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## **Wapiti Corridor Planning Society**

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### **Stakeholder Engagement Session Report** **Motorized Trail Users** **Evergreen TEC Centre April 27, 2010**

#### **Introduction**

The Wapiti River Valley corridor, which extends from Pipestone Creek to the Smoky River, is a beautiful natural area used for recreational, agricultural, industrial, educational and ecological purposes. With the growth in population, this area is seeing increasing activity; therefore it is important that the local community and resource users (stakeholders) take steps to ensure that the best decisions are made about how the area is used, now and in the future, to ensure the safety, security and benefit for everyone.

The Wapiti Corridor Planning Society (WCPS) is creating- through an open, transparent and inclusive process- a vision and multi-use land use plan for the Wapiti River Valley corridor that accommodates, protects, and balances the current and future needs of the area and its people. As such the WCPS is working with stakeholders to cooperatively develop a set of recommendations and implementation actions to guide the use and development of the Wapiti River Valley corridor. The ultimate goal is to develop a multi-use plan that meets the needs of all land users.

On April 27, 2010 the WCPS held a stakeholder engagement session with motorized trail users of the Wapiti River Valley. The Society invited representatives from organized quading, motocross riding, power boat driving and other off-road user groups to a session aimed at contributing to the development of the multi-use plan for the Wapiti River Valley corridor. During the session a map with current state of knowledge about Motorized Trails was used to validate and document new information. The session focused on uses of the area; the concerns users have over how the area is used; and their vision for the future of the area.

The session started at 06:50 p.m. and ended at 09:00 p.m.

### **In Attendance:**

Bob Scott	Camp Wapiti
Christine Schlieff	Board Trustee; Wapiti Peace School
Dan Wong	WCPS, City of Grande Prairie
David Pochailo	Public Lands Officer; SRD
Jim Smith	President; WCPS
Ken Langstaff	Evergreen Park Board; WCPS
Lauranie Howatt	Treasurer, WCPS; Wapiti Dunes Development Society (WDDS)
Lesley VanDemark	Councillor, MD Greenview; WCPS
Lou Maffret	President, Grande Prairie Moto Cross Association; WCPS
Mike Brekkans	Trapper
Randy Gulick	Grande Prairie River Rats
Rick Bennett	Swan City Snowmobile Club
Wade Bloomer	Wapiti Dunes Development Society (WDDS); WCPS
Barry Hunter	Planning Consultant to WCPS
Carlos Salinas	Planning Consultant to WCPS

## **1. Concerns and Challenges**

- There are no guidelines or direction on how to use the trails right now. The quads and ATVs are taking over all the sand dunes from border to border, both sides.
- There is a large number of riders under 16 years of age.
- Enforcement of underage riders should start from the city. RCMP and county officers should be patrolling in the dunes area.
- Significant damage to forests by pine beetles and fires.
- No identified representation from the quad riders group to be included in the board. Quad manufacturers and dealers may help to create these groups as they are approached by these users.

## **2. Land Use Priorities and Strategies**

- There must be respect to all users: horseback riders, hikers, etc.
- The use of sand dunes should be accessible again to horse riders and hikers as with was in the past.
- Designate suitable areas for horseback riders and hikers, for example, areas west to Highway 40.
- There should be trail signage for direction and safety warning messages. In addition, education campaigns for the use of a trail system.
- Due to the magnitude of easy-access related problems, fencing should be brought up as a solution for some of the users needs (i.e. trappers, parks).

- A boat launch should be constructed on the East side of Highway 40 bridge. Likewise, the River Rats Club would like to have a river boat launch 30 miles upstream from Pipestone.
- Signage, education and enforcement activities should be implemented as part of the strategies of the plan.
- Invitation to enforcement groups to inform about the WCPS and to see what their enforcement plans are.
- Waste disposal and garbage on the river valley: Dumpsters should be installed in staging areas.
- Areas east to Resources Road should be designated for quad riders and areas west to Highway 40 for horseback riders and hikers.
- Controlled access of quad riders to all trails and areas can be done by setting better staging areas.
- The existing motocross track and future 50 cc tracks are to be included in the WCPS plan.
- Rather than point fingers to unorganized groups, encourage them to participate and help to manage the area.
- Keeping doors open for participation to all users, even to unorganized users, and create as many opportunities as we can for participation.
- Exploring bikers: Not a big concern. They have low impact on environment.

### 3. Management Areas

- Recreational Areas:
  - Trail system for motorized users in the eastern side should be designed for different users; these can be multi trail or single trail systems according to the users.
  - Area east of the bridge can be converted by SRD into a big grass area for people to use.
- Protected Areas:
  - Areas with ecological value: swamps.
  - Some trapping lines may be preserved at the end of leasing period.
  - There are closed facilities to off road riders in the area (winter range areas).
- Industrial Development:
  - It is important to ensure that residential development in the river valley does not affect the recreational value that the wapiti river valley corridor represents for the people of Grande Prairie.

#### 4. Organized Groups, Mission Statements and Codes of Conduct

- Motorized user organizations have mission statements, codes of conduct which consider the sharing of trails with other users.
- The quad problem is not a problem restricted to Grande Prairie. The Province of Alberta is trying to come up with some guidelines, it is one of the priority subjects under the land use framework, it seems that nobody from the meeting was involved in the development of those ALUF guidelines.

#### 5. Long Term Goals and Vision

- There is a motocross track and there are plans to set some more tracks for the use of 50 cc motorbike racers, basically for kids on an adjacent 18 acre parcel.
- Appropriate trails to allow various users to enjoy their sport safely.

#### 6. Other Issues

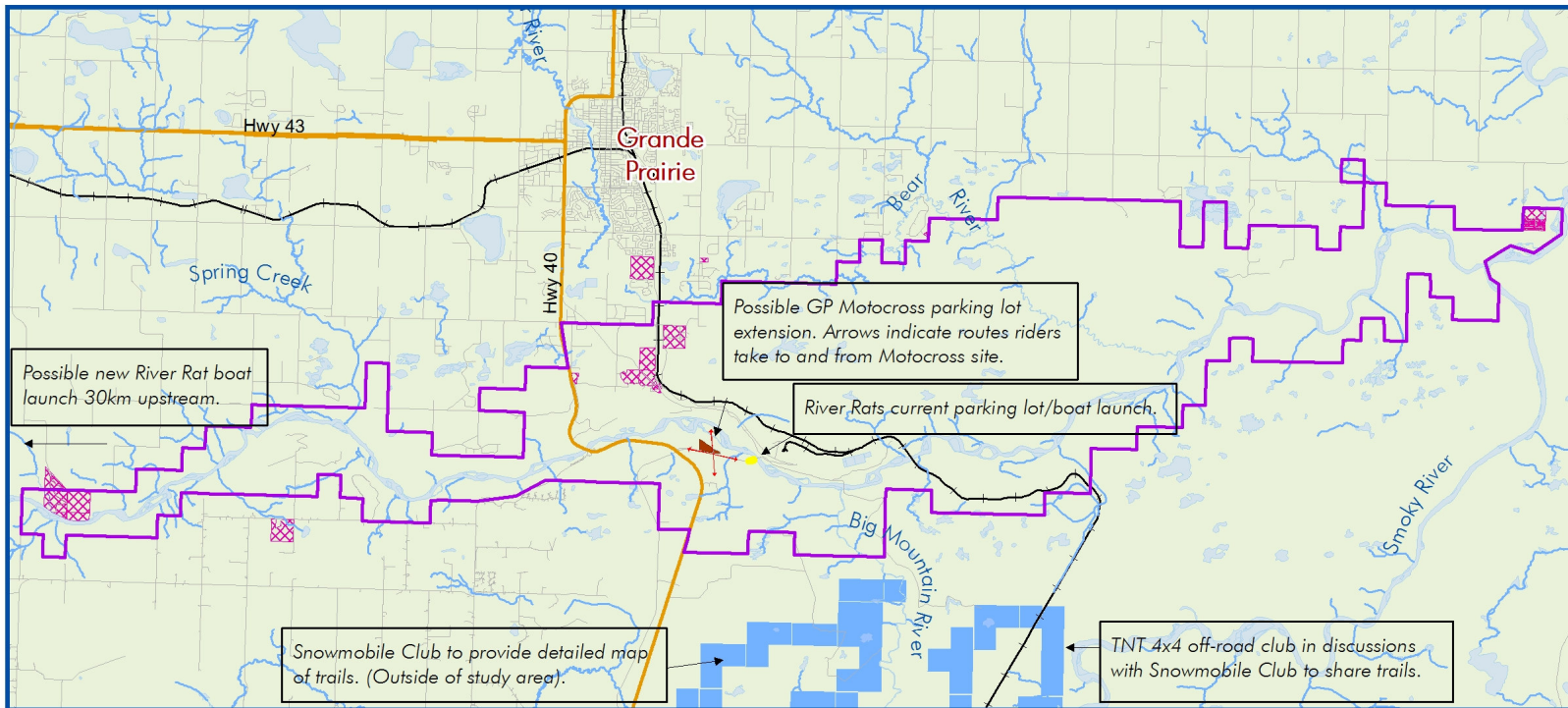
- There are no organized groups of quad riders, except for one called “TNT”, which comprises small off-road vehicles.
- Western side of planning area is not so appealing to off-road drivers as most of it does comprise private lands.
- What size of loop can be a reasonable ride for a horseback riders and/or for a motorized off road vehicle?
- Off-road traffic nearby traplines directly and negatively affects the trappers’ activities.





# KNOWN INFORMATION FOR MOTORIZED TRAIL USERS

Updated with contributions from Stakeholder Engagement Session April 27, 2010



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|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Wapiti Corridor Planning Area | Minor Highways         |
| River Rats parking lot        | Primary Highways       |
| Snowmobile Trails             | Railway                |
| Grande Prairie Motocross      | Rivers and Streams     |
| Land Zoned for Recreation     | Lakes and Major Rivers |



This map was created for the Wapiti Corridor Planning Society for use in creating a multi-use plan for the Wapiti Corridor Planning Area. It is for illustrative purposes only.