

Report to the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board 2013



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The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area

In 1997 the provincial government accepted the multi-stakeholder Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP) for Fort St. John and Fort Nelson which specified special management of the Muskwa-Kechika area. The Muskwa-Kechika Management Plan was adopted through Order-in-Council (1367/97) in October of that year. The management plan is to be implemented by all relevant government agencies through agency-specific management activities, local strategic plans, resource development permits as well as Crown land and natural resource dispositions. In 2000, area was added to the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area through a recommendation in the Mackenzie LRMP.

In June 1998, the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act was passed. The legislation included the creation of an advisory board tasked with advising government on management of the 6.4 million ha Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (M-KMA) and the Muskwa-Kechika Trust Fund.

Objectives for the M-KMA were developed as part of the Fort Nelson, Fort St. John and Mackenzie LRMPs. The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area contains a diversity of values. Participants in the LRMP processes suggested a novel management approach. This intent remains and this report affirms the Province’s commitment to the principles of the M-KMA. The Province supports the M-KAB’s efforts to develop innovative processes and to assist in achieving the balance of values within the M-KMA.

The management goal for the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area is to ensure that wilderness characteristics, wildlife and its habitat are maintained over time while allowing resource development and use, including: recreation, hunting, timber harvesting, mineral exploration and mining, oil and gas exploration and development. The integration of management activities, especially related to the planning, development and management of road access within the M-KMA, is central to achieving this intent. The long-term objective is to return lands to their natural state, as much as possible, as development activities are completed.

Industrial Use

Oil and gas development

Oil and gas development is regulated by the Oil and Gas Commission (OGC), a crown corporation of the Province. No new Crown sales either wholly or partially in the M-KMA have been issued between January 2008 and the date of this report.

Table 1: Natural gas wells in the M-KMA

Well Authorization Grant Year	Number of Well Authorizations
Pre-2000	30
2000	4
2001	1

Table 2: Natural gas tenures issued by year

Year of Title Issue	Number of Titles Issued	Total Tenures Area - ha	Total Area within MKMA - ha
Pre-2000	7	3,933	2,307
2000	3	3,088	2,752
2003	2	3,075	2,614
2004	5	1,417	837
2005	3	1,404	918
2006	2	566	229
2007	2	2,529	2,529
2008	4	5,615	5,613
2009	2	2,553	1,989

An unknown number of gas wells within the M-KMA have been decommissioned or ‘shut in’ since 2011. It may be that low prices for natural gas in the North American market plus the large-scale development of shale gas reserves outside the M-KMA are factors influencing the low rate of exploration and sale within the M-KMA. For whatever reason, interest in developing petroleum reserves within the M-KMA remains modest.

Mineral and coal tenures

Similarly, while there are a number of mineral tenures issued and active in the M-KMA, interest in developing mineral resources within the M-KMA remains modest. No coal titles or Notices of Work have been issued within the M-KMA since 2012.

Table 3: Mineral and coal tenures within the M-KMA

Tenure Type	Tenure Sub-Type	Count of Tenures	Total Tenures Area - ha	Total Area within MKMA - ha
Coal	Application	11	198,464	108,459
Mineral	Claim	895	313,246	290,844
Placer	Claim	18	8,485	5,326

Table 4: Mineral, coal and placer tenures issued by year since 2011

Issue Year	Tenure Type	Sub-Type	# of Tenures Issued	Total Tenures Area - ha	Total Area within MKMA - ha
2013	Mineral	Claim	54	7,556	6,471
2013	Placer	Claim	1	17	17
2012	Mineral	Claim	59	32,399	30,114
2012	Placer	Claim	14	7,536	5,110
Pre-2012	Coal	Application	11	198,464	108,459
Pre-2012	Mineral	Claim	782	273,291	254,258
Pre-2012	Placer	Claim	3	931	199

Land Act tenures

Table 5: Land Act tenures within the M-KMA

Tenure Stage	Count of Land Tenures	# of Replacement Tenures	Area of Tenures	Tenures Area in MKMA
Application	28	19	951,769	228,459
Inventory	2	2	31	31
Tenure	124	32	911,859	200,322

Of the 28 applications for crown tenure within the M-KMA currently, 19 are replacements of existing tenures. Of 124 extant tenures, 32 have been replacements.

Table 6: Detail of current *Land Act* tenures and applications

Tenure Stage	Type	Purpose	Count of Land Tenures	# of Replacement Tenures	Area of Tenures	Tenures Area in MKMA
Application	Crown Grant	Agriculture	1	0	19.73	19.73
Application	Crown Grant	Residential	3	1	34.53	34.53
Application	Licence	Commercial Recreation	13	12	788,717.61	166,172.09
Application	Licence	Wind-power	2	1	3,457.92	2,938.02
Application	Reserve/Notation	Commercial	1	0	0.25	0.25
Application	Reserve/Notation	Environment, Conservation, & Rec.	1	0	157,144.75	59,073.71
Application	Reserve/Notation	First Nations	2	0	2,385.30	212.15
Application	Right-Of-Way	Energy Production	4	4	7.23	6.54
Application	Right-Of-Way	Utility	1	1	1.59	1.60
Inventory	Inventory	Residential	2	2	31.40	31.40
Tenure	Lease	Agriculture	1	0	261.79	265.50
Tenure	Lease	Commercial	1	1	5.79	5.79
Tenure	Lease	Commercial Recreation	4	3	29.74	29.95
Tenure	Lease	Communication	1	0	3.76	3.76
Tenure	Licence	Commercial	3	2	4.50	4.52
Tenure	Licence	Commercial Recreation	12	10	74,777.58	30,184.53
Tenure	Licence	Communication	3	3	0.77	0.20
Tenure	Licence	Community	1	0	2.57	2.57

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Tenure	Licence	Industrial	1	0	1.00	1.00
Tenure	Licence	Institutional	2	2	10.05	10.19
Tenure	Licence	Quarrying	1	0	3.81	3.81
Tenure	Licence	Utility	2	0	1.12	1.08
Tenure	Licence	Wind-power	4	2	14,045.24	5,150.29
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Commercial	9	0	5.36	5.36
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Commercial Recreation	1	1	43,599.49	31,351.12
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Environment, Conservation, & Rec.	30	0	639,229.37	114,046.33
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Institutional	1	0	4.70	4.26
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Miscellaneous Land Uses	9	0	40.31	47.58
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Quarrying	14	1	337.07	189.90
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Transportation	12	1	9,442.49	7,167.70
Tenure	Reserve/Notation	Utility	1	0	130,000.00	11,812.88
Tenure	Right-Of-Way	Energy Production	8	4	14.04	13.65
Tenure	Right-Of-Way	Utility	3	2	38.61	19.68

Table 7: Land Act tenures and applications, by year

Status Change Year	Tenure Stage	Count of Land Tenures	# of Replacement Tenures	Area of Tenures	Tenures Area in MKMA
2013	Application	11	5	194,213	93,865
2013	Tenure	13	7	638,256	107,445
2012	Application	10	9	620,549	214
2012	Tenure	3	2	4	4
Pre-2012	Application	7	5	137,007	134,379
Pre-2012	Inventory	2	2	31	31
Pre-2012	Tenure	108	23	273,599	92,872

There has been a nominal increase in tenures within the M-KMA since 2011. As described below, interest in developing wind energy resources may be a factor in this.

Table 8: Land Act tenures for wind energy

Status Change Year	Tenure Stage	Tenure Subtype	Tenure Purpose	Tenure Sub-purpose	Count of Land Tenures	# of Replacement Tenures	Area of Tenures	Tenures Area in MKMA
2009	Application	Licence Of Occupation	Wind-power	Investigative And Monitoring Phase	1	0	17	9
2011	Application	Investigative Licence	Wind-power	Investigative And Monitoring Phase	1	1	3,441	2,929

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2013	Tenure	Investigative Licence	Wind-power	Investigative And Monitoring Phase	3	1	9,081	3,716
2013	Tenure	Licence Of Occupation	Wind-power	Investigative And Monitoring Phase	1	1	4,964	1,435

Since 2011, there has been 1 Investigative Use Permit (IUP) , and 3 licences of occupation for wind issued within the M-KMA.

Table 9: Commercial recreation tenures

Status Change Year	Tenure Stage	Tenure Subtype	Tenure Purpose	Tenure Subpurpose	Count of Land Tenures	# of Replacement Tenures	Area of Tenures	Tenures Area in MKMA
Pre-2012	APPLICATION	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	GUIDED NATURE VIEWING	1	0	128,981	128,479
Pre-2012	APPLICATION	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	TRAIL RIDING	1	1	4,564	2,958
Pre-2012	TENURE	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	GUIDED FRESHWATER RECREATION	2	0	47,876	5,347
Pre-2012	TENURE	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	MULTIPLE USE	2	2	12,011	9,949
Pre-2012	TENURE	NOTATION OF INTEREST	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	MISCELLANEOUS	1	1	43,599	31,351
Pre-2012	TENURE	STANDARD LEASE	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	HUNT CAMPS	4	3	30	30
2012	APPLICATION	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	HUNT CAMPS	7	7	7,625	7,625
2013	APPLICATION	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	FISH CAMPS	1	1	0.3	0.2

2013	APPLICATION	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	MULTIPLE USE	3	3	647,548	27,110
2013	TENURE	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	FISH CAMPS	1	1	1	1
2013	TENURE	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	HUNT CAMPS	6	6	32	32
2013	TENURE	LICENCE OF OCCUPATION	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	TRAIL RIDING	1	1	14,857	14,857

Wildlife Act

The M-KMA continues to be a highly desirable place for personal and commercial recreation, supporting the following licensed activities under the *Wildlife Act*:

- Resident hunting;
- 24 guide outfitters;
- 53 traplines;
- 6 licenced transporters; and,
- 15 angling guides.

Access regulations

The access restrictions within the M-KMA continue to present managers with a number of challenges. Since the development of the ATV weight restriction, for instance, the use of so-called 'side-by-side' off-road vehicles has become commonplace. Most of these vehicles are in excess of the weight limit and are therefore disallowed. The Conservation Officer Service has issued a number of warnings and tickets for the use of overweight ATVs, however this may not reflect the intent of regulation.

Compliance with other access regulations is imperfect. Signage along designated routes has not been repaired and vehicle travel beyond designated access routes is common. Similarly, travel beyond 400m from designated routes is becoming common. As a few operators break the rules either maliciously or by ignorance, further non-compliance will become harder to manage as operators who intend to follow regulations become unsure of the rules.

Tenured users are required to abide by the access regulation or acquire a variance permit. This has caused some concern mainly among industrial users, especially when delays in permitting can hamper a user's ability to meet regulatory requirements.

The Province requests that the M-KAB provide advice to the Director of Resource Management on how to better manage access within the M-KMA.

Sulphur/8-mile Stone's Sheep

The Sulphur/8-Mile Stone's Sheep research project is complete. The steering committee made a series of recommendations to the Director of Resource Management in 2012. Those recommendations were provided to the M-KAB as well. While not yet implemented due to limitations in staffing resources, the Province expects to take action on the recommendations in 2014.

Appendices

- Maps
 - ftp://ftp.geobc.gov.bc.ca/pub/outgoing/GeoBC_Regional/North/Fort_St_John/MKMA_Maps/
 - Guide Area Certificates
 - Traplines
 - PNG Tenures
 - Mineral tenures
 - Land tenures
 - Wind tenures
- Game survey reports
- Burn report
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