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HEADWATERS
ALLIANCE



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NEWS RELEASE

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BC Government Betrays Public Trust in Robson Valley LRMP Decision

A government plan to log most of the remaining wilderness and rare inland rainforest of the Fraser River headwaters and the watersheds of Bowron Lake Park represents an enormous betrayal of public trust, and will be met with widespread opposition, according to the Fraser Headwaters Alliance. On Friday, the government announced that it had approved the Robson Valley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), despite the fact that consensus was never reached on large portions of the area covered by the plan.

“Community members spent nearly four years negotiating in good faith to come up with a plan for local land management, but government restricted their options at every step of the process,” said Alliance Coordinator Roy Howard. “LRMPs were originally intended to reduce the conflicts surrounding the use of crown land, but approval of this plan will have the opposite effect.” Indeed, government’s failure to adhere to its own principles calls into question the validity of other LRMP processes currently underway in the province.

The Fraser Headwaters Alliance calls on the BC Government to place an immediate moratorium on any development in all areas of the Robson Valley where consensus was not reached in the LRMP process. These areas should be subject to a new planning process, as was done recently for a portion of the Kispiox LRMP.

The “government recommended” plan, modified behind closed doors with no public input, allocates a paltry 69,000 hectares to additional protected areas within the 1.4 million hectare plan area. This is a reduction of more than 13% from protected areas recommended by government agencies at the close of negotiations, and is completely insufficient to protect the rich biodiversity of the ecosystems in the region.

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The plan allows widespread logging in the Goat and Raush valleys, two key wildlife corridors between parks in the Cariboo Mountains and the Rocky Mountain Trench. Conservation biologists, including participants in the international Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Conservation Initiative, consider protection of such corridors to be of paramount importance to the long-term survival of many wildlife species. The approved plan also allows resource extraction in more than 80% of the pristine watershed of the Cariboo River, which flows into the Bowron Lakes chain - degrading wilderness quality in this world-famous canoe circuit.

“Despite assurances that these watersheds will be subject to ‘special management’ restrictions, we have no confidence that this will be different from business as usual,” Howard said. “Logging in these pristine areas will devastate populations of salmon, grizzly bears, and mountain caribou and effectively remove any options for the communities of the region to develop a sustainable economy.”

“The BC government must face the fact that continued unsustainable harvesting of our precious timber resources will soon leave the province bankrupt,” said Alliance President Lelani Arris. “Viable economic alternatives exist - ones that incorporate tourism, sustainable and ecologically sound harvesting practices, and use of other forest resources besides timber. Our organization will not stand by and allow the government to destroy our quality of life and economic future as well as that of our children’s. We will continue to fight for conservation of this valley’s natural resources and against development of the last remaining pristine areas in the Robson Valley.”

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