown provide highly developed sites on main roads. The Ministry of Forests provides primitive campsites on a network of forest roads.

17 Cross-country Skiing by Canadians over the age of fifteen had a participation rate of 3.5% in 1996. The participation rate in BC was fully thirty percent higher at 4.5% of the population over fifteen⁵. In the US, participation in cross-country skiing increased by nearly 23% between 1982 and 1995. Cross-country skiing had a relatively low number of participants with around 3% of the US population participating - 6.5 million people. An enthusiast only had to ski 6 days to be so rated, these people represent less than 1% of the US population and complete 73% of cross-country skiing activity. Cross-country skiing is most popular with the 30-39 year age group; otherwise it is equally popular with the other age groups¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 16% of lower mainland residents participate in Cross-country skiing³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 12% of BC residents participate in cross-country skiing a slight decrease from 13% in 1995⁴. The GVRD survey states the following reasons why cross-country skiing will continue to grow:

- Aging national population;
- Can be enjoyed by people in the 60+ age group;
- Fits well into the growing fitness trend;
- A reputation as an ideal family sport, diversity of appeal, (exercise, camaraderie, grace and speed);
- Perceived good value for expenditure

In the Bulkley TSA, cross-country skiing is a very important winter activity. The extensive groomed trail network in the Community Forest along with a large, new lodge and a lighted trail provide a provincially important facility. The ski club has produced many athletes of national calibre. Cross-country skiing is also popular on private lands throughout the Bulkley Valley. In the 90's backcountry ski touring attracted a growing number of users. Backcountry cabins in the Babine Mountains and the Telkwa Range are attracting ski tourers. Ski tourers looking for remote, steep slope skiing are using a number of peaks including Mt Seaton and parts of the Hudson Bay Range.

18 Hunting. In 1996 slightly over five percent of Canadians fifteen years and older participated in hunting - 1.2 million participants. The rate of participation in BC was just above 3% - 98,000 participants, the lowest participation rate in Canada. In Canada almost six times as many men as women hunt. Nearly 75% of hunting participants are between 25 and 55 years of age. Hunting is more popular among rural Canadians than it is among their urban counterparts (perhaps because of opportunity). Canadians hunting in 1996 spent an average of nearly 17 days at this activity and made an average of nearly 13 trips to do so. Across the country slightly over nine percent of the survey population expressed some interest or great interest in hunting⁵. In the US, hunting had the greatest rate of participation decrease over the study period with more than 12% fewer hunters in 1995 than there were in 1982. However 9% of the population is still involved in hunting as of 1995 - 14.2 million people. People who hunted at least 12 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. They represented around 2.5% of the US population and accounted for 74% of the use. Hunting was most popular with those in the 30-39 year age group. Moderate hunting use occurred in the other age groups younger than the 50 years while only 15% of total use occurred in those ages 50 years and older¹. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicates that 10% of BC residents participate in hunting down from 13% in 1995. The trends section of the GVRD study states "A While the number of (BC hunting) licenses sold has remained stable in the last five years (1995), this represents a declining participation rate due to a growing population" Locally, most hunting is for moose or deer, the quality of opportunity appears to have declined in recent years and more restrictive hunting regulations reflect this. It remains to be seen whether this is a cyclic decline.

19 Swimming and visiting a beach. In 1996, Twenty three percent of Canadians aged 15 and over participated in swimming in a natural environment⁵. Swimming participation rates for BC residents was nearly 4% higher than the national average^{ibid}. Swimming participation in the

US increased about 38% between 1982 and 1995¹. In the US population surveyed, 39% of the people swam outdoors during 1995 - 78.1 million people. Outdoor swimmers who participated more than 13 days in a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts accounted for 78% of total outdoor swimming activity. Swimming is most popular in the 16-24 and 30-39 year age groups. It is less popular in the other two age groups under 50 years. In the 50+ age groups only about 14% participate in outdoor swimming activities. In a related vein, the US survey indicates that 62% of the US population - 124 million people participated in Visiting a beach@ during the study period. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 61% of lower mainland residents participate in outdoor swimming and 83% participated in Going to the beach@³. A BC Parks survey in 1998 indicated 58% of BC residents participated in outdoor swimming, a decline from 62% in 1995 and 77% of British Columbians enjoyed Going to the beach@, a decline from 80% in 1995⁴. In the Bulkley Valley swimming is very popular during the summer months at Tyhee Lake Provincial Park. Other lakes in the Bulkley valley receive lesser amounts of swimming use. Occasional swimming occurs in the Bulkley River during the late summer.

20 Running/Jogging by US residents increased by around 14% between 1982 and 1995 and rated 7th as an activity that the US population participated in with around 26% of the people taking part -52.5 million people¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 31% of lower mainland residents participate in jogging or running³. In the Bulkley TSA running/jogging is restricted mainly to roads and trails within area communities. The population of this area appears to be generally quite fitness conscious and running is quite a popular outdoor activity.

21 Horseback riding. In 1996 1.6% of Canadians aged 15 and over participated in horseback riding while 2% of BC residents participated in this activity⁵. In the US, horseback riding increased around 10% over the 13-year period between 1982 and 1995. In 1995 around 7% of the US population participated in horseback riding - 14.3 million people. People who went riding at least 6 days in a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts represented 2.3% of the total US population and accounted for 94% of total riding use. Almost 37% of horseback riders are under the age of 24 years. The other three age groups under 50 years had 12-22% of riding participants. Only slightly over 11% of riders are older than 50 years¹. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 15% of lower mainland residents participate in horseback riding³. Horseback riding is popular in the Bulkley Valley but trail riding occurs mainly on private land. Only a few trails on crown land appear to be receiving horseback riding use.

22 Off road driving by Canadians had a participation rate of 3.4% in 1996. The participation rate in BC was about 30% higher at four point five percent⁵. In the US, off road driving participation rates increased by about 44% between 1982 and 1995¹. A participation rate of 14% ranks off road driving around 13th in terms of overall participation -27.9 million people. People who participated in off-road driving in at least 14 days a year were classified as enthusiasts. These enthusiasts accounted for 87% of total off-road driving. The 16-24 and 30-39 year age groups each had around 25% of the off-road driving participants. The 25-29 and 40-49 age groups had fewer participants while the 50+ age groups represented around 17% of total off-road drivers. Off-road driving is 20-30% more popular in the western US than it is in other parts of the country. The 1995 GVRD survey indicates that 77% of lower mainland residents drive for pleasure - an activity that undoubtedly overlaps this category³. ATV and 4x4 use is limited to hard surface roads in sensitive terrain through direction of the Bulkley LRMP. In the Bulkley TSA most off-road driving really takes place on de-activated logging roads.

Appendix B

Priorities for trail Inventory

Trails are arranged in each category according to their points in the Attractiveness rating exercise

- 1) Very High attraction, < 30 minutes travel time from Smithers
 - Crater Lake
 - Telkwa Pass Road
 - Silvern Lakes (from McDonnell side)
 - Glacier Gulch
 - Community Forest Ski Trails
- 2) High attraction, < 30 minutes travel time from Smithers
 - McDowell Lake
 - Malkow Lookout
 - Toboggan Creek Road
 - Community Forest Nature Trails
- 3) Very High Attractiveness rating, 30 minutes to one hour travel time from Smithers
 - Microwave/Winfield Plateau
 - Onion Mountain
 - Higgins Creek (the portion of the access outside Babine Mountains Park)
 - Cronin Creek (the portion of the access outside Babine Mountains Park)
 - Little Joe Lakes (the portion of the access outside Babine Mountains Park)
- 4) High attraction, 30 minutes to one hour travel time from Smithers
 - Harold Price – Meed Creek route
 - Jack Mould Lake
 - Hankin Plateau (status of exclusion area will indicate whether inventory required)
 - Duckwing Lake
 - Mooseskin Johnny
 - Hunter Basin (status of exclusion area will indicate whether inventory required)
 - Ashman ridge
 - Dome Mountain
- 5) Moderate attraction up to one hour travel time from Smithers
 - Mt Leach access to Microwave
 - Elliot Creek
 - Caribou Mountain South
 - Caribou Mountain North
 - Guess Lake Road
 - Boulder Creek Road
 - Seaton Basin
 - Louise/Bud/Sandstone
 - Passby Creek
 - Webster Lake (status of exclusion area will indicate whether inventory required)
 - Rocky Ridge Road
- 6) All other Moderate attraction trails
 - Dominion Basin
 - French Peak
 - Camel Humps (status of exclusion area will indicate whether inventory required)
- 7) All low attraction trails
 - Moricetown to Cronin
 - Goathorn east
 - Seaton Ridge
 - McDonnell Lake
 - Corya Creek
 - Hankin Lookout
 - Fort Babine Trail
 - Canyon Creek Ski trails

Appendix C
Database Characteristics
& Sample data tables for
Trails, Alpine Areas, Lakes
and Recreation Sites

Database Headings for Trails, Alpine areas, Lakes, Recreation Sites

Trails

Column 1	Trail Name
Column 2	Road or trail
Column 3	Setting
Column 4	ROS 1999
Column 5	Future ROS
Column 6	LRMP RMZ
Column 7	LRMP direction
Column 8	RAMP Class
Column 9	Fish & Wildlife
Column 10	Travel time
Column 11	Length/time to alpine
Column 12	Trail condition
Column 13	Level of difficulty
Column 14	Use summer/winter
Column 15	Type/level use
Column 16	Current/potential issues
Column 17	Management Class
Column 18	Attractiveness Rating
Column 19	Comments

Alpine Areas

Column 1	Alpine Area Name
Column 2	Setting
Column 3	Type of Access
Column 4	ROS 1999
Column 5	Future ROS
Column 6	LRMP RMZ
Column 7	LRMP direction
Column 8	RAMP Class
Column 9	Fish & Wildlife
Column 10	Travel time
Column 11	Overall use
Column 12	Types/levels of use
Column 13	Issues/potential issues
Column 14	Management Class
Column 15	Attractiveness Rating
Column 16	Reasons

Changes is column headings to make consistent

Lakes

Column 1	Lake Name
Column 2	Proposed classification
Column 3	Setting
Column 4	ROS 1999
Column 5	Future ROS
Column 6	LRMP RMZ
Column 7	LRMP direction
Column 8	Fish & Wildlife
Column 9	Access, trail, road, air
Column 10	Access management
Column 11	Travel time
Column 12	Type/levels of use
Column 13	Current/potential issues
Column 14	Management Class
Column 15	Attractiveness Rating

Recreation Sites

Column 1	Recreation Site name
Column 2	Setting
Column 3	ROS 1999
Column 4	Future ROS
Column 5	LRMP RMZ
Column 6	Travel Time
Column 7	Types of use
Column 8	Site Condition
Column 9	Management Class
Column 10	Comments

Appendix D
Recreation Access Management
Decision Making Principles

2.0 workshop results

2.1 Principles for Recreational Access Management

The following set of recreational access management principles were developed for the Bulkley portion of the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District by the CMD Recreational Access User Sub-Committee at their September 28-29 workshop. These principles are intended to help guide decision-making with respect to the creation, management and deactivation of access used for recreational purposes. They can also assist in resolving access-related issues that may arise between recreational user groups, including the identification of areas where access restrictions may be necessary.

2.1.1 General

1. Recreational users of all sports and disciplines have intrinsic rights to the responsible use of Crown lands to fulfill their recreational needs.
2. Responsible recreation is a legitimate use of Crown lands and the public has a right to access recreational resources on Crown lands in the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District, where it does not detrimentally affect the environment, endanger wildlife, or conflict with other specified land use objectives.
3. Education about responsible recreation practices should occur through and between communities, individuals, groups, organizations and government interaction, using such mechanisms as licensing, public meetings, advertising, brochures, signs and formal training courses.
4. Monitoring for responsible recreation use of Crown land is the responsibility of both government agencies and the public.

2.1.2 Access Management

1. Except where land use objectives have established otherwise, roads will be permanently or semi-permanently deactivated. Deactivation will be well-advertised to the public and individual user groups will be notified directly. *Landscape Unit plans will address strategic road access management and include an assessment and consideration of recreational objectives. Access management plans will follow the direction provided by the Landscape Unit plan. (This follows the intent of the original workshop principle, and specifies how agencies and industry will utilize the management direction from the RAMP.)*

2.1.3 Commercial Recreation

1. Commercial recreational ventures will not take precedence over, nor displace, the public recreationist.

2.1.4 Environmental Protection

1. Where fish and wildlife habitat values are determined to be sensitive to access development and use, these sensitivities will be recognized in recreation development and management decisions.
2. In areas identified for motorized recreational use, objectives for fish, wildlife and habitat values must still be met.
3. Sensitive fish, wildlife and habitat values will provide direction when identifying motorized and non-motorized recreational areas.
4. Sensitive ecosystems, such as, but not limited to, alpine, riparian, wetlands and native grasslands, will be recognized as important resource values and access will be managed to avoid negative impacts on these areas. Travel through these sensitive ecosystems will be restricted to hard surface roads and trails. Where existing trails are negatively impacting a sensitive area or ecosystem, trails should be re-routed or upgraded.
5. Lakes offering potential for wilderness recreation will remain without roads until completion of a district-wide lake classification that includes the setting of management objectives for these lakes.

2.1.5 Non-Motorized/Motorized Principles

1. Motorized vehicles do not belong in some areas.
2. Restrictions on motorized recreational use in some areas should be qualitatively balanced with assured motorized vehicle access in other areas.
3. Planning must reflect that motorized use can have an impact on the ability of non-motorized users to fulfill their recreational experiences in areas where both types of use occur concurrently; non-motorized use does not have the same potential effect on motorized users.
4. Both motorized and non-motorized experiences should exist within a range of travel distances and settings, including urban, semi-primitive and primitive.
5. Snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles must be registered and identifiable.

Appendix E
ROS classification standards

Appendix F
Attractiveness rating data
Tables for trails, alpine areas
lakes