

JUMBO REGIONAL RECREATIONAL AREA PROPOSAL — RDCK



Garth Lenz

**A PRESENTATION TO THE REGIONAL
DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
JUMBO REGIONAL RECREATION
AREA PROPOSAL**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

A Comparison of Burns Bog and Jumbo Pass

A Proposal for the Jumbo Regional Recreation Area

1. Current Legal Status
2. Purpose
3. Management Goals
4. Management Partnerships
5. Financial Partnerships
6. Traditional Use
7. Wildlife Values & Wildlife Viewing
8. Recreational Opportunities in Glacier Creek Drainage Trails
9. Important Points to Consider

Appendices

Leaders in the Field

West Kootenay Coalition for Jumbo Wild and Other Supporters

Grandfathered Uses

Map

OVERVIEW

Regional districts across B.C. are increasingly adopting visionary approaches to acquiring and managing park and recreation areas. These districts have taken bold steps in linking regional recreation areas with the values of public health, recreation, ecological stewardship and quality of life for local residents. Recognizing that individual regions require individual approaches both to management and the financing of operating costs, they have developed innovative solutions to these issues. Some leadership examples cited here are the Capital Regional District (CRD), Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), and Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). (See Appendices: 1. Leaders in the Field)

What is important to note here is that these regional districts have recognized that they cannot rely solely on themselves for the management of regional park/recreation areas. Partnership building with interested parties has had the effect both of spreading the load and increasing the available pool of expertise. The coalition approach includes not only the legal partners in park management agreements but seeks to include public service agencies and the public itself through upkeep and maintenance, fitness, health and education programs. This principle extends to the funding of parks through financing partnerships with municipal, regional, provincial, and federal governments, as well as foundations and other sources. This creative approach will provide local decisions, local management and local accountability for recreation and well being for local residents.

A COMPARISON OF BURNS BOG AND JUMBO PASS

A case in point of cooperation between several levels of government to reach an agreement to protect an ecologically sensitive habitat is Burns Bog. There are many parallels between Burns Bog and the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area. Both areas have a long history of confrontation between the public, private interests, environmentalists, and government. Both Burns Bog and the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area have rare or ecologically fragile species. And both areas have been deeply impacted by past and present industrial uses of natural resources.

- Burns Bog contains the only known population of the red-listed southern red-backed vole in the province, and the red-listed Pacific water shrew. It provides critical habitat for rare dragonflies and water boatmen, as well as a population of greater sandhill crane. Genetically and ecologically important flora are present in Burns Bog, including cloudberry, bog-rosemary, crowberry and velvet-leaf blueberry.
- The proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area contains blue-listed species such as bull trout, cutthroat trout, wolverine, mountain goats, as well as Harlequin duck nesting grounds. The Central Purcell grizzly bear population is seen by biologists as highly vulnerable to any habitat modification, especially the kind posed by the proposed Jumbo Glacier Resort.
- In the case of Burns Bog, the contention has now been mostly defused by an agreement signed in 2004 making the bog a protected 5,045-acre conservation area under the management of the GVRD Parks Department and the Corporation of Delta. The Burns Bog conservancy was made possible by financial and logistical cooperation between four levels of government.

The RDCK would need to apply for a license to occupy, which would provide the solution for the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area. Once approved, the RDCK can then move forward with a management plan for the area on this issue.

JUMBO RECREATIONAL AREA PROPOSAL



David McCrory

The provincial government is acting to restrict decision-making power from municipal and regional authorities through the passing of Bills 30 and 75. Now more than ever, it's vital that regional governments assert the right to local decision making.

We are asking the RDCK to support the implementation of the Jumbo Regional Recreation Area proposal for that part of the Jumbo wilderness that falls within RDCK boundaries. We recognize that the RDCK would need to study the feasibility of this proposal.

A separate proposal for the eastern portion of the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area is being considered by recreation and environmental groups in the East Kootenays for the Regional District of East Kootenay for a linked, 'Hands Across the Mountain' initiative.

CURRENT LEGAL STATUS

West of the height of land, the Jumbo Pass Trail, Monica Meadows Trail and area, and the Macbeth Icefield trails are in the care of the Ministry of Tourism, Sports & Arts, designated as Recreation Reserves. At this time, the most practical route to securing the area as a regional recreation area would be an application to the B.C. government for a 'license to occupy.'

PURPOSE AND MANAGEMENT GOALS

The purpose of the recreation area is to preserve the natural ecosystems for the conservation of wildlife, the maintenance of biological diversity and to provide ongoing recreation based upon the enjoyment of the natural environment.

A management plan for the area could build on the examples of the CRD, GVRD and CSRD with the following goals in mind:

- 1) All existing permits by tenure holders will be 'grandfathered' into the proposed agreement. (See Appendices: 3. Grandfathered Uses.)
- 2) Create a management board appointed by the RDCK to develop a management plan for the new recreation area. The board will be responsible for implementation of the management plan.
- 3) Conservation of the natural values is a priority.
- 4) No new commercial or industrial developments or expansions would be allowed.

MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Management roles and responsibilities for the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area as a public trust would have to be clearly defined. It is important that this area remain as public lands to be managed cooperatively between RDCK and different provincial public agencies. Management could be comprised of the following:

- Ministry of Forests currently maintains road up Glacier Creek
- Ministry of Tourism, Sports & Arts (responsible for management of Jumbo Pass trail and cabin, Macbeth Icefields trail, and Monica Meadows and recreation area)
- the regional district(s)
- adjacent municipalities in the RDCK
- local volunteers

FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

It has repeatedly been the case that national, provincial and even regional parks and recreation areas must be designated by the provincial government in order to remain fully protected. In this case, the B.C. government would need to be persuaded to declare the area a regional recreation area.

A financial strategy for the operational costs of the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area could include:

- Establishment of a non-profit trust or foundation to raise funds for ongoing operational costs
- Funding from the Columbia Basin Trust and other relevant granting agencies such as B.C. Lotteries
- Support from provincial government agencies that could still be responsible for and have an interest in this region, i.e.: Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests.

TRADITIONAL USES

The Jumbo Glacier area has been used by First Nations and settlers for its wealth of natural resources, trapping, hunting, and wild food gathering. Today the area is well used for hunting, trapping, logging, mining and recreation. No permanent developments and only one unmaintained seasonal access road has resulted in a continuously wild, viable habitat.

WILDLIFE VALUES & WILDLIFE VIEWING



The proposal area contains a wealth of sensitive wildlife including mountain goats, grizzly bear, and Harlequin duck. Blue-listed species: wolverine, bull trout and cutthroat trout lead a very fragile existence in the steep, rugged terrain of the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area.



Jumbo Pass is a vital East-West and North-South connective corridor for a number of species. The Jumbo area is one of the West Kootenay's most spectacular backcountry wilderness areas and a vital connector for grizzly bears to the adjacent Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (within 12 km). Thus, setting it aside as a regional recreational area would be a major step in protecting grizzly populations.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN GLACIER CREEK DRAINAGE TRAILS - HIKING

- Macbeth Icefields Trail leads to tongue of Macbeth Icefield from main line Glacier Creek road (previously maintained by BCFS, now MoTSA).
- Monica Meadows Trail leads to alpine meadows from road on north fork of Glacier Creek (previously maintained by BCFS, now MoTSA).
- Jumbo Pass Trail leads to historic Jumbo Pass from parking lot on road on south fork of Glacier Creek (previously maintained by BCFS, now MoTSA).
- Truce Glacier route leads to glacier from near end of road on south fork of Glacier Creek (a primitive route flagged and cairned in places following a moraine along the west bank of Glacier Creek's south fork; not maintained; use at own risk).
- Glacier Creek and Jumbo Creek valleys and related peaks, used by many hikers, can be accessed for excellent views by a trail/route to an easy peak north of Jumbo Pass.
- Bastille Mountain, south of Jumbo Pass: a rough alpine route leads to the summit of this peak, overlooking the pass (easy scrambling).
- Starbird Pass north of Mt. Monica. Accessible by moderate bushwhacking and alpine travel, from the end of the road on the north fork of Glacier Creek. Excellent camping here with views down the Starbird Glacier to the east and into Horsethief Creek.
- Crystal Ridge can be reached with moderate effort from the same point (height of land at north end of north fork of Glacier Creek), and is noted for its attractive rock crystals.

MOUNTAINEERING

Easy access to the Jumbo area's many big peaks provide excellent opportunities in the Glacier Creek drainage for general mountaineering, with routes on snow, ice, and rock. The rock is generally better than on neighbouring peaks to the east in the Jumbo drainage. The Alpine Club of Canada uses the Jumbo area as part of their training.

- Egyptian Peaks, located along the height of land between Jumbo and Glacier creeks between Monica Meadows and Jumbo Pass. Fine climbing with excellent views on solid rock up to and beyond mid-class-5 ratings, especially Mts. Amon-Ra, Horus and Isis.
- Mt. Monica offers a variety of approaches on rock and snow.
- Starbird Pass route gives access to Eyebrow Peak, the only 11,000' mountain that can be ascended from the West Kootenay (it has been climbed in a day round-trip from Nelson).
- Truce, Cauldron, and Horseshoe glaciers on the south side of Glacier Creek. Some 7 peaks with elevation over 10,000' (such as Truce, Cauldron, Blockhead, and Ochre) can be accessed from the south fork of Glacier Creek.
- Macbeth Icefield, especially Mts. Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and Banquo. In the past, a bridge across Glacier Creek and a road up Deep Creek gave access to the twin 10,000' summits of Emperor and Archduke. Ice climbing routes have been done on the long east face of Emperor and Archduke, although access is not easy.



The Jumbo area has a connection with the early days of Canadian mountaineering (a part of our heritage) as Truce, Cauldron, Birthday, and Eyebrow all saw first ascents around 1915-1916 by parties led by the legendary Canadian guide Conrad Kain (he's buried in Cranbrook). Another pioneering alpinist, J.W. Harndon, made the first ascent of Mt. Monica in 1910 or 1911.

WILDFLOWER VIEWING

Monica Meadows and Jumbo Pass are often visited in season by amateur and professional photographers for their spectacular wildflowers. There are ample opportunities for photography (just take a look at locally-produced calendars). The Glacier Creek drainage may be equalled, but not exceeded, by very few other locations for its easily-accessible opportunities for nature photography in a spectacular setting.



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CABINS

The Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Arts and the East Kootenay Hut Society jointly administer the new Jumbo Pass cabin. (Has outhouse.)

SKIING

RK Heli-Skiing has tenure on Macbeth Icefield, Truce Glacier, Horseshoe Glacier, Blockhead Glacier, south fork of Glacier Creek, and other areas. They also have an emergency shelter well off-road in the south fork of Glacier Creek.

Ski touring, backcountry skiing is an important use of this area.

MOTORIZED RECREATION

Used by ATVs and snow machines.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Hunting and trapping are uses by local residents.

CAMPING

- Monica Meadows is the best-known camping area and has an outhouse.
- Dunsinane Falls has a decent campsite at the end of Macbeth Icefield Trail.
- Starbird Pass
- Larch Meadows, located below Truce Glacier at south fork of Glacier Creek.

Camping at Jumbo Pass is possible, although great care should be taken to avoid impact on fragile alpine landscape and watch for grizzlies. The same goes for the other high-use area in Glacier Creek drainage, Monica Meadows.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT TO KEEP JUMBO WILD

A proposal for a regional recreation area would easily draw upon widespread support from the public—polls consistently show opposition to the Jumbo Glacier Resort at 90%.

Over 4,000 letters to the B.C. government have opposed the Jumbo Resort Development and real estate sales. Over 1,000 residents protested the ski development, the largest protest in the West Kootenays. More letters of opposition were received at the Environmental Assessment Office than any other proposal in the history of EAO.

There is already widespread support for conservation of the Jumbo area and a broad coalition of groups have worked for 19 years to keep Jumbo wild, to maintain the Jumbo area as undeveloped wilderness with low-impact recreational use. Among these supporters are prominent individuals, scientists, and organizations based locally and internationally but even more important is that a large majority of West Kootenay residents want to keep Jumbo wild as a legacy for our children's future.

(For only a partial list of allies in the West Kootenays, see Appendix: 2. West Kootenay Coalition for Jumbo Wild and Other Supporters.)

The Jumbo Regional Recreation Area Proposal would be a legacy for our children and future generations. In 2010, the B.C. government has invited the world to come to the Olympics. Let the West Kootenays put forward our own legacy and invite the international community to celebrate with us this very special area that is so important for the wildlife and local use. The proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area is a natural treasure that will benefit wildlife and our children and grandchildren for many generations to come.

APPENDICES: LEADERS IN THE FIELD

(1.1) Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)

The GVRD's core vision statement is clear: "Sustainability encompasses economic prosperity, community well-being and environmental integrity for today's and future generations." Less than 5% of GVRD parklands are developed for public use, with over 95% managed for conservation, with the goal of protecting "biodiversity, environmental and cultural integrity."

The GVRD makes the vital connection between ecological integrity and the reduction of public health costs through managed recreation in parks and green spaces. They support groups such as school districts and others who wish to use regional parks for fitness, active living and ecological awareness programs. In the case of Burns Bog, both scientific study of biodiversity and ecological awareness programs for the public are seen as an integral part of future park management.

The GVRD has a committee that includes all interested parties, and has the added benefit of maximizing the available pool of expertise. The Technical Outdoor Recreation Planning Committee (TORPC) includes municipal parks departments, B.C. Parks, Fraser Valley and Squamish-Lillooet regional districts. Other partnerships have been made with public service groups like the Elks, CNIB, and GF Strong Institute, for developing facilities for the disabled and disadvantaged.

(1.2) Capital Regional District (CRD—Greater Victoria area)

The CRD's Master Plan for regional parks, completed in 2000, was the product of extensive consultation with the public and First Nations. The Plan's top priorities are: 1) "To establish and protect a network of regional parks in perpetuity that represent and help maintain the diverse range of natural environments in the CRD;" and, 2) "To provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities that foster appreciation and enjoyment of, and respect for, the region's natural environments."

The CRD recognizes the problem of creating “islands of extinction” and therefore has integrated the management of lands surrounding parks into their plan. They recognize also that preserving ecosystems within park areas is the best way to ensure people are attracted to use these areas. The partnership-building role is seen as critical to the long-term success of the parks plan. This includes not only active public consultation and recruitment but also active partnerships with “other park agencies, municipalities, First Nations, land trusts, landowners, business, residents and interest groups.”

(1.3) Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD)

The CSRD completed a regional parks survey for its electoral areas ‘C’ and ‘F’ in 2003. According to the firm Future Legacy Consulting Group, up to 97% of the public polled want environmental and recreational values protected in the Shuswap region. The plan designated five categories of parks and recreation areas, and identified four different park administration models. But what is perhaps most interesting are the various means proposed for financing these regional parks. Like the RDCK, the CSRD has a low population density and therefore a thinly spread taxation base. The plan includes a funding profile developed to suit each park or recreation area within each sub-region of the district.

WEST KOOTENAY COALITION FOR JUMBO WILD AND OTHER SUPPORTERS

Argenta Committee for Wild Jumbo
Blewett Conservation Society
Friends of Glacier Creek
Friends of Jumbo Pass and Monica Meadows
Friends of the Lardeau River
Friends of Purcell Wilderness Conservancy
Friends of White Grizzly/Goat Range Park
Kaslo Trailblazers
Kootenay Mountain Holidays Inc.
Mountain Trek Ltd.
Pro Terra
Purcell Alliance for Wilderness (PAW)
Sinixt Nation
Valhalla Wilderness Society
West Kootenay Eco-Society
West Kootenay Mountaineering Club
West Kootenay Naturalists
West Kootenay Watershed Alliance

and beyond:

Applied Ecological Stewardship Council of B.C.
Becky Scott-Olympic Gold Medallist (Nordic skier)
Canadian Alpine Club
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
East Kootenay Rod and Gun Club
Grant McEwan Mountaineers
Green Party of B.C.
Jumbo Creek Conservation Society
Ktunaxa Nation
Patrick Morrow-Mountaineer/Photographer
Scott Niedermayer-NHL Hockey Players
Western Canada Wilderness Committee
Wildsight
World Wildlife Fund
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

GRANDFATHERED USES

The proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area management plan would allow for the existing tenures within the west Jumbo area.