



Ministry of Environment
Environmental Stewardship Division (Okanagan Region)

**Proposed Gilpin-Morrissey WMA and
Gilpin Grasslands/Boothman's
Oxbow Provincial Park Management
Planning Process**
Public Information Session and
Planning Workshop Summary

Summary of September 22, 2007 Public Information Session and Planning Workshop

Purpose of Meeting: To provide the public with information on the proposed Gilpin-Morrissey Wildlife Management Area, and the recently created Gilpin Grasslands and Boothman's Oxbow provincial parks, as well as a forum in which the public can raise questions, concerns and issues associated with these areas. A series of information panels highlighting the area and management issues for the parks and the proposed WMA were on display for public viewing.

MOE staff in attendance

Keith Baric
Mike Ladd
Rob Stewart
Brian Harris

Agency

Planning Section Head, Okanagan Region
Parks Supervisor, Okanagan Region
Ecosystems Officer, Okanagan Region
Wildlife Biologist, Okanagan Region

Chair

Dave Kaegi

Agency

Wildland Consulting Inc.

Invitees in Attendance

A total of 31 participants attended the Information Session and Planning Workshop. These participants reflected a broad spectrum of interests in the community ranging from recreational uses of the area (ATV users, hikers, mountain bikers, dirt bikers, snowmobile riders), hunters, ranchers, adjoining land owners, and interested citizens.

Meeting Highlights

1. Keith Baric gave a brief overview presentation summarizing what is a WMA, the planning process for a WMA, and some of the management issues that should be addressed in the proposed WMA.
2. Following the presentation, the meeting participants were asked to raise any questions or concerns regarding the proposed WMA or the two new provincial parks. This format allowed for each individual to state their concerns/issues.
3. Concerns were expressed over a variety of topics, these topics were summarized and the participants were each given 3 sticky paper dots and asked to place these dots beside their three most pressing issues/concerns that should be addressed in a management plan for the proposed WMA and for the provincial parks:

In order of priority (from highest to lowest priority), these issues are:

1. Maintain access for recreational activities (ATV's, dirt bikes, mountain bikes, snowmobiles) in the proposed WMA.



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2. Impacts of cattle grazing on natural habitat values (water, range, vegetation).
 3. Impact of a WMA on private land (access to and over private land, increased wildlife activities on private land, increase/decrease of employment opportunities in area that would be covered by a WMA).
 4. Allow for the continuation of hunting in a WMA.
 5. Impacts of cattle grazing on wildlife.
 6. Adequate government resources to implement/monitor management plans.
 7. Impacts of wildlife on cattle grazing.
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4. Some people expressed concerns that the WMA management plan could be changed without public input and more serious access controls applied. The concern also applied to current hunting and grazing regulations.
 5. A concern was expressed over the impact positive/negative on the wildlife fencing along the highway.
 6. There was a concern expressed over the impact of cattle on the riparian areas and water quality in the proposed WMA.

The Ministry made a commitment that these management issues would be highlighted and expanded upon in the following workshop (slated for late October). The overall intention for the follow up workshop would be to create several guiding management principles for the proposed WMA and the established provincial parks.



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Proposed Gilpin-Morrissey WMA and Gilpin Grasslands/Boothman's Oxbow Provincial Park Management Planning Process Planning Workshop 2

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Summary of October 27, 2007 Planning Workshop 2

MOE staff in attendance	Agency
Keith Baric	Planning Section Head, Okanagan Region
Mike Ladd	Parks Supervisor, Okanagan Region
Rob Stewart	Ecosystems Officer, Okanagan Region
Brian Harris	Wildlife Biologist, Okanagan Region

Chair	Agency
Dave Kaegi	Wildland Consulting Inc.

Meeting Highlights:

The intention of this planning workshop was to follow up on issues/questions that were identified in the first Information Session and Planning Workshop held on September 22, 2007. An effort was to be made by the Ministry of Environment to identify 'guiding management principles' and strategies that would apply to the draft management plans for the proposed Gilpin-Morrissey Wildlife Management Area and the newly established Gilpin Grasslands and Boothman's Oxbow provincial parks.

Although the advertisement for the October 27 meeting was placed in the Boundary Bulletin (for two weeks leading up to the workshop) which made clarification of the change of venue time (to start at 9 a.m. instead of 1 p.m. as was originally mentioned at the September 22 workshop) some members of the public did not realize that the meeting was to start at 9 a.m. Nevertheless, 54 people signed in at 9 a.m. (some people chose not to sign in, and it was determined that approximately 65 people were in attendance). The meeting proceeded to accommodate those who showed up at the correct time.

The meeting was essentially a full house and there were not enough chairs to accommodate all the participants. Approximately 42 individuals stated that they had not attended the first planning workshop. In light of this, the facilitator Dave Kaegi, chose to amend the layout of the workshop so that more people could vocalize their concerns or issues with respect to the WMA proposal and draft management direction for the provincial parks. Guiding management principles or formulating strategies was not covered at the meeting. Ministry staff also made it clear that there was a confusion on venue time, and that a third workshop would be planned to ensure full participation at one meeting.

Starting shortly after 9 a.m., and following a brief presentation by the regional planner, it became clear that there was considerable opposition to the WMA proposal despite the Ministry of Environment outlining that motorized/mechanized access to, and in, the area will remain virtually the same (except for specific areas where wildlife and grassland values may be impacted negatively by off-road use). Several people thought a vote was necessary to reinforce the opposition to the proposed WMA. Ministry staff explained that a vote is not part of the planning process and that a draft plan is created first, which identifies issues and offers possible strategies to deal with those management issues. Concerns were also raised that there was not enough material provided before the meeting so that attendees could be better informed of the issues. Ministry staff outlined that a website is available and that there were several mechanisms at the first workshop to submit comment forms and acquire



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information on the planning process. The Ministry ensured that updates would be provided on the website well in advance of the next workshop. Ministry staff had also pointed out that since the first workshop on September 22 that only 3 comment forms had been submitted. A few members of the public commented that websites are not always easily accessed (i.e., not everyone uses the internet).

Some members of the public brought up more general issues with parks and protected areas management in the surrounding region of Grand Forks. Although this was not the forum to discuss other areas of concern, Ministry staff addressed those issues and provided context as best as possible.

The meeting essentially became a two way dialogue between members of the public and Ministry staff around access issues and there was opportunity to add additional information (via the facilitator) to the priority management issues identified in the first workshop on September 22.

The issue of cattle grazing and wildlife/grasslands impacts associated with range use was not as a high priority management concern cited at the meeting (specifically from those attending at 9 a.m.- see below).

Most of the meeting participants remained until 12:30 p.m. but vacated shortly afterwards, but by 12:45 p.m. it became obvious that a second wave of meeting participants were arriving (assuming the meeting was to start at 1 p.m.). Most of these attendees were unaware that a meeting had just taken place, citing that they were informed that the meeting was to commence at 1 p.m. Ministry staff made the decision to hold another meeting at 1 p.m. to accommodate these new arrivals. 19 people had signed in to the meeting and it was stated again by Ministry staff that advertising was not broadcasted effectively for the meeting (specifically the time change) and a commitment to hold another meeting in early December would be arranged by the Ministry.

Access was not a priority issue with the attendees of the 'second' meeting that begun shortly after 1 p.m., rather the discussion focused on multiple issues with particular emphasis on current domestic range use in both the proposed WMA and newly established Gilpin Grasslands Provincial Park. Concerns raised by the group focused on water quality, grassland impacts, visual impact of cattle grazing and development not consistent with conservation values. Elaboration on the management priorities (identified from the first planning workshop on September 22) became the emphasis of this second meeting.



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Proposed Gilpin-Morrissey WMA and Gilpin Grasslands/Boothman's Oxbow Provincial Park Management Planning Process Access Meeting Summary

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Summary of November 19, 2007 Access Information Meeting

Purpose of Meeting: Sharing of natural resource information and access management information between the Ministry of Environment and ATV, motorcycle, and all terrain biking enthusiasts in a small group setting. In order to accommodate the interests of key access stakeholder and have an effective forum to discuss access issue/needs this meeting was by invitation.

MOE staff in attendance

Drew Carmichael
Keith Baric
Mike Ladd

Agency

Regional Manager, Okanagan Region
Planning Section Head, Okanagan Region
Parks Supervisor, Okanagan Region

Chair

Les Molnar

Agency

Riverbend Resources

Invitees in Attendance

Cliff Enquist
Paul Fofonoff
Ryan Tomlin
Len Mehmal
Wayne Swetlishnoff
Ray Johnston
Kevin Smith
Dave Brusseau
Walter Hampf
Norm Bundschuh
Wil Bundschuh
Keith Dixon
Bill Hingley
Joe Mottishaw

Affiliations

ATV
ATV, hunter
ATV shop owner
ATV, hunter, rancher tenure holder
ATV, landowner adjacent
ATV, hunter
mountain bike, motorcycle
ATV, hunter, Snowmobile, landowner adjacent
ATV, landowner adjacent
ATV, landowner adjacent
ATV, landowner adjacent
mountain bike trails
ATV
ATV, hunter, landowner adjacent

Invitees not able to attend

Tom Hinter
Dave McKinnon
Chris Moslin
Les Hall

ATV, Alderman
motorcycle
Alderman
ATV, hunter



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Proposed Gilpin-Morrissey WMA and Gilpin Grasslands/Boothman's Oxbow Provincial Park Management Planning Process Access Meeting Summary

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Meeting Highlights

1. All attendees introduced themselves and stated their interest in attending the meeting. Most were concerned about the lack of provisions for future ATV and other motorized access to any proposed WMA and the proliferation of restrictive regulations on ATV use and overall access restrictions
2. Drew Carmichael gave a 15 minute presentation on the regional perspective of a WMA creation and the need for access controls in areas of high habitat and wildlife values. He introduced other areas of the region where major environmental impacts are occurring from indiscriminate use of ATV's without a sufficient access management strategy in place. Questions followed.
3. Keith Baric gave a 45 minute overhead presentation on present road status within the Gilpin Grassland Park, Boothman's Oxbow Park and the proposed WMA and also indicated where road accesses may be closed or signed at strategic locations for specific environmental reasons.
4. Keith also gave detailed descriptions regarding the status of the Nature Trust properties currently managed by the MOE. He also offered a description of other WMA's within the Kootenay and Thompson regions and how they are managed for access control. He gave an overview of ecological reasons for access controls in Gilpin Grasslands and Boothman's Oxbow parks and the proposed WMA to conserve specific wildlife and their habitat, for example, sheep and mule deer winter range values and species at risk.
5. A question and answer period continued for about 90 minutes after Keith's presentation regarding which roads and accesses might be closed over the areas in question. Drew Carmichael stated again that the WMA is not assured and many other government agencies and special interest groups might object to its creation. However, the planning process necessitates the creation of a draft WMA plan and this draft plan will reflect the general public's concern around access.
6. The concept of WMA draft management plan creation and public input was discussed with the group. Some people expressed concerns that the WMA management plan could be changed without public input and more serious access controls applied. Drew answered these questions but doubted a plan would be changed over the medium to short term (5 to 10 years) unless critical environmental impacts were occurring. Keith suggested ongoing public involvement is necessary for the successful implementation of a management plan within the WMA (if created).
7. Keith and Drew encouraged all in attendance to take hand out maps and make written submissions to the MOE, Penticton. Another general public meeting will take place at the Legion Hall on Saturday, December 1, 2007 for more public consultation and information regarding the proposed WMA.



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Proposed Gilpin-Morrissey WMA and Gilpin Grasslands/Boothman's Oxbow Provincial Park Management Planning Process Planning Workshop 3

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Summary of December 01, 2007 Planning Workshop 3

The purpose of the meeting was to provide the public with information on the proposed Gilpin-Morrissey Wildlife Management Area, including a 30 min presentation from Keith Baric (Regional Planner) outlining management issues identified at the previous workshops and providing examples of strategies showing how these issues would be addressed. Prior to the presentation, a series of information panels highlighting the area, management issues and management strategies were on display for public viewing. An open public forum began after the presentation by Keith Baric. The purpose of the forum was to enable members of the public to raise questions, concerns and issues associated with the proposed WMA.

MOE staff in attendance

Keith Baric
Drew Carmichael
Rob Stewart
Brian Harris
Tricia Klein

Agency

Planning Section Head, Okanagan Region
Regional Manager, Okanagan Region
Ecosystems Officer, Okanagan Region
Wildlife Biologist, Okanagan Region
Planning Officer

Chair

Dave Kaegi

Agency

Wildland Consulting Inc.

Invitees in Attendance:

A total of 60 participants attended the Information and Planning Workshop. A large number of these had attended at least one of the previous workshops. These participants reflected a broad spectrum of interests in the community ranging from recreational users of the area (ATV users, hikers, mountain bikers, dirt bikes, snowmobile riders), hunters, ranchers, adjoining land owners, and interested citizens.

Meeting Highlights:

1. The information panels were spread throughout the hall to allow all the participants to have a look at the proposed area and some management strategies before the presentation and open forum. The information was also available in a handout and given to all the participants.
2. Keith Baric gave a 30 min presentation summarizing what is a WMA, the planning process for a WMA, some of the management issues that had arisen from previous workshops and the management strategies to deal with these issues.
3. The MOE (Ministry of Environment) stressed that a WMA would help in securing funding for treatment of the area through resources such as prescribed burning and water management. Also, to a great extent, the area is still relatively undeveloped in comparison to other grassland complexes in southern BC. A WMA would help with future zoning of the area and limit the likelihood of private ownership of the land and protect the landscape from other forms of intrusive development.



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4. Maintaining public access to the proposed WMA is a key concern for many local recreationalists who use the area throughout the year for a wide range of recreational pursuits. Concern and confusion were expressed over the road access especially around the "Old Sand Creek road" and access to the western Nature Trust properties that reside north of the gravel pit located in District Lot 264; therefore further clarification of future access will need to be addressed.
5. Concern was also expressed over the possible changes of the management plan in the future; the public would like to be involved if any changes would be made. It was made clear that an integral part of the planning process are the people of the area and therefore they would be involved in any future proposed changes unless these changes were through other agencies holding rights to the land. It was also noted that the MOE would like to see a stewardship/advisory volunteer group arise out of the local community including people from a variety of interest backgrounds. This stewardship group could also tackle other issues such as old fencing (discarded and a potential hazard) as the people using the area are much more aware of the location of problems such as these.
6. Future treatment of the area was discussed regarding the use of resources such as prescribed burning, fencing, BC Conservation Corp, MOF and funding sources such as the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF). A discussion also commenced regarding enforcement and how would this be dealt with. It was noted that BC Parks staff and the Conservation Officers of the area would be key players in enforcement, however that the public themselves are able to police themselves through mechanisms such as recording and reporting of issues they observe.
7. If the proposed WMA is approved then there is a possibility for presentations to occur at the local schools to educate the youth of the area. Also suggested was an attempt to find a local area for the people (especially youth) to be able to ATV and dirt bike. MOE commented that it has been in communication with the town of Grand Forks regarding the possibility of finding land for this particular purpose. However, because vacant Crown land (with low environmental value) is limited within close proximity to the town (or within town limits) this may be a difficult task.
8. Wildlife priority on the WMA was questioned, there was a concern expressed over the low numbers of mule deer in the area. Another concern raised was if the WMA would be focused on grassland conservation. It was explained that in southern BC there is not a lot of opportunity to protect for grassland ecosystems because of private land and therefore all species are of a high priority including grasses. Also pointed out were the 3 Wildlife Habitat Areas that already exist within the proposed WMA metes and bounds, which are focused on the protection of smaller species at risk such as the rattlesnake.
9. Final concern expressed included ensuring that outsiders could not come in and begin to run motorized tours of the WMA.