

MUSKWA-KECHIKA COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT – APRIL 16, 2004

PROJECT # M-K 2003 - 2004 – 18

The Peace Sub-Region Conservation Officer Service (C.O.S.) has been responsible for carrying out the Compliance and Enforcement project for the past four years. The project has evolved over that period of time, having had a variety of project names attached to it. The main focus of the project has basically remained the same though – compliance and enforcement of Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection mandated legislation through a First Nations Conservation Officer program.

The Muskwa – Kechika Trust Fund placed an additional component on to this project in 2003-2004: *“Assisting, initiating and exploring a vehicle for opportunities to enhance CR (Commercial Recreation) Tenures in the M-KMA. This component will be partnered with Land and Water BC Inc. (LWBC) and WLAP”*. The COS was unaware of the addition at the outset, however, once it became known, Sr. C.O. Keith Rande made contact with Al Zachodnik and Jason Lawson of LWBC in Fort St. John. Informal discussion in regard to the possibility of future partnering on necessary LWBC commercial recreation tenure activity within the M-K took place. Unfortunately, LWBC did not identify any actual activities throughout the project year after that point.

B.C. Parks is also focusing on commercial recreation activity within parks situated in the M-KMA. Therefore, the COS partnered with BC Parks on a 10 day horseback patrol through the Prophet and Muskwa areas. The purpose of the patrol was to check on CR permit holders, patrol for non-permitted CR activities, hunter checks, and to show a general compliance and enforcement presence in the backcountry to any and all resource users present. Ten days was marginal for completing a thorough horse patrol through a vast area, however, a longer patrol was cost prohibitive with the project funds available. The trip was successful, however, somewhat exhaustive. In order to cover as much area as possible during the 10 days, the camp was broken down, moved and re-established each day. The details of the trip are outlined below.

2003-2004 was a successful, active year, with many training opportunities, investigations and other related activities:

- **TRAINING**
- Annual firearms qualification in Fort St. John, including rifle, shotgun and handgun. May 2003.
- Predator Attack Training in Prince George including: aerial gunning techniques & safety; tranquilizing refresher; snaring refresher; cougar and bear attack workshop. June 2003.
- RCMP Clandestine Drug Course.

- Five day course on Search Warrants and Case File Management administered by the Justice Institute of B.C. Held in Prince George. Intensive course on new search warrant methodology due to changing laws in B.C. and Canada. Procedures for handling major case files as well. Attendees were required to draft a search warrant and have it assessed at the end of the course. December 2003.
- Med A3 Federal boating course – 1 day, February 2003.
- Computer training – Word Level 1 – 1 day.
- Physical Standards (PSS) training and recertification in Prince George – 3 days.

- **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- Scouts Canada Bear Awareness presentation in Fort St. John.
- Blueberry First Nations Youth Camp presentations at Halfway River Ranch: Conservation Enforcement and Bear Awareness.
- Kaska First Nations Wilderness Guide Training and Bear Awareness presentation.
- Contacts made on horse patrol.

- **FOOT PATROLS**

- 3 day foot patrol into Beattie Lake in response to complaint of unlawful angling guide.

- **ATV PATROLS**

- 3 day ATV patrol into Nevis Creek and Redfern Lake with Parks for anglers, hunters, commercial recreation operators and other resource users
- Halfway River access trail ATV patrol due to complaint regarding unlawful vehicular access.
- Though not a “patrol”, four days were spent doing ATV checks on 3-D seismic operation in Prophet River area. This was part of a stream crossing investigation being handled by Fort Nelson.

- **HORSE PATROL**

- 10 day joint horse patrol with Parks into Prophet, Muskwa and Gatho River areas with contractor Herb Leake. Patrol was targeted at checking hunters, as well as both legal and illegal commercial recreation operators (guides and packers). Camp was packed on 12 horses and moved daily for 10 days. 7 hours riding per day. 52 contacts were made. 4 violations were encountered, and one eviction notice was posted. Contract price was \$16,000, however, cost to this project was \$12,500, as BC Parks paid \$3,500 of contract price. Patrol itinerary:
 - Leake’s Ranch on Prophet River to Muskwa River – 2 days.
 - Muskwa River to Kluachesi Creek (Moose Meadows)– 1 day.
 - Moose Meadows to Gatho Creek – 2 days.
 - Gatho Creek to Kluachesi Lake (Blue Lake) – 1 day.
 - Kluachesi Lake to Muskwa River – 2 days.
 - Muskwa River to Herb Leake Ranch (Prophet River) – 2 days.

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- **VEHICLE PATROLS**
- Halfway access trail x 3.
- Prophet River in response to illegal stone sheep complaint.
- Mile 95 Road illegal moose complaint x 2.
- Mile 156 Road illegal moose complaint.
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- **INVESTIGATIONS**
- Five unlawful moose.
- Undersize stone sheep killed in MK x 2.
- Unlawful vehicle use on Nevis Creek trail
- Numerous “permit to accompany” permit violations referred to COS by Wildlife Branch licencing.
- Unpaid guide royalties.
- Undersize elk shot by guided non-resident hunter.
- Possible unlawful elk reported to C.O. Brodhagen while on horse patrol.
- Undersize moose shot by guided resident hunter.
- Unlawful motor vehicle usage on Redfern and Halfway trails.
- Assist Fort Nelson with 3-D seismic program stream crossing investigation.
- Interference with lawfully set traps in Sikanni area.
- Angling and false statement investigation.
- Grizzly bear baiting.
- Unlawful mule deer.
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- **OTHER ACTIVITIES**
- Assist Fort St. John C.O.S. with Waste Mgt. Act search warrant.
- Attend variety of problem wildlife complaints.
- Ticket dispute court appearance.
- Administrative duties associated to MK case files and investigations.
- Assist Fort Nelson C.O.S. with search warrant.
- Attend sewage complaint in Peejay area.
- To Moberly Lake and Hudsons Hope area in regard to investigational follow-up.
- November is extremely busy month due to deer season in the Peace. CO Brodhagen called upon to assist Fort St. John and Dawson Creek general duty Conservation Officers.
- Number of day/night patrols in FSJ area.
- 8 call outs regarding problem wildlife and hunting investigations.
- Assist in investigations of 3 deer, 2 moose and 1 elk shot and left in Fort St. John area.
- Assist Dawson Creek with major residential search warrant.
- 2 after hours call-outs. 1 problem wildlife and 1 investigation.
- Prepare for and assist in Fort St. John District Inspection by Senior C.O. Rande.

- Good rapport maintained with BC Cattlemen's Association trappers through winter months.
- Assist Fort Nelson with seismic investigation.
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- **Aircraft Patrol**
- Complaint received regarding motor vehicle inside closed area on Nevis Creek trail.
- Patrolled by helicopter
- Covered Redfern, Halfway, Sikanni trails
- Violators apprehended and charged.
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- **Contacts**
- 362 resource users
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- **ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FORT NELSON C.O. SERVICE MK COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT (In 2002 Duke Energy donated \$1000 toward the MK Trust Fund for Fort Nelson C.O. Service MK compliance and enforcement activities. This donation was included in the 2003-2004-18 project funds)**
- 6 day boat patrol for hunters, anglers and other resource users on Muskwa and Tuchodi Rivers.
- 2 – one day boat patrols up Muskwa and Tuchodi Rivers.
- Racing River area patrol by vehicle.
- 3 Tetsa River area hunter patrols.
- 2 – one day vehicle patrols into the Prophet River area.
- ATV patrol into the Toad River and Yedhe Creek area.
- Elk decoy project on Highway 97 in Tetsa River area.
- Overnight patrol for general resource users in Liard area.

The Conservation Officer Service would like to thank the Muskwa-Kechika Trust Fund for its continued support. We believe this has been an important and successful project over the past four years, and hope that it can continue forward. We take pride in maintaining, preserving and protecting the Muskwa-Kechika as well as all of British Columbia for future generations.

Yours Truly,

Keith E. Rande
 Senior Conservation Officer
 i/c Field Operations
 Fort St. John, B.C.