

August 25, 2014

Chris Addison
Director of Resource Management
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
Northern Region

Re: Muskwa-Kechika Management Area: Designated Access Routes

Dear Chris:

The Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board has reviewed the issues you provided to us regarding the designated access routes in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (M-KMA).

First, we would like to confirm principles for having designated access and believe these principles should be made available to all users of the M-KMA.

Public awareness of such principles will assist in understanding, acceptance and adhering to the regulations that are in place for these routes.

- 1) Designated access routes within the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area are routes that have provided historical use by the public and include use by motorized all terrain vehicles.
- 2) Restrictions for these designated routes are to protect sensitive habitat and prevent unfettered access that would cause environmental damage beyond the designated route corridors.
- 3) New designated access routes will not be established.

Based on these principles, our advice to you as the Director who is responsible for the current regulation for designated routes is:

- 1) Maintain restrictions by using the Wildlife Act, Public Access Prohibition Regulations
- 2) Include the principles above under the heading of "Muskwa-Kechika Management Area" in the regulation.
- 3) Continue with the current restrictions regarding the width of each designated route.
- 4) Work with other government agencies to ensure that signage for each designated route is in place and maintained.
- 5) Regarding the current weight restriction for "atv's"; it is understood that since the Regulation was first put into place, ATV's were generally under the 500 kg weight restrictions. ATV's have changed greatly and as such we believe increasing the weight

restriction to allow machines that are up to 650 kg (which would include what is known as “side by sides”) will not impact the principles for having designated access routes as long as:

- a. These vehicles adhere to the designated routes and restrictions within each route,
 - b. The current routes that have serious water and mud problems and where braiding has occurred, be repaired to ensure proper drainage and provide a firm surface. This will prevent these areas for “mudbogging”, which is not part of the intent of these access routes and prevent further braiding which causes serious environmental damage.
- 6) Ensure detailed information and how to obtain that information is made available to the public for each designated route. We recommend that each route have GPS coordinates provided so that ATV users could download this while out on an access route so they are clear on where they are in relation to the restrictions on each route.

The province’s new Off Road Vehicle legislation is a positive advancement for off road/all terrain vehicles in the province in terms of registration for these types of vehicles. This will help with enforcement of existing regulations throughout the Province.

We recommend to the Province however, that the definition for these types of vehicles is clear and concise and consistent for all legislation and regulations that reference such vehicles.

We understand that funding for designated route repairs and maintenance along with signage is limited. However, we encourage the Province to work within the respective Ministries and their staff (Tim Bennett, FLNR Recreation and Trails, BC Parks etc.) along with user groups and local communities that will support this and help to make it happen.

Please continue to keep us informed as to your progress with our advice. Should any changes in the future be considered for the M-KMA designated access routes, the Advisory Board would desire to be involved in those discussions to be able to provide advice to the Province.

On behalf of the Advisory Board,

Stephanie Killam
Chair
Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board