

Feedback regarding the

Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

Submission to the Alberta Land Use Secretariat



Prepared by the
Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association
January 15, 2014

Introduction

The Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association (RMDRA) is a Not for Profit, volunteer member run organization established in 2004 to represent the community and advance the sport of Off Road Motorcycling (ORM) in Southern Alberta. This feedback paper describes the RMDRA's concerns, questions and recommendations regarding the recreational aspects of the Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (the Draft Plan).

This document is offered for consideration by the Land Use Secretariat and the Stewardship Minister in preparation of the final South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP).

Feedback regarding the content of the Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is concentrated in eight areas of need:

1. clear regulatory intent regarding recreational access and use
2. clarity regarding the transition from existing access to a managed trail system
3. clarity regarding crossings of water bodies and shores
4. clarity of intent and definition of 'Linear Disturbance'
5. a transparent and efficient conflict resolution process
6. an effective and efficient Planning Subcommittee structure and process
7. legislative clarity authorizing self-sustaining funding for OHV users
8. a fresh start for the Ghost PLUZ trail system

For convenience, acronyms, definitions and references are included at the end of this document and, where convenient, delineated or explained in the document text when first used.

Letters of support regarding the advocacy efforts of the RMDRA provided by recreation stakeholders are included as follows:

Appendix A - Endorsements

Background information excerpted from the 2012 RMDRA Submission *Off Road Motorcycling in the South Saskatchewan Region* is included in appendices as follows:

Appendix B	About the Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association
Appendix C	Feedback on the RAC Advice to the Government of Alberta
Appendix D	Ingredients for Success in ORM Recreation

Clear Regulatory Intent Regarding Recreational Access and Use

The Draft Plan lacks specific regulatory reference to the implementation of sustainable motorized recreation access. The Draft Plan ties motorized recreation to regulation only as a sub bullet of the Regional Trail System Plan (to be developed in the accordance with the as yet non-existent Provincial Trails System), which is listed as one of 17 strategies proposed to support the general objective of “a wide range of recreation experiences and tourism opportunities that meet the preferences of regional residents and residents”, towards which the Designated Minister “may take whatever steps... is desirable for achieving...” (SSRP Pages 98, 97, 130, 154). This oblique reference stands in sharp contrast to specific regulatory references regarding conservation areas, air quality, water quality, etc.

RMDRA acknowledges the reality that competing land uses will necessitate accommodation and management but has a deep concern that recreation and tourism stakeholders will rely on ‘objectives’ and ‘plans’ whereas competing special interest groups will rely on regulations, limits, and triggers to resist recreational access. Many existing laws and regulations, while well intentioned and appropriate, are referenced beyond the intended scope for the purpose of unreasonably precluding recreational users from the land. By contrast, there is no existing (or proposed) regulation asserting the rights of recreational users to responsibly access and use the land. The development of a Regional Trail System Plan as a strategy is not concrete enough in defining the minimum recreational opportunities for the OHV and ORM users in allowable use areas. RMDRA believes a more meaningful commitment in the SSRP is appropriate, spelled out in clearly stated measurable objectives regarding recreation access (i.e. X number or Y km of sustainable ORM trail in ABC area in the next 3 years).

RMDRA acknowledges the reality that OHV and ORM use will, like all forms of recreation and human activity, have some impact on the land. The Draft Plan addresses this vaguely as “enhanced management of human footprint... minimized through planning” – a weak and general response regarding the coexistence of various land users and their impacts. In very few cases does the Draft Plan establish the level of impact that the government deems acceptable in order to accommodate the many competing land uses.

Compounding this concern is the lack of clarity regarding the standard to which recreation impacts will be held. In the absence of clear regulation and standards, recreational users are often put in the impossible position of ‘proving non-impact’ – a classic problem of hypothesis within the scientific method and the logic of falsification. For example, whereas an assertion by special interest regarding an impact can be substantiated with anecdotal evidence, a recreational user group can never gather sufficient evidence of non-impact to conclusively ‘prove’ the assertion false.

RMDRA specifically requests that the Land Use Secretariat spell out at the regulatory intent, the levels and thresholds expected of all recreational user groups to achieve sustainable access and use of specific land areas within the region, and clearly stated measurable objectives regarding recreation access.

Clarity Regarding Transition to Managed Trail System

The Draft Plan acknowledges Off Highway Vehicles (motorized-recreation) in Note 7 of Schedule C: SSRP Land Uses. Several points within this note warrant review and revision to increase the success of a transition from the present state of off-highway recreational use to the desired future state of sustainable managed trail systems.

The second bullet point on page 154 creates a concern:

“In areas where designation of trails has not yet occurred, use of existing access can continue but no new trails or routes or access may be developed without an access management plan.”

While RMDRA recognizes the need to manage the existing and historical trail system in the absence of a management plan, our experience with Access Management Planning gives us pause to endorse such strict specificity without contemplating scenarios that require work on the land to mitigate an unexpected condition or conflict. This bullet as written would effectively restrict the managers of the land from acting to improve a situation.

RMDRA respectfully suggests the modification of the Schedule C bullet #2 by the addition of the following in italics:

“In areas where designation of trails has not yet occurred, use of existing access can continue but no new trails or routes or access may be developed without *contemplating the access management plan with the exception of trail additions or modification to address the sustainability or improvement of a trail*”

RMDRA acknowledges the need for a transition from unmanaged to managed trail systems, but we strongly recommend the Four E’s process follow the progression laid out by National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC):

Engineering => Education => Enforcement => Evaluation

We recognize a strong desire from many users of the land to see higher levels of enforcement, but caution that enforcement in isolation will result in far lower improvements in compliance than will a comprehensive approach to the management of the entire OHV Recreation system. RMDRA recommends that the final SSRP documents provide clear instruction regarding this comprehensive approach.

A key indicator of a successful management system is voluntary enforcement of rules by individual community members. An excellent example of this success is the Report-A-Poacher program where a comprehensive combination of that communities “Four E’s” are achieved

- clear and transparent access to the resource, credible draws tied to sustainable populations
- education regarding the benefits of compliance to the resource and the community
- effective enforcement that is predictable and fair
- credible data gathering and publishing to close the loop with community members

In the absence of any of these components, the “ethic” that moves individuals to voluntary enforcement would be lost and the R-A-P program would have minimal uptake.

Clarity Regarding Crossing of Water Bodies and Shores

The third bullet point on page 154 raises a second and much more serious scenario of conflict:

“Regardless of whether or not there is a management plan or trails plan in place, off-highway vehicle use shall not occur in the beds and shores of permanent water bodies.”

RMDRA fully acknowledges and respects the need for protection of water bodies and water courses for numerous reasons. Unfortunately, this bullet as stated is problematic for three reasons:

- the statement conflicts with existing management practice and best practice for OHV Recreation
- the definition of ‘permanent’ water body is unclear and inconsistently interpreted in the field
- as written the statement makes much existing trail inaccessible and makes transition impossible

Present management practice in areas with managed trail systems include various methods of mitigating impact to water bodies and shores including bridges, mats, and stream bed hardening to facilitate crossing with acceptable impact. The reality, however, is that currently fully approved and designated sustainable trails cross directly through the beds and shores of permanent water bodies.

The application of the regulation precluding recreational use in the beds and shores of water bodies is highly inconsistent on trails outside of designated trail areas. In a notable instance, an ESRD officer has directed that competition event organizers construct a temporary bridge to cross an ‘ephemeral stream’ that showed on a map but was a wide swale that had been dry for years and was thoroughly overgrown with brush and grass. In other cases, ESRD have not provided clarity regarding required infrastructure until field conditions were fully assessed, often determining that the stream bed was suitable for crossing without infrastructure.

Finally, the prohibition of entry into water bodies and shores is at odds with the stated intent to continue access on existing trails. Beyond the limited existing designated trail systems, the current reality is that most informal trail systems include crossings of streams; the vast majority of existing crossings are well established and were selected or enhanced by hardening to permit sustainable passage for vehicles appropriate to the trail type. Prohibiting water crossing makes existing trail systems effectively unusable.

For illustration, compare this statement to regulations regarding other types of water use, such as swimming, fishing, and boating. Depending on the nature of the water body, the uses of that water, and the recreational demands of users, regulations are appropriately tailored to permit and restrict various uses. Within the Glenmore Reservoir in Calgary, for example:

- motorized boating is always prohibited
- fishing is permitted only from boats and shores, not from docks and ramps
- non-motorized boating is allowed seasonally
- swimming is always prohibited

Most other water bodies and water courses, on the other hand, have far fewer restrictions because they supply no major water users, are less sensitive, or have fewer demands. In the same vein, forestry practices are actively managed and vary based upon the nature of the land and forest in a given location, the intended use of that area, and myriad other factors. There is no blanket regulation that addresses all water use or forestry activities.

NOHVCC actually cites this sort of ‘blanket’ policy as counterproductive to the sensible application of sustainable trail Engineering practices; intermittent streams are specifically highlighted as a cautionary

example as many environments do not require infrastructure and requiring unnecessary infrastructure can doom a sustainable trail initiative.

RMDRA recommends a revision to water body regulation to reflect the diversity of circumstances and conditions; we believe this will increase compliance in truly sensitive areas and not breed indifference to unreasonable regulation.

Clarity of Intent and Definition of ‘Linear Disturbance’

The Draft Plan makes multiple references to ‘linear disturbance’, ‘linear feature’ and ‘linear footprint’ but provides no definition nor classifies different features used by various recreational users. Despite this lack of clarity, specific linear disturbance density targets are mooted.

Our research indicates the prevalence of ‘linear disturbance’ in the vernacular developed from the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan published in 2008, which offers the following definition:

“Linear disturbance – Human-caused linear features on the landscape (i.e. power lines, cut lines, seismic lines, roads)”

This document also differentiates between different types of roads and trails and between ‘open route’ and ‘restricted route’ roads.

At the core, reduction in linear disturbance was introduced with the goal of reducing interactions between humans and grizzly bears, with the desired outcome of reduced human caused mortalities. Most interestingly, the document contains the following recommendation:

“The Team recommends replacing open route density with mortality risk values as a measure of success, once sufficient data have been collected and model development and validation are complete.”

RMDRA is concerned that the original intent of linear disturbance management has been missed and the concept is now being used to arbitrarily limit recreational use opportunities on the landscape.

Furthermore, we want to be clear that sustainable single track ORM trails should not be classified as ‘linear features’. 99.9% of all single track trails:

- avoid impact with standing trees, live or dead
- are meandering in design and do not create extensive lines of sight
- are invisible from modest distances and from aerial photographs
- overgrow and disappear within several years if unused
- have none of the problematic ‘open route’ characteristics

Off Road Motorcycle users have far fewer encounters with bears than other recreationalists – the nature of single track trails ensure sufficient engine noise and slow enough travel speed to provide notice of approach, and the foliage provides ample cover for animals to disappear. Hikers and horses are obviously quieter and more likely to surprise animals, and two-track vehicles of all sizes tend to have more open trails and longer sightlines within linear disturbance. We respectfully submit that single track ORM trail contributes negligently to grizzly bear risk and should be excluded from any calculation regarding ‘linear disturbance’.

RMDRA recommends exclusion of single track ORM trail from calculation of ‘linear footprint’.

A Transparent and Efficient Conflict Resolution Process

As stated previously, RMDRA acknowledges the reality that competing land uses will necessitate accommodation. Unfortunately, the process by which such accommodation would occur is fraught with uncertainty and highly dependent on the effectiveness of managers and officers of departments. The complexity of the region and the many demands on the land will inevitably lead to conflicts at the policy, procedure, and application levels. While the Draft Plan frames up multiple objectives and strategies, it naturally does not prescribe a priority or precedence for the competing forces.

One of the key ingredients in well-functioning societies, relationships, and organizations is the presence of credible 'institutions' that stand independent of the individual participants and decision makers. In a democratic society, the independent judiciary is a critical institution that outlasts and transcends individual leaders or political movements. Similarly, within a collective bargaining environment, the grievance clause is extremely important to all parties as it provides an agreed upon process for resolving disagreements about the application of policy or terms of the agreement. To prevent personal philosophies of individuals from shaping the application of law, the police force is independent of the judiciary – and citizens may appeal decisions made by the implementers of the law.

In the same vein, RMDRA believes an independent recourse path will relieve departmental managers and personnel from being both the decider and the implementer, and provide a transparent and critical tie back to the SSRP intent independent of the philosophies of individual governments, ministers, or departmental personnel.

RMDRA strongly recommends that SSRP establish a clear and transparent recourse process that permits independent review of departmental and individual implementation decisions.

Effective and Efficient Planning Structure and Process

The Draft Plan provides limited indication of the intended process for the creation of Access Management Plans, Recreation Management Plans, and Trail System Plans – particularly in regards to the decision making framework and authorities that will need to be established for the many stakeholders and interested parties to participate effectively.

In the absence of information to the contrary, it is a significant concern that management plans in other areas of the SSRP may follow the same approach as the Ghost Access Management Plan (GAMP) and direction of the Ghost Stewardship Monitoring group (GSMG). RMDRA members have participated for many years in the GSMG, and we believe that the factors impeding successful progress on the GAMP are related to inadequate governance structure and clarity of process rather than flawed intent.

In our view, the ingredients for a successful stakeholder consultation process and structure are:

- Clear charter including defined scope, deliverables, and deadlines for consultation process or group
- Clear group and member governance model and transparent compliance mechanisms
- Constructive engagement and disclosure of interests to manage biases and conflicts of interest
- Clear definition of consultation, review, and approval processes and milestones
- Clear limitation of stakeholder involvement to consultative role, not endorsement or approval
- Clear definition of decision making authority and responsibility of the departmental personnel

The recreation and tourism community will be best served if the final SSRP spells out credible, transparent consultation processes to establish specific management plans. In addition, RMDRA feels strongly that the decision making model must be **CONSULTATIVE** in order to achieve the objectives of Appendix J and the planning objectives in general. All stakeholders must be heard and considered, but the departmental managers must be able to then take decisions and advance the process within the intent of the SSRP, the Land Stewardship Act, and other relevant legislation and policy.

For clarity, RMDRA explicitly recommends against structures or efforts that rely upon consensus decision-making and approvals; such structures stymy progress as no party stands to gain from accommodation or compromise when a veto option exists. In addition, placing the onus upon stakeholder groups to reach consensus effectively relieves the departmental personnel of accountability for progress and advancement of the objectives of the Regional Plan.

RMDRA recommends a consultative advice group structure that limits stakeholder involvement to providing input to the departmental personnel, who make and implement decisions guided by that input and the clear regulatory intent laid out in the SSRP and supporting documents.

Legislative Clarity Authorizing Self-Sustaining Funding For OHV Users

As previously mentioned in *Off Road Motorcycling in the South Saskatchewan Region - Submission to the Alberta Land Use Secretariat* prepared by the RMDRA in 2012, RMDRA supports the RAC Advice statement 6.4.4.8 proposing user-pay system(s) to assist with funding of recreation. Specifically, RMDRA supports user-pay systems for all recreational access to fund the management, facilities, and maintenance necessary to achieve sustainable access for all users of the land and attendant recreation facilities, including but not limited to:

- OHV & ORM users
- Snowmobile trail network and back country users
- Cross country ski trail network and back country ski touring users
- Hiking, climbing, hunting, and fishing users
- Unserviced camping users

Observation indicates that people value goods, services, and even access more highly if they have paid an appropriate price and see direct evidence of their contribution money at work. RMDRA strongly believes that users who pay for an annual Trail Pass and Unserviced Camping Permit will recognize the value provided by these specific fees, and willingly comply where they may have previously avoided the license plate requirement for a vehicle which will never travel on a public road. OHV access passes in other jurisdictions have proven highly successful.

As a member club of the Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association, RMDRA generally supports the initiative of the AOHVA to establish a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO) to establish a sustainable funding and management mechanism for OHV and ORM trail systems. Important features of the proposed DAO:

- funded by a levy on motorized licensing fees; directed to motorized volunteer organizations
- strictly for investment in development and maintenance of designated motorized trails
- provide a location for the liability of trails and infrastructure to reside
- promote partnership opportunities with all trail users and government
- coordination of enforcement activities across government departments
- enable and engage the volunteers as partners in stewardship and education programs.

This DAO would effectively redirect the license plate levy and aligns strongly with proven programs in other jurisdictions.

RMDRA is disappointed by the statement provided on page 55 of the draft plan regarding establishment of New Public Land Recreation Areas in the eastern slopes which specifically states that “no fees will be charged”. This level of specificity is surprising given the broader generality on many topics with the Draft Plan, and is not consistent with best practices in other jurisdictions.

RMDRA recommends that the SSRP contain clear direction to establish DAO funding to support the objectives of the Plan for all aspects of recreational use.

A Fresh Start for the Ghost PLUZ Trail System

The original Ghost Access Management Plan intent pledged, in words virtually identical to those in the Draft Plan, to recognize existing trail inventory.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the day employed inadequate technology, ill-informed personnel, and eschewed stakeholder participation in the documentation process. Trail Inventory and input from local ORM users and clubs was not included despite significant efforts from the ORM community; hundreds of trail kilometres were inventoried and submitted to AESRD but NONE of the inventory was reflected in the designated trail system. Efforts to augment this minimal ORM trail base through the GSMG have achieved very limited progress; the consensus approach has effectively stonewalled progress for the ORM community and exacerbates the fundamental problem. The 'clean slate' approach that resulted from missteps in the early stages of the GAMP would be catastrophic if repeated throughout the South Saskatchewan Region.

We believe the success of the SSRP would be best demonstrated in the success of a meaningful trail management plan that is acceptable to recreational users. The ORM and OHV community are in agreement that the Ghost PLUZ should be an immediate and top priority for the SSRP to serve as an example **before** further Recreation Management Plan / Trail System Plan processes begin in other areas.

The Ghost PLUZ is a priority because:

- the OHV community begrudges sustainable trails lost due to the prior flawed GAMP approach
- significant progress has been made by OHV user groups to inventory trail and develop master plans
- immediate demand for a meaningful trail system close to the largest population in the SSRP
- relieve pressure on other unmanaged areas that do not currently have a management plan

In an effort to meet the recreational ORM trail demand in the Ghost PLUZ, the RMDRA specifically requests that the Ghost PLUZ designated trail system immediately incorporate the single track trails that existed prior to the implementation of the GAMP based on the recommendation from NOHVCC trained ORM riders trained in identifying trails that are most likely to be sustainable. ESRD was provided with trail inventories by the ORM community during the development of the GAMP, and we would be able to submit current GPS trail data as needed. The RMDRA has a Recreational Site Agreement in place with ESRD and is in a position to install and maintain infrastructure or make modifications to the trails to bring them up to NOHVCC standards. This approach and close working relationship with AESRD has worked very well in McLean Creek PLUZ for the ORM community; creating a desirable trail system, increasing trail compliance and substantially reducing trail infractions.

It cannot be overstated that after more than seven years the GAMP/GSMG has failed to meet any of the expectations of OHV users. If the SSRP is proposing a new approach to access management plans, we do not see how the Government of Alberta can continue to support the failed GAMP/GSMG. While RMDRA appreciates the process that SSRP has undertaken to gather perspectives and input to tackle a tough challenge of meeting the needs of this great region, the RMDRA simply cannot wholly support the SSRP if the GSMG process is to continue in its current form or be replicated to other areas.

RMDRA recommends that the current management process for the Ghost PLUZ be replaced by an effective recreation management planning process with the clearly defined deliverable of providing meaningful, sustainable summer and winter recreational opportunities to the ORM/OHV community.

Summary of Recommendations

The eight areas of need identified above and the associated recommendations for inclusion in the SSRP form, in our view, a comprehensive framework that will create a viable management environment to move toward the future we envision for Southern Alberta as a world class Off Road recreation environment.

RMDRA recommends the following eight core components of that framework be included in the final SSRP.

RMDRA recommends that the SSRP contain clear recreational regulatory intent, the levels and thresholds expected of all recreational user groups to achieve sustainable access and use of specific land areas within the region, and clearly stated measurable objectives regarding recreation access.

RMDRA recommends that the SSRP provide clear instruction regarding transitional work both to existing trail inventory and prescribing a comprehensive approach to recreation management built upon the Four E framework and sequence:

Engineering => Education => Enforcement => Evaluation

RMDRA recommends revision to SSRP intent and water body regulation to eliminate impractical blanket crossing regulations and instead effectively reflect the diversity of circumstances and conditions.

RMDRA recommends exclusion of single track ORM trail from calculation of 'linear footprint'.

RMDRA recommends that SSRP establish a clear and transparent recourse process that permits independent review of departmental and individual implementation decisions.

RMDRA recommends a consultative advice group structure that limits stakeholder involvement to providing input to the departmental personnel, who make and implement decisions guided by that input and the clear regulatory intent laid out in the SSRP and supporting documents.

RMDRA recommends that the SSRP contain clear direction to establish DAO funding to support the objectives of the Plan for all aspects of recreational use.

RMDRA recommends that the current management process for the Ghost PLUZ be replaced by an effective recreation management planning process with the clearly defined deliverable of providing meaningful, sustainable summer and winter recreational opportunities to the ORM/OHV community. Furthermore, RMDRA recommends an expedited review and integration of existing single track inventory in the Ghost PLUZ.

Willingness to Contribute

RMDRA recognizes the complexity surrounding this recommended framework, and offers unreservedly to participate in consultation, crafting, drafting, or any other capacity that is helpful to the Land Use Secretariat and the Government of Alberta in making the SSRP as implementable and successful as possible.

Conclusion

The Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan consultation process, to represent the ORM community, and contribute to the recreational vibrancy of the Region.

Recognizing the complexity of the subject and the diversity of views and stakeholders involved in the land use conversation, RMDRA Executive and Members would welcome any opportunity for feedback, dialogue, questions, or concerns with this document and the proposals and observations contained therein.

RMDRA thanks the Land Use Secretariat and the Stewardship Minister for considering the input of individuals and user groups like the RMDRA, and for their dedication in stewarding the lands of this spectacular Province. We look forward to working with the Government of Alberta on the development of Recreation Management Plans and Trail Systems within the SSRP.

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Acronyms

AOHVA	Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association
DIDS	Digital Integrated Dispositions
Draft Plan	Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
GPS	Global Positioning System
ESRD	Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
FLUZ	Forest Land Use Zone
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GSMG	Ghost Stewardship Monitoring Group
GAMP	Ghost Access Management Plan
NOHVCC	National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
PLUZ	Public Land Use Zone
RMDRA	Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association
SRD	Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
SSRP	South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
OHV	Off Highway Vehicle
ORM	Off Road Motorcycle

Definitions

meaningful	as used, a ‘meaningful designated trail system’ is meaningful in that it possesses trail content of sufficient appeal, scale, quantity, quality, variety, proximity, accessibility, documentation, and infrastructure to achieve the ‘enthusiast satisfaction’ element of trail system design.
Single Track	an off road trail that is only wide enough for one wheel to fit at a time as opposed to a double track which would allow two riders to ride side-by-side, or a four wheeled vehicle to drive with a wheel in each track.

References

Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Team (2008). *Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan 2008-2013*.

Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association (2012). *Off Road Motorcycling in the South Saskatchewan Region - Submission to the Alberta Land Use Secretariat*.

South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council (2012). *Advice to the Government of Alberta for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan*.

Crimmins, Tom M. (2006). *Management Guidelines for OHV Recreation (written in association with the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council)*.

<http://www.nohvcc.org/>

National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council

Appendix A

Letters of Support

From: Schuttler Blaine
Sent: Tuesday, January 07, 2014 9:22 AM
To: pres@rockymountainriders.com
Subject: SSRP

“KTM Canada fully backs the RMDRA and their stance regarding the SSRP. Canada is fortunate to have many great people and organizations, working hard to safely sustain and develop off-road recreational opportunities, and the RMDRA sets a national standard when it comes to these initiatives.

Too often, Off Road Motorcycling is labeled with unjust stereotypes; the truth is that Off Road Motorcycling is a REAL sport—a FAMILY sport—and needs to be treated like one. There are benefits to Off Road Motorcycling that extend far beyond the enjoyment of riding a bike. It teaches leadership, builds confidence, and improves physical and mental health. Off Road Motorcycling is not an inexpensive sport and as such the participants spend considerable amounts of money in order to enjoy it. The participants support many businesses within the catchment area of the SSRP and throughout the Province of Alberta through their spending. This in turn creates employment and significantly contributes to local, provincial, and federal tax coffers.

The RMDRA understand these reasons, and many more, and that’s why KTM has supported and plans to continue supporting the RMDRA well into the future.”

Regards,

Blaine Schuttler
Regional Sales Manager - Western Canada
KTM Canada
Husqvarna Canada

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From: Dean Thompson
Sent: Monday, January 06, 2014 11:15 PM
To: pres@rockymountainidirriders.com
Subject: Blackfoot Direct

Blackfoot Direct has been a strong supporter of the RMDRA for many years in regards to their advocacy of responsible off-road riding and fully support their stance in regards to the SSRP future plans.

There are many misconceptions about the way off-road motorcyclists think about the responsibility they have to sustainability of the designated trail system in the back country. RMDRA have been strong advocates about the responsibility to ensure our trail systems are maintained and respected by all user groups that enjoy them. Through many RMDRA member meetings I have attended, I am always amazed by the passion I see from both board and club members in regards to the strong responsibility they feel in order to do what is possible to ensure responsible riding. Whether that be the planning of organized trail maintenance outings or constructing bridges and mats in order that all riders tread lightly.

Off-Road motorcycling is a great family sport involving all members of the family enjoying time together in the back country and building many friendships along the way. If off-road motorcycling was threatened in anyway it would have a serious economic impact on many businesses as OHV are a large portion of many motorcycle shops annual sales.

Blackfoot Direct strongly support RMDRA and are confident that their voice is one that is shared by the majority of off-road motorcyclists.

Dean Thompson
Owner and GM of Blackfoot Direct



Cycle Works Motorsports is in full support of the Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders initiatives, including and not limited to their stance with SSRP Phase 3. As a group of 5 dealerships employing over 130 people, we have an invested interest in the future of off-road riding in Alberta, and fully recognize that groups like Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders will ensure a positive future for our sport, both in terms of environment and economics. We have been involved with the club for several years, and support their commitment to creating and maintaining sustainable trail systems, with a strong focus on education, responsibility and future impacts. We feel Alberta has an opportunity to set the standard for off road trail systems in Canada, and would be best poised to do so with input from Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders. As this is a family oriented club that stands for equal and fair use for all OHV groups, Cycle Works is proud to have previously supported, and continue to support the Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders.

Jim Roth, President Cycle Works Motorsports

Alicia Dubovsky, General Manager Cycle Works Edmonton

Vince Aiello, General Manager Cycle Works Calgary

Don Galloway, Co-Founder Cycle Works Motorsports

Joe Zalk, General Manager, Cycle Works Acheson

Jaron Seitz, General Manager Cycle Works Foothills

Chris McCoy, General Manager Cycle Works Red Deer

"accelerate your ride"



BLACKFOOT MOTOSPORTS

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15 January 2014

SSRP,

Blackfoot Motorcycle Ltd completely endorses the RMDRA and their position regarding the SSRP. RMDRA along with many other organizations are working hard to safely sustain and develop off-road recreational opportunities. Off Road vehicle citizens represent a substantial economy at a variety of levels. Manufacturers, Distributors and Dealerships all benefit from the sale of units and continued Parts and Service business these customers represent. Blackfoot Motorcycle Ltd has on average 75 full time employees most of whom have a family. This represents upwards of 200 citizens that are impacted by the success our business. When you consider the total number of dealers, their staff and families, this represents and large numbers of Albertans that are positively affected by the sustainable use of the off road trail systems. The economy continues to benefit from the purchase of utility trailers, camping trailers, tents and equipment that are used by these citizens to enhance their experience while random camping, designated camping or the use of staging areas. Other economic impacts include hotels, restaurants, and gas stations etc. all of which benefit in the use of designated sustainable trial systems in Alberta.

As many Albertans are, Blackfoot Motorcycle Ltd is concerned for the ecosystem that could be impacted by the use of the designated off road trail system. RMDRA is very committed to creating and maintaining designated sustainable trail systems. Blackfoot Motorcycle Ltd supports this position and understands the importance of proper-shared use of these public lands. RMDRA is committed to working with the SSRP to insure that fair and realistic guidelines are created in the planning for designated OHV trails. RMDRA has also expressed to us their commitment to the fresh water systems in these purposed riding areas, insuring proper placement of trails and the use of bridges where required.

As the owner of Blackfoot Motorcycle Ltd I feel very fortunate to be able to take my 3 boys, Alex, Josh and Noel out dirtbiking. We go as a family with our friends the Dilawri's. The girls all ride their mountain bikes and the boys go riding our dirt bikes. It gives all of us the opportunity to experience the incredible Alberta wilderness with our children. We teach them to respect the lands by staying on designated trails, insuring everything we bring in to the wilderness comes out with us and to properly avoid the wildlife we encounter. It also bonds all of us as family focusing on the positive experience we share on these days riding. Taking our kids dirtbiking has and will continue to help us insure we raise goods kids that understand to respect our lands and create strong family values.

"Blackfoot Motorcycle Ltd has supported and plans to support the RMDRA well into the future."

Thank you,

*Patrick Chambers
Owner*

CANADA'S PREMIER POWERSPORTS DEALERSHIP SINCE 1970

2004 EARNST & YOUNG, ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR FINALIST : 2002 EA SPORTS, SUPERCROSS TEAM OF THE YEAR : 2001 FRASER MILNER CASGRAIN, PINNACLE AWARD WINNER
1999 ARTHUR ANDERSON, TOP 100 PRIVATE COMPANIES : 1998 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, SMALL BUSINESS OWNER OF THE YEAR

Appendix B

About The Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association

The Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association (RMDRA) is a volunteer member run organization established to promote responsible use of Off Road Motorcycles (ORM) in legal and designated areas, maintain trails and be a land access advocacy focal point. This responsible use includes organizing off-road competition events, recreation and entertainment opportunities for members and their families.

CLUB MANDATE

1. Build a Community of Off Road Motorcyclists
 - Shared enjoyment of off road motorcycle riding, mentoring & skills development
 - Promote responsible trail use, maintain trails and share the land with other stakeholders
 - Organize off-road competition, recreational riding and fun social events
2. Provide a Central point for communications, discussions and promotion
 - Website and user forum supporting a wide range of appropriate topics
 - Publicize benefits of RMDRA membership and objectives at industry events, to riders and to the general public
3. Provide credible & sustainable representation at land use initiatives
 - Maintain and grow sustainable ORM land access and designated trail systems
 - Practice open, factual land access stakeholder communication, regulations and conflict resolution
 - Grow the number of riders involved in clubs and associations with the objectives of achieving a larger united voice and spreading positive influence on land use
 - Encourage a common lobbying voice via collaboration with other off road clubs and associations who demonstrate similar objectives



HISTORY

RMDRA was founded in 2004 as a registered not for profit organization under the Societies Act of Alberta. The organization was established in response to an observed gap in the organization and leadership of recreational Off Road Motorcycle users in the population centres in and around Calgary, with the primary intent of organizing and promoting competitive ORM events. RMDRA quickly established a productive relationship with the (then named) Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) while pursuing permission to host a competitive ORM event in the Ghost Public Land Use Zone.

During the summer of 2004, RMDRA volunteers rode, logged, and compiled maps and significant records of the single track trails in portions of the Ghost PLUZ using Global Positioning System (GPS) devices and data processing tools. Total trail records compiled includes hundreds of kilometres and represented thousands of hours of field and office work by volunteer members. These maps and data records were provided to SRD at no charge to assist with the inventory efforts of the Ghost Access Management Plan. Unfortunately and despite this good faith collaborative effort of the RMDRA members, these trails were ultimately NOT DESIGNATED as approved single track trails when the GAMP process was complete, and have not yet been re-designated in the ensuing years despite ongoing collaboration with ESRD and RMDRA participation in the Ghost Stewardship Monitoring Group.

During the summer of 2005 RMDRA planned, submitted application for, and held the first RMDRA competitive ORM event in the Ghost. The event now hosts hundreds of ORM competitors from across Alberta annually.

In 2006, in recognition of growing enthusiasm amongst the ORM user community, RMDRA introduced Guided Rides – a periodic gathering of ORM users to recreate and explore trails in a small group. These small group rides provided a venue for education on responsible use, improvement in user technique and skills in a supportive environment, and the opportunity to broaden the working knowledge of the trails network within the ORM community.

In 2008, SRD approached RMDRA and explained the imminent clarification of the permitted uses and designated trail system within the McLean Creek PLUZ, a popular recreation area for ORM users. At SRD's request, RMDRA volunteer members and leadership again rode, logged, and compiled maps and significant records of the single track trails throughout McLean Creek PLUZ using GPS devices and data processing tools. Total trail records compiled exceeded one hundred kilometres and represented over a thousand hours of field and office work by volunteer members. Ongoing collaboration on maintenance, trail signage, and infrastructure work by RMDRA and ESRD has resulted in the McLean Creek PLUZ network of ORM trails standing as a strong example of a **meaningful designated single track trail system.**



In 2008 and 2009, RMDRA collaborated with ESRD and other OHV organizations including Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association, Second Gear Club, Rocky Mountain Land Cruisers, Calgary Motorcycle Association, and Calgary ATV Riders Association to fund the offering of the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Coalition (NOHVCC) sustainable trail construction course in Calgary. Of the sixty (60) attendees, RMDRA members filled thirteen (13) spots in the course. All of these attendees remain active in the Association and contribute to the land advocacy and trail development and maintenance work of the RMDRA.

Following the successful completion of the NOHVCC training, RMDRA members gained approval to develop, map, and designate a new single track trail in the Ghost PLUZ. Over the summers of 2009, 2010, and 2011 forty kilometres of single track trail were engineered, flagged, and installed in the area east of Fallen Timber campground, and this trail is now known as the *Fallen Timber Trail*.



This trail represents both a success story as the project gained endorsement of ESRD and ultimately approval by the GSMG, but also a disappointment as it remains the only designated trail in the Ghost PLUZ despite other trail submissions and sustained ORM trail advocacy efforts by RMDRA representatives.

During 2011 and 2012, intersection signage throughout McLean Creek was undertaken by RMDRA and ESRD to improve the navigability and appeal of the designated trail system. Eighty-nine ORM specific intersections were identified, ground proven, signed, and GPS verified by RMDRA member volunteers. This project ultimately represents an investment of nearly 1000 hours and the attendant vehicle operation costs.

2012 was another successful year for RMDRA as membership numbers now exceed 500 ORM user members. Guided rides continue apace, bringing ORM users together and opportunities for education, volunteerism, and development.



The RMDRA has a busy 2013 planned:

- January: we will host a booth at the Calgary Motorcycle Show to inform attendees and advance our mandate of land advocacy and responsible use.
- February: the RMDRA Annual Swap meet will attract close to one hundred ORM users to buy, sell and trade gear, parts, and stories; and a significant fundraising opportunity as our volunteer force will staff two nights of Casino under the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission's Gaming for Charities guidelines and receive a portion of the proceeds of provincial casino revenues allocated to participating not for profit entities.
- Our trail development team will be actively working through the winter to advance trail proposals in collaboration with ESRD. Spring will bring opportunity to flag and ground prove these trails to ensure viability. This topic is explored more under **SUSTAINABLE TRAIL SYSTEMS**
- Easter Weekend will see the annual Spring Campout attended by over 20 families
- Trail infrastructure installation commences in the summer as the land dries out.
- RMDRA Annual Competitive ORM Event will take place in July as one of nine rounds in the 2013 Provincial Off Road Competition Series.
- Fall brings cooler weather and dry conditions, the optimum circumstance for trail construction
- Thanksgiving Weekend sees the annual Fall Campout – again expecting 20 families or more



FAMILIES

A key element of Off Road Motorcycling and the RMDRA mandate is the participation of families. RMDRA sells only one grade of membership – a Family Membership – with the intent to encourage, rather than monetarily disincend, the participation of all members of a family in our events and efforts.

A key aspect of Off Road Motorcycle design philosophy is accessibility to all ages – motorcycles and attendant protective apparel are manufactured for safe use by children as young as four years old. Terrain variability permits advancement from open fields and gentle undulations, to smooth, wide trails, to moderate challenges, and so on.

As discussed in the **COMPETITION** section young Albertans (and their parents) are very active in personal and skills development – in competitive and recreational arenas. The ORM community fosters friendships and mutual respect that is visible and accessible to youth, and develops in them a sense of responsibility and duty that serves our community and, we believe, our broader society well as they grow into quality citizens.

To serve this clear observed need and foster family participation, RMDRA organizes a series of family events each year in addition to the scheduled competitive events. Usually involving camp-outs of more than twenty families, annual events often include:

- Spring Camp Out
- Canada Day Family Event
- Fall Camp-Out



INVESTMENT

RMDRA members actively invest in the ORM trails in the areas around Calgary – particularly in McLean Creek PLUZ and Ghost PLUZ. This investment takes many forms including:

- thousands of volunteer hours in trail maintenance, enhancement, construction, and signage
- physical infrastructure such as fence crossings “up’n’overs”, bridges, and muskeg mats
- participation in stewardship activities including land advocacy, committee work, etc.

A key investment in trail maintenance and construction technology has been the Morrison Trailblazer – a hydraulically driven machine custom built to establish and refurbish trail.



Originally used by SRD to establish the original trails in McLean Creek and the Ghost Forest, this abandoned unit was discovered at the Alberta Parks Sheep River Ranger Station and donated to RMDRA by Alberta Tourism, Parks, and Recreation.

RMDRA members and sponsors invested over four hundred hours of disassembly, refurbishment, fabrication, and re-assembly time and twenty thousand dollars of purchased and in-kind contributions to produce a modern marvel that vastly

improves the ease of building and refreshing single track trail, increasing the quality and sustainability of trails where it is used. The RMDRA Morrison Trailblazer features all of the purpose built trail construction features of the original Morrison compact tracked hoe plus the following custom RMDRA enhancements:

- Hydraulically controlled adjustable track width to permit narrow (single) trail tread access
- Rear boom complete with ground engagement teeth
- Fully hydraulic six way blade
- Excavator bucket thumb
- Hand tool, fuel, and miscellaneous integral gear storage



COLLABORATION

Since inception, RMDRA has collaborated closely with government, ORM industry, and other off road enthusiasts to advance responsible trail use.

In particular, RMDRA works closely with ESRD in a multitude of ways, including to:

- document historical trail throughout the McLean Creek PLUZ and Ghost PLUZ
- develop and maintain the designated trail systems in McLean Creek
- actively represent ORM users in the Ghost Access Management Plan process and subsequently participate in the Ghost Stewardship Monitoring Group
- establish, validate, and gain approval for the Fallen Timber Trail in the Ghost PLUZ
- conduct competitive ORM events on approved course routes including designated, historical, and newly established single track trail.

This collaboration has evolved into a formal framework of a Recreational Site Agreement (RSA) issued by ESRD that permits installation of approved infrastructure on public lands for which RMDRA maintains all responsibility and liability.

Similarly, RMDRA has applied for and received funding for trail projects through the National Trails Coalition, a Canadian not for profit organization that brings the broad spectrum of trail-based activities together in a collaborative manner to build, maintain and promote trails and trail use across Canada.

RMDRA also receives strong support from the ORM industry to achieve the trail development and maintenance work, competitive event execution, and ORM community development aspects of the RMDRA mandate. One example of this support includes previously mentioned provision of in-kind donations for the Trailblazer restoration project including an entire engine from a local power sports dealer.



Another significant example of industry collaboration is the selection of RMDRA as the designated club from Alberta to receive funds from the 2012 'KTM Off-Road Support Program' by which KTM has donated thousands of dollars to support RMDRA's mission. KTM Canada provided the following statement regarding this selection and our work in advocating the role of ORM recreation in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan:

"KTM Canada fully backs the RMDRA and their stance regarding the SSRP. Canada is fortunate to have many great people and organizations, working hard to safely sustain and develop off-road recreational opportunities, and the RMDRA sets a national standard when it comes to these initiatives. Too often, ORM is labeled with ugly names and unjust stereotypes; the truth is that ORM is a REAL sport—a FAMILY sport—and should be treated like one. There are benefits to ORM that extend far beyond the enjoyment of riding a dirt bike. It teaches leadership, builds confidence, and improves physical and mental health. The RMDRA understand these reasons, and many more, and that's why KTM has supported and plans to support the RMDRA well into the future."

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT & ADVOCACY

RMDRA member volunteers consistently work each year to improve and update designated single track trail. Trail maintenance work occurs in response to the natural processes and regular utilization at work in multi-use lands such as vegetation growth, deadfall and windfall, water or wind impacts, and occasional rut and water accumulation interventions. Enhancement work occurs in response to unexpected degradation of a trail section due to unanticipated ground, weather, or usage conditions. In this case the undesired effects are mitigated and trails restored or rerouted to prevent degradation recurrence.

RMDRA actively researches, plans, and advocates for additional designated single track trail. To assist with this work, RMDRA volunteers have developed and acquired Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools that permit ready visualization of ground and water conditions, wildlife sensitivities, other stakeholders and land users, etc. Through collaboration with ESRD and Forestry Management Area (FMA) holders data sets have been assembled to identify the following “layers” for consideration in trail development:

Geographic information:

- GPS
- LIDAR
- slope shader
- wet area mapping
- hydrology map

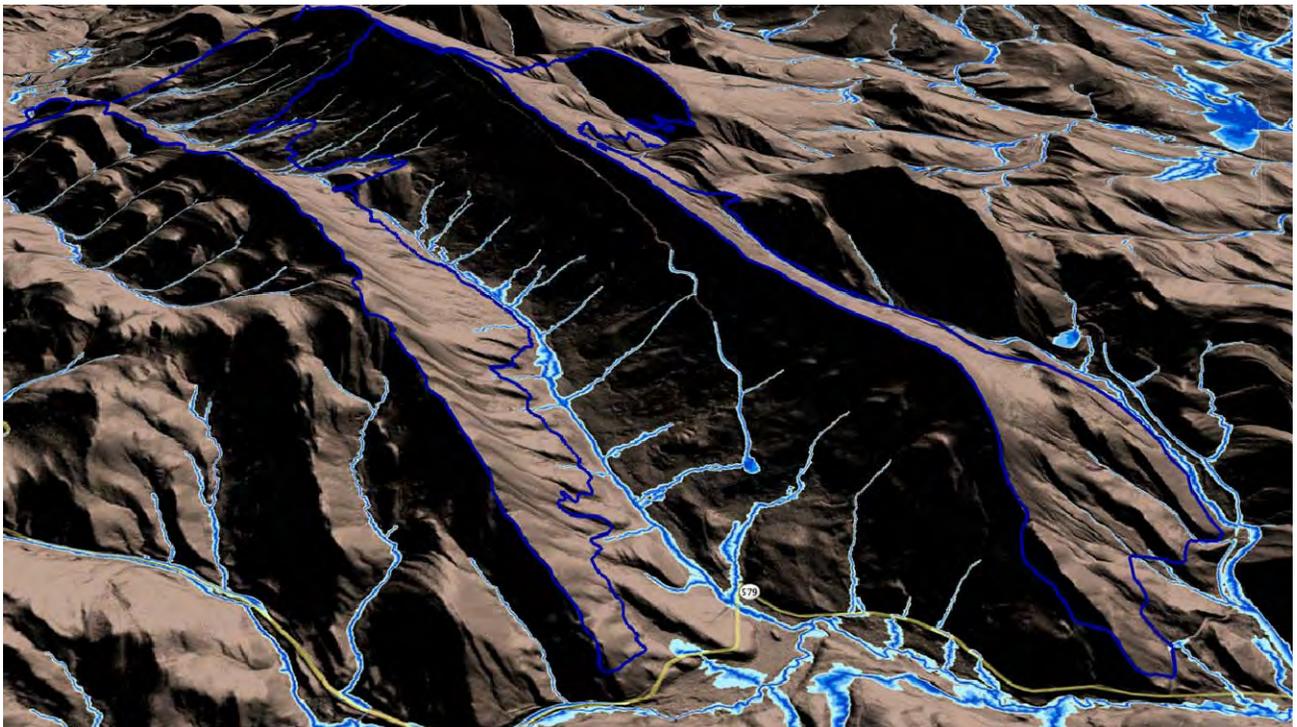
Wildlife information:

- prime protection
- critical protection
- grizzly bear habitat
- coniferous areas
- deciduous areas

Other information

- historical sites
- logging plans
- surface lease holders
- cut lines
- DIDs (oil & gas)

After combining these layers it is possible to readily visualize routes and areas suitable for sustainable single track trail. A sample image of the visualization of the Fallen Timber Trail is included below, where the trail is shown in **Dark Blue**:



Appendix C

Feedback on the RAC Advice to the Government of Alberta

FEEDBACK ON THE RAC ADVICE

3.0 Vision & Principles

RMDRA broadly supports the **Regional Vision Statement**. RMDRA also broadly supports the **Strategic Land-use Principles** and sees particular value in the explicit emphasis on:

- **Accommodating multiple users** (not “if” but “how” and under “what” conditions)
- **Integrated planning**
- **Regulatory streamlining and efficiency**

Equally important is the stark reality of the final principle, **Economic opportunity**, and RMDRA applauds the intention to provide more certainty and clarity regarding constraints to development. RMDRA experience indicates that sustainable economic activities enhance the access and infrastructure on multi-use lands, elevating the availability of the recreation opportunities for all users.

4.0 Healthy Economy

RMDRA broadly supports the advice contained in sections **4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, and 4.7**. With regard to section **4.5 Recreation and Tourism** we respectfully submit that the tourism and recreation values discussed in this section are vague and, to our interpretation, narrowly focus on “world-class, tourism destination” of the typical National Park “viewpoint” style. RMDRA sees another facet of economic contribution possible by elevating the accessibility, quality, and ultimately reputation of the world-class ORM trail systems possible in the multi-use lands of the South Saskatchewan Region. Southern Alberta has some of the best terrain in the world, and with cultivation and management the recreation and tourism industries associated with this resource could bring significant economic benefit to our Region. Successful examples of these multi-use/OHV tourism destinations exist throughout the USA.

5.0 Healthy Ecosystems and Environment

RMDRA broadly supports the advice contained in section **5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4**. Our desire for sustainable access to lands for ORM recreation is in no way in conflict with the desired Environmental Outcomes.

6.0 Healthy Communities

RMDRA broadly supports the advice contained in section **6.1, 6.2, and 6.3**. With regard to section **6.4 Recreation and Tourism**, RMDRA specifically appreciates the clarity with which certain RAC Advice points are made:

- 6.4.1 highlights the recreation preferences of residents and supply of recreation opportunities to meet those preferences
- 6.4.4 highlights the need to minimize impact on land, water, and biodiversity
- 6.4.4.3 identifies the value of retaining recreation and tourism opportunities on lands beyond those specifically designated therefor, and the need for an integrated access management plan for the entire Eastern Slopes.

Regarding recreation and tourism area integrity and infrastructure, RMDRA strongly supports the RAC advice statements to develop user pay systems (**6.4.4.8**) and appropriate enforcement (**6.4.4.9**), and to enhance infrastructure (**6.4.4.16**) and un-serviced camping opportunities (**6.4.4.20**). RMDRA finds much of the content of the RAC Advice section **6.4** to be extremely sound and reasonable, with a very notable exception: **6.4.4.10**.

6.4.4.10 makes a generally agreeable statement regarding the need for stewardship and respect for the natural environment but then provides three extremely specific examples of activities which it implies are not in accordance with stewardship and respect for the natural environment: Motorized Recreation, Motorized activities in riparian areas and wetlands (“mud bogging”), and Unmanaged camping.

RMDRA finds point **6.4.4.10** of the RAC Advice extremely troubling for three key reasons:

- 1) In a document largely aimed at the strategic level and almost entirely crafted in broad, general terms, this precise targeting stands out for its specificity. Why?
- 2) The advice statement lumps three distinct activities together – motorized recreation, mud bogging, and unmanaged camping. It is clear and obvious that irresponsible vehicle use in riparian areas and wetlands is indefensible, whereas both motorized recreation and unmanaged camping can be and are largely performed responsibly, sustainably, with stewardship and respect for the natural environment.
- 3) The advice statement is not written in an objective and neutral manner, and frames motorized recreation and unmanaged camping as inherently lacking in stewardship and respect for the natural environment; this categorical implication is simply false. Such framing is prejudicial and threatens the integrity of the Advice document.

RMDRA strenuously requests that this element of the RAC advice be carefully reviewed and weighed against objective evidence of the excellent, sustainable motorized recreation examples that abound in the South Saskatchewan Region. Likewise, RMDRA requests that the workbook response data to questions to **6.4.4.10A, 10B, and 10C** be regarded carefully given the prejudicial framing of the Advice statement.

7.0 Land-use Direction and Management Intent

RMDRA broadly supports the advice contained in sections **7.0A, 7.0C, and 7.0D**. With regard to **7.0B. Conservation**, RMDRA supports the intent of maintaining water security and ecological outcomes, particularly when reviewed with the Strategic Land-Use Principles in mind.

RMDRA notes that the RAC Advice regarding Conservation Management Areas (CMAs) includes surface access for energy and mineral development where environmental outcomes are achievable, and forest harvesting practices modified and adapted to achieve those same outcomes. Likewise, RMDRA notes the suggestion that motorized recreation be limited to designated trail, routes, roads, and staging areas.

With regard to the final paragraph on Page 50 of the RAC Advice, RMDRA applauds the RAC for highlighting their intent to achieve conservation objectives while maintaining access, and their unwillingness to endorse these conservation areas in the absence of managed access. This view of access to ecologically important areas using “the concept not of ‘if’ or ‘who’ has access and activity rights, but ‘how’ access and activities can occur” stands out as an enlightened stance in a traditionally “winner take all” arena. RMDRA strongly encourages the Land Use Secretariat to strive to maintain this multi-use approach as the Draft Plan emerges and proceeds to finality.

With regard to **7.0E. Recreation/Tourism** RMDRA finds the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) to be an excellent classification system. The ROS offers a clear frame of reference for discussions of land development and access. RMDRA recognizes the value of Primitive and Backcountry opportunities and the appropriate determination of suitable motorized vehicle access.

When read together, **7.0B and 7.0E** define a level of motorized access to CMAs and attendant Primitive and Backcountry ROS areas that is managed and limited, but not precluded. RMDRA believes that this approach can be very successful, particularly for the highly sustainable trail systems that serve ORM users.

APPENDIX D

Ingredients for Success in ORM Recreation

SUSTAINABLE TRAIL SYSTEMS

RMDRA supports the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOVHCC) approach to Management of OHV recreation and to sustainable trail and trail system design. This approach is summarized well in the NOVHCC publication Management Guidelines for OHV Recreation (2006), and a small summary of this best practice philosophy and methods is included below.

At a macro level, four key elements underpin successful OHV recreation, known as the Four E's of OHV Management

- Engineering – the proactive use of trail and system design to avoid undesirable uses and outcomes
- Education – the proactive communication of expectations of behaviour and tenets of responsible use,
- Enforcement – the proactive assessment of causes of violations to help users achieve compliance
- Evaluation – proactive monitoring of trail management, user, and environmental outcomes

When contemplating recreational area or trail system design, developing a clear vision of success requires consideration of several aspects:

- type of vehicles – what user groups are to be served, in what combination or proportion?
- opportunities – what types of experiences does the area's characteristics make possible?
- facilities provided –
- what infrastructure and supporting services are needed to achieve success?
- management approach – based upon the Four E's and these considerations, what management will be necessary to achieve and maintain sustainable success?

Once a clear vision for a recreational resource is established, a proven sequential process leads to a sustainable system that protects resources and satisfies user expectations.

The Sustainable Trail System process is designed around the need to transition from historical trails to designated routes. Recognizing and taking stock of existing trail is an imperative step – historical trails and infrastructure have tremendous recreational value and any unsustainable conditions are generally mitigated much more readily than comparable new trails can be established.

Successful system layout depends upon:

- understand rider needs – understanding rider desires is essential to meaningful system outcomes
- adequate experience – trail quantity must be sufficient to provide a satisfying experience
- loop opportunities – variety is a key ingredient to satisfaction, and in-and-out trails fall short
- diversity in difficulty – successful systems contain a mix of novice, intermediate, and expert
- desirable features – appealing destinations enhance the exploration experience for users
- camping opportunities – accessible camping facilities and connecting trails improve a system

- support facilities – identify trailheads, parking, sanitary facilities, and other services
- opportunities for youth – include supervisable areas appropriate for children /new riders
- address problem trails – unsustainable trail sections must be mitigated, rerouted or reclaimed
- one-way trails – avoid one-way trails to keep reckless speed down and variety up,

Within the overall system design, detailed trail planning and design decisions are necessary to achieve a cohesive trail system that performs as intended:

- trail objectives – identify each trail’s intended purpose, use, capacity, and management
- environmental protection – route trails to avoid sensitive areas and to manage and control water
- maintenance efficiency – design trails to minimize the need for ongoing upkeep and restoration
- rider satisfaction – construct trails to deliver the desired difficulty level consistently

Site-specific factors:

- flow – avoid abrupt transitions from fast, sweeping to tight and technical trail
- grade – ensure trails ascend at no more than half the grade of a given side slope
- water control – utilize undulations and an out-sloped tread to encourage water dissipation
- stream crossings – harden approaches or provide infrastructure to meet requirements
- soil stability – design trails to avoid wet areas or provide armoring or infrastructure
- intersections – provide an offset and adequate visibility from all approaches to slow riders
- curves – utilize curves to reduce sight distances and increase difficulty
- Vegetation – minimize clearing to control speed, increase difficulty and enjoyment

Once established, any recreation area must be actively managed and maintained to achieve long term success. The recommended methods of active management include:

- information – use websites, maps, signs, etc. to increase user satisfaction and enjoyment
- management presence – proactive interaction by agency personnel using the same vehicles as users
- trail maintenance – annual inspection and upkeep addresses unsustainable conditions
- volunteers – engage users to do work, build understanding and community support
- monitoring – establish a protocol for ongoing quality assurance
- enforcement – quality enforcement addressing real problems shows value of resource, encourages compliance and responsible behaviour
- public outreach – involve other stakeholders early to design in solutions to concerns

The NOHVCC model for OHV recreation management has been applied successfully in jurisdictions throughout Canada and the United States. British Columbia, Ontario, Montana, and Idaho all boast meaningful designated trail systems that



are planned, designed, and managed according to this recognized best practice.

STAGING AREAS

ORM recreation requires, by definition, transport of recreation vehicles by on-highway vehicle to an unloading point which serves as a meeting point, parking area, and base of operations. Location, number, and characteristics of staging areas within the managed access area and designated trail system have a significant effect upon the quality of the OHV recreation experience and the nature and extent of external effects of OHV access.

Observation and basic geometry indicate that recreation density declines dramatically as the distance from a staging area increases; the duration / distance of a recreational ride becomes a limiting factor and whereas long rides may access areas far from a staging area, all rides long and short must cross the areas close to a staging area. To reduce recreation density across a large recreation area, implementing multiple staging areas will effectively distribute activity, avoid crowding, and achieve more sustainable recreation throughout the area.

Siting of staging areas away from areas of critical ecological, wildlife, wetland, riparian, or other relevant value will reduce the impact of OHV activity on these sensitive aspects of the land and other land-use aspects. In the simplest terms, staging areas adjacent to creeks necessitate a crossing to access all lands on the other side; staging areas adjacent to sensitive wildlife are more likely to distribute traffic amongst that wildlife, and staging areas adjacent to a non-OHV tourism site are likely to draw criticism from non-OHV visitors. By proactively identifying areas without these sensitivities, staging area site selection can dramatically affect the level of conflict between OHV access and other land users and values.

Finally, the provision of critical infrastructure greatly enhances the usability of designated staging areas and serves to draw users to the most conducive facilities. Outhouse facilities and fire pits are critical, and picnic shelters and pumped water are excellent additions if available



CAMPING

Camping obviously plays an extremely important role in much of the recreation in the South Saskatchewan Region, and ORM and OHV users are no different from other recreational users of the land in this regard; as camping facilities vary in the level of infrastructure available, so demand for facilities varies according to the needs of the users. As articulated in 6.4.4, additional infrastructure is needed in the South Saskatchewan Region to support current and future population levels; one need only endeavour to place a weekend reservation in a provincial campground or attempt to access a sani-dump on a Sunday afternoon during summer months to see the clear and present demand.

In the case of OHV and ORM users, sanctioned motorized access is a key element of suitable camping infrastructure – campgrounds without such access are of reduced attractiveness to OHV and ORM users, and facilities with OHV access are an important element of any conversation regarding achieving sustainable OHV use and access.

As a result of the limited levels of sanctioned OHV access in campgrounds throughout Alberta, the OHV community has developed a level of comfort with unserviced camping in areas where OHV access is sanctioned. This unserviced camping approach solves certain access challenges, but in the absence of infrastructure has the potential to create other issues. To this point, one leader in the OHV/ORM community is fond of saying:

“Good People make Bad Choices when they have NO OPTIONS”

In other words, many of the bad behaviours that we see in unserviced camping situations are the result of insufficient camping infrastructure and inadequate OHV access in designated camping areas – leading to unplanned, unmanaged, and unfacilitated camping and the highly variable outcomes that are not unexpected in the absence of plans, systems, and facilities.

RMDRA strongly asserts that designated unserviced camping areas that are well located and outfitted with essential infrastructure can be a successful, low cost, highly sustainable contributor to reducing the congestion and negative externalities that are currently manifest in the Southern Alberta camping environment. To achieve desired environmental outcomes and foster successful unserviced camping, infrastructure is variously classified as follows:

ESSENTIAL:

- Garbage Receptacles
- Outhouses
- Sani-dump

RECOMMENDED:

- Pumped Water
- Fire Rings

OPTIONAL:

- Picnic Tables
- Firewood

Sani-dumps in particular pose a significant challenge in the South Saskatchewan Region – many return arteries from the foothills and eastern slopes (where significant recreation and tourism opportunities exist) lack sufficient public sani-dump facilities.

COMPETITION

RMDRA strongly advocates that Organized Sporting Events are a key element of the Off Road Motorcycling community and have a significant positive effect on the community, the economy, and the land. The benefits of competitive events include fitness, health, mentorship, volunteerism, family participation, education, responsible use, and sustainable trail construction. Organized Sporting Events are essential to ORM community and a critical funding source for ORM clubs and provide resources for further trail maintenance.

The health and fitness benefits of Off Road Motorcycling may not be immediately obvious to the casual observer (given the presence of motorized propulsion in the sport) but have been the subject of academic research in recent years (Burr, Jamnik, and Gledhill; 2010) and conclusively established as having significant positive impact on body fat percentage, waist circumference, risk of cardiovascular disease, proper metabolic function, and progression of diabetes. Similarly, fitness levels of various professional athletes were surveyed and ORM competitors were consistently found to be among the fittest professional athletes.

The volunteerism, family participation, mentorship and education aspects of organized ORM sporting events stem almost entirely from the progressive nature of the competitive class structure and the significant effort necessary to organize such events at the local club level with limited financial support from sponsors and advertisers, and no financial support from provincial or municipal government. All proceeds produced from hosting competitions are reinvested by clubs into mandate activities such as education, trail maintenance and infrastructure, and land-use advocacy.



To compete successfully at the national and international level in events such as the Canadian Enduro Championship (CEC) and International Six Days Enduro (ISDE), Albertan ORM enthusiasts hone their skills and fitness in countless smaller, local sporting events organized by volunteers from the ORM

community. These events require enormous advance effort including course planning and design, event application and approval, course preparation and infrastructure, event promotion and fundraising. Execution of the event itself likewise demands an army of volunteers to ensure safety, sound competition, and enjoyment of the event by participants, volunteers, and spectators.

Competition in ORM events attracts participants ranging in age from pre-schoolers to senior citizens, making ORM a truly family sport. A sample list of classes of competition for a typical ORM event is as follows:

Day 1 Classes

- Pee Wee Beginner
- Pee Wee Expert
- Kids Beginner
- Kids Junior
- Kids Intermediate
- Kids Expert
- Ladies B

Day 2 Classes

- Ladies A
- Beginner
- Junior
- 40B (Age 40+ B Level)
- 30B (Age 30+ B Level)
- 50+ (Age 50+)
- Legends (Age 60+)

Day 2 Classes

- 40A (Age 40+ A Level)
- 30A (Age 30+ A Level)
- Intermediate (Age 16+)
- Professional (Age 16+)

Day 1 Classes typically require three or four courses varying in length and difficulty; Day 2 Classes require one course of significant length and difficulty where lower classes use only a portion or higher classes repeat sections to ensure competitiveness. Organizing all of these courses, start times, tracking of participants, timekeeping, and results tabulation again relies on a multitude of volunteers – often the parents, siblings, or children of participants. Almost all participants from a host club volunteer in some way to help the event succeed.

Organized sporting events provide a venue to advance the responsibility and sustainability of Off Road Motorcycling. Trails created in the preparation for an ORM competition are subject to a high level of oversight and approval, are planned well in advance using sustainable trail engineering practices, and ideally include new single track each event supplementing existing single track and connective trails. By this method, ORM events grow the trail inventory and contribute new single track built to the best modern practice, thereby reducing the overall concentration of users on the trail network and the load placed on any individual trail.

Participation in ORM competition occurs at the discretion of the host club, and in a volunteer driven environment irresponsible and disrespectful behaviours stand out and are quickly brought to alignment. The progressive class system encourages mentorship and advanced riders model the behaviours that make them successful competitors; younger and less experienced riders strive to learn and improve. Sportsmanship reigns supreme as challenging terrain and conditions often require cooperation between competitors to succeed on the course, and participants with mechanical issues are routinely assisted by competitors to ensure safe completion for all. This ethic of collaboration permeates the community of ORM Competition on the trail and off; in one recent example, the host campground operator provided extremely complimentary feedback on the respect shown by attendees for the facility, other campers, and the policies and rules of the area.

We note with concern the reference in 6.4.4.10 of the RAC Advice (discussed above in Part II - Feedback on the RAC Advice) as follows: “Motorized recreation, including rallies and races, should not be

permitted on public lands unless authorized on designated trails, routes or areas;”. RMDRA views this advice statement as misleading to the casual reader as currently all ORM organized sporting events held in Southern Alberta are authorized and routes approved by ESRD and held within approved trails, routes, and areas.

All events are fully sanctioned and insured through the Canadian Motosport Racing Corporation (CMRC) or the Canadian Motorcycle Association Inc. (CMA). CMRC and CMA are responsible for setting, implementing, maintaining and developing standards for rules of competition, officiating, organization and promotion of events including mandatory sound testing, with penalties including disqualification for sound test failures.

RMDRA and other host clubs work closely with ESRD to plan, apply, and gain approval for organized competition wherever the event is held in the South Saskatchewan Region. Gaining approval for a competitive event requires rigorous preparation and commitment to upholding the requirements of the Temporary Field Access, and follow through in executing a safe event that positively impacts participants, the land accessed for the event, and other users in the area. ORM competitive events across the South Saskatchewan Region are of consistently high quality, strongly attended, and well regarded throughout the Canadian ORM community.

The Competitive Event Approval System currently works well, and though requirements are rightly stringent, generally accessible and reasonable to host clubs seeking to promote an event. RMDRA acknowledges and strongly supports the observed policy direction that the regulatory system is intended to encourage approve successful events, not deny access for events. RMDRA respectfully requests that the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan reflect this ongoing effort to foster successful events rather than advocating for a reduction of such events as the RAC Advice intimates. We believe the optimal solution is to collaboratively manage competitive ORM use and access, not ban or curtail that access and activity.



FUNDING

As mentioned above in **Part II - Feedback on the RAC Advice to the Government of Alberta**, RMDRA supports the RAC Advice statement 6.4.4.8 proposing user-pay system(s) to assist with funding of recreation. Specifically, RMDRA supports user-pay systems for all recreational access to fund the management, facilities, and maintenance necessary to achieve sustainable access for all users of the land and attendant recreation facilities, including but not limited to:

- OHV & ORM users
- Snowmobile trail network and back country users
- Cross country ski trail network and back country ski touring users
- Hiking, climbing, hunting, and fishing users
- Unserviced camping users

Observation indicates that people value goods, services, and even access more highly if they have paid an appropriate price and see direct evidence of their contribution money at work. RMDRA strongly believes that users who pay for an annual Trail Pass and Unserviced Camping Permit will recognize the value provided by these specific fees, and willingly comply where they may have previously avoided the license plate requirement for a vehicle which will never travel on a public road. OHV access passes in other jurisdictions have proven highly successful.

It is also salient that the revenue benefits of user-pay or access pass systems extend beyond residents of the Region or the Province. Southern Alberta attracts OHV and ORM users from across adjacent Provinces and States and beyond (as our users travel to other areas to recreate on new terrain) and tourist recreation would be another solid source of revenue to fund planning, management, and infrastructure. When a visitor comes to Alberta to fish, he must buy a fishing license... why would an OHV user not buy a trail access pass?

ENFORCEMENT

RMDRA strongly believes that compliance with designated trail systems is the goal of ORM managed access, and that the path to compliance lies in successful establishment of meaningful supply of designated access. When the supply of ORM single track trail is sufficient in scale, quality, and variety to meet the demand of the user base, the need for enforcement will be minimized.

Previous enforcement cycles in the Ghost PLUZ have focussed on discouraging users, but the reality is that McLean Creek PLUZ is not large enough nor does it have sufficient camping space to accommodate the high numbers of users during peak times. The result is that users seek other areas to recreate, whether designated or not. Again:

“Good People make Bad Choices when they have NO OPTIONS”

Enforcement without sufficient managed access is a recipe for conflict and frustration. Managed access with ample designated trail networks, ORM infrastructure, and proactive enforcement aimed at encouraging sustainable, compliant use is a recipe for a world-class recreation environment. To achieve designated trail compliance in the South Saskatchewan Region, RMDRA strongly believes that efforts must be aimed at encouraging sufficient meaningful access, not at deterring recreation demand by punishing non-compliance.