

THE FUTURE OF THE GHOST WATERSHED: EXPLORING SOLUTIONS

Compiled Output from Multi-Invitational User Forums and Open House May 2012

Facilitated and Compiled by:

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1.0 Summary of Themes Heard

Each forum was centered on the theme "The Future of the Ghost Watershed: Exploring Solutions". Participants were invited to host discussion topics on issues, challenges or opportunities for which they had deep caring when it came to the future of the Ghost watershed. The discussion hosts took responsibility to ensure that conversation notes were captured and entered into the computer. The document contains the unedited discussion comments captured and written by forum participants.

After all forum and open house discussions were compiled into one document, an effort was made to identify the overall discussion themes. The summary of themes below was performed by three GWAS members and the forum facilitator.

SUMMARY OF THEMES

The forums were open to anyone who cared about the future of the Ghost watershed, and an invitation was extended to a wide cross section of users. The caring about the Ghost watershed was what every participant had in common. Some of the themes that emerged from the conversations included:

Ecosystem Awareness, Planning and Management

There was a sense among the participants that more needs to be done to increase awareness of the Ghost – as source drinking water for Calgary, as a playground in nature in close proximity to a thriving metropolis, as a gem of beauty, as a home of wildlife. There needs to be greater effort put into future planning in order to balance the many users of the Ghost's many resources.

Sustainability and stewardship of the Ghost watershed emerged as a topic of conversation many times. This included discussions on:

- Build complete baseline database utilizing all existing databases share from government, forestry, industry, etc.
- Ensure that ecosystem-based management plans are developed, followed, monitored and enforced.
- Join forces with aligned groups like those working on the Ghost Reservoir Stewardship Plan
- Enable greater public awareness of the Ghost watershed and its challenges
- Get more people to experience nature

Lack of Government Leadership

There is a confused message from the Provincial Government – words and actions are not aligned. On the one hand, there are policies that seek sustainable development and use. On the other hand, there is virtually no enforcement of the legislation and supporting regulations, there is very little maintenance, and there is very limited funding for infrastructure, facilities, and trail development. The confused message does not sit well with any group, and contributes to user conflict.

OHV Use

Issues about off-highway vehicle (OHV) use often arose in conversations. With the growth of Calgary and OHV sales, there is pressure on the Ghosts' limited area. OHV use is generally not seen as compatible with non-motorized use in close proximity. The current OHV trail system is inadequate. Some OHV use has been irresponsible and unsustainable in terms of its impact on the Ghost ecosystem. For the most part, OHV users chose not to attend these workshops. A special "open house", especially designed and held in the Benchlands area in order to provide easy access for OHV users, was attended by only one OHV user.

Balance of Diverse Interests

The Ghost watershed area is enjoyed in many ways by many people. Participants appreciated the opportunity to exchange perspectives and ideas about how to make the Ghost watershed sustainable into the future. There was a desire to be inclusive of all users, no matter whether conflict currently existed. There was a sense that respectful dialogue among all users will lead to effective and sustainable approaches.

2.0 Invitation to the Event

BACKGROUND

Many of us share the common goal of maintaining the Ghost Watershed well into the future.

In 2011, a study was done of the cumulative impacts of current land uses in the Ghost Watershed. Projecting current and proposed uses fifty years into the future, this Cumulative Effects study showed that water quality, recreational resources, along with fish and wildlife habitat, would decline if current and proposed land uses continue. This study can be viewed at www.ghostwatershed.ca.

It is important that we come together to create a sustainable future for this landscape. Through open dialogue and frank discussion, we are capable of solutions we haven't yet imagined. The wisdom and expertise to resolve the challenges of the Ghost Watershed reside within us.

OUR GHOST WATERSHED FORUMS

Our upcoming series of workshops will begin the process of effective dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing the Ghost Watershed. We invite everyone interested in the Ghost Watershed to bring their best thinking on the theme of the day, which is:

"The Future of the Ghost Watershed: Exploring Solutions"

We will utilize an outside facilitator and an "open space" process for large group collaboration. The open space method will enable us to set an agenda which incorporates the topics most important to each of us on this theme.

In advance of the forum, please consider questions such as these:

- What makes the Ghost-Waiparous area special to you? What might ensure these special characteristics remain for our children to enjoy?
- How might we maximize benefits and minimize liabilities of the area's land uses?
- What might lead to increased opportunities for all users of this multiple use area?
- How might we improve water quality, recreational opportunity and resources, along with fish and wildlife habitat in the Ghost?

The Future of the Ghost Watershed: Exploring Solutions

Please bring your passion for the Ghost Watershed, your vision for its future, and your personal commitment to learning and contributing. We look forward to discovering solutions together at these upcoming sessions.

Yours truly,

Marina Krainer Executive Director on behalf of the Board of Directors of Ghost Watershed Alliance Society

Dates and Locations:

Saturday, April 28	9am 1 pm	Cochrane Toyota Community Room
Friday, May 4	5:30pm. – 10pm	Beaupre Community Hall
Saturday, May 5	9am - 1 p.m.	Cochrane Toyota Community Room
Friday, May 11	2pm – 6pm	Calgary Water Centre, Bow River
Room		

You may attend one or more sessions.

The Forums are **limited to 40 people per event**. **Please register by e-mail** at office@ghostwatershed.ca
noting the session(s) you would like to attend.

Refreshments provided.

3.0 Underlying Principles

The study process was guided at all times by the following principles:

- Inclusiveness It is important that stakeholders be given the
 opportunity to express their views and be heard in a timely manner to
 meet the project deadline of June 2012. Stakeholders include the
 people who live in the area, companies who are there to extract
 resources, government, recreationalists, and other interested parties.
- Openness All results of the study, as well as the process, will be open and available to the public as soon as possible. There will be no hidden results or reports. Personal privacy will be subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- **Clarity** Information will be presented in as simple and clear a manner as possible to make it understandable to the lay person, notwithstanding that some of the information and planning issues may be quite complex.
- **Effectiveness** The study is focused on determining and achieving specific objectives in terms of local action and public knowledge in order to achieve the goal. It will not be sufficient to simply review the challenges and create another report for future consideration.
- **Timeliness** Significant impending development is in the near future for the study area, driven by economic and population pressures. The process needs to move in a timely fashion to avoid arriving at a default destination that could leave all Albertans the poorer.
- Flexibility Planning is a dynamic process and, while the ALCES
 Group and GWAS will organize the process as carefully as possible, it is
 important to be open to adjusting the process in accordance with
 future unforeseen circumstances.
- Optimism It is important to recognize the opportunity to not just prevent damage, but to make things better for the watershed and people to whom it is important. Change is inevitable, but all stakeholders must be challenged to examine ways in which their actions can actually improve the visual, biological, productive and cultural aspects of this special place.

4.0 Community Outreach Process and Invitation List

The underlying philosophy of the community outreach process was to provide an environment that welcomed all perspectives and all users of the Ghost watershed. The central belief was that the best chance for positive change in the Ghost watershed would occur if all users were invited to be in respectful dialogue about the challenges and opportunities facing the Ghost.

Workshops were advertised by personalized emails to many representatives of groups, organizations, businesses, government, and individuals (see Invitation List below). Where phone numbers were known, GWAS members made personal phone calls.

Workshops were advertised in 3 local newspapers (Cochrane Eagle and Times as well as Rocky Mountain Outlook) in order to extend the invitation to the broader public. The Cochrane Eagle wrote an article on the workshops before the May 11th and 12th sessions. Flyers were put up on local notice boards and at local businesses. A sign was posted beside the road for the Open House event.

Several follow up emails and phone calls were completed. GWAS also contacted the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) asking for ideas about who to contact and how to get OHV groups involved.

Volunteers from the GWAS dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to the invitation process.

Invitation List:

Businesses:

Cochrane Mountain Toys Cochrane Bow Ridge Sports Outdoor equipment stores The Crossing Capture the Flag Paint Ball Brewster's Adventures Lazy H Trail Company Saddle Peak Trail Rides

Industry:

Spray Lake Sawmills Direct Energy

Local, Provincial and Federal government:

Town of Cochrane City of Calgary

The Future of the Ghost Watershed: Exploring Solutions

Sustainable Resource Development

Land-use Secretariat

Tourism, Parks and Recreation

AB Environment & Water

County Rocky View

MD Bighorn Council & staff

MLA Banff-Cochrane

Department of Fisheries and Oceans

NGOs and local groups:

Ghost Hikers Group

Morley Native Community

Local developers Enviros Camp

King's Fold Retreat

Local residents and Ranchers Community of Benchlands

Waiparous Village

Alberta Equestrian Federation Friends of the Eastern Slopes

CEAC

Cochrane Camera Club

CPAWS Y2Y AWA ERWP

Trout Unlimited Cows & Fish

GWAS Members

CAOC

Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley

BRBC and its members

Calgary Regional Partnership

Action for Agriculture

Water Matters

Alberta Conservation Association

Ducks unlimited Miistakis Institute

Ghost Stewardship Monitoring Group

ATV tours providers

ATV safety course providers Quad, motorbike and 4x4 club

representatives

Alpine Club of Canada Calgary Hiking Club

Individuals:

Motorized recreational users whom GWAS members know personally Non-motorized recreational users whom GWAS members know personally

5.0 Forum and Open House Process

Numerous planning discussions were conducted between January and April, and a central theme arose around ensuring that the public sessions completed honoured and reflected the guiding principles of section 2.0 – inclusiveness, openness, clarity, effectiveness, timeliness, flexibility and optimism.

The first place that the guiding principles surfaced was in the determination of a theme. The theme had to be simple, easy to understand, and welcoming of all viewpoints and users. The planning group landed on "The Future of the Ghost Watershed: Exploring Solutions" in an effort to attract all users who cared about the ghost watershed and were interested in exploring possible future scenarios.

The design of the forums followed the structure of Open Space Technology in order to invite and validate all perspectives. This enabled any participant to help create the agenda for each forum based on the overall theme. In the forums, there was some overlap in participants and agenda topics, though each discussion session was unique. **Discussion notes were captured by the participants and are contained unedited herein**.

Four forums were scheduled to run through late April and early May. One discussion in the first forum asked about attracting more motorized users to the forums. That led to a decision to sponsor an open house format on a day and location aimed at making it easy for motorized users to attend. Feedback from the open house session is also contained herein.

6.0 Agenda Building by Participants

Each forum was centered on the theme "The Future of the Ghost Watershed: Exploring Solutions". Participants were invited to host discussion topics on issues, challenges or opportunities which they had deep caring when it came to the future of the Ghost watershed. The discussion hosts took responsibility to ensure that discussion notes were captured and entered into the computer. In several cases, the participants combined similar topics.

The sections that follow in this document contain the unedited discussion comments captured and written by forum participants.

Topic, Issue or Question Posted (before grouping)

Sustainable Trail Development, Reducing Conflict

Move from Government control to User Group/Volunteer Responsibility

Education and Advocacy: Value of watershed plus the opportunity is offers Albertans to enjoy the area and improve their quality of life

Opportunity of having the Ghost as a special place for people to enjoy in a nondestructive fashion

What did the landscape look like during the 1000 years before white man, what has changed since, what are the implications

Province revamp coordinated Fish and Wildlife Ranger stations all along the Forestry Trunk Road

Better quality of data and planning tools, i.e. we make more decisions based on the information we have – increased opportunities will come with better planning

What can we do to ensure that good, relevant research gets <u>attention</u> and influences important decisions that will impact the watershed?

Societal responsibility to provide places where people can continue to get out and connect

How can we get all users around the table to try to find solutions together?

Is it worthwhile to create a Lake/River/Watershed Stewardship Plan for the Ghost Reservoir?

Eastern Slopes declared by Province as a Prime Protection Zone

How do increasingly diverse interests equitably share a diminishing resource?

How do we ensure the ecological good and services provided by the Ghost are

sustained for all users including motorized, non-motorized and individual

As the conservation interests assert themselves for strongly, where are the tens of thousands of ATVers and bikers supposed to pursue their passion?

I want to do my sport/activity without conflict. How do we ensure that?

How to get more engagement from more diverse user groups?

Key recreation area near the big city. Does Ghost/Waiparous area need some formal protection?

At-Risk Wildlife: Grizzly Bears and Native Fish

Policing of OHV users. Despite having a network of official trails, they appear to go where they want unimpeded

How can we make sure that the government, as our land manager, does a better job of managing the Ghost watershed

How do we engage government policy and enforcement around competing land use activities, i.e. Forestry/OHV

Protection and Regulation (Current and Future)

What was it like 100 years ago, prior to development?

Who is going to pay for changes if there are changes?

How do we implement good community ideas and policy such as in GAMP and IRMP's?

Inventory: Everything and Ephemeral

Impact of Management/Development Decisions on Residents and Land "Owners"

How do we know what/if there are issues?

The Ghost as a Source Water Protection Area

How can the Ghost region continue as a multi-use area with the growth and intensification of uses we have now?

7.0 Province Revamp and Coordinate Ranger Stations all along the Forestry Trunk Road

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

- Need a feeling that the area is managed in the public view
- Pride in AB Forest Service
- Maybe management of eastern slopes should be turned over to TPR in regards to recreation
- SRD Forestry mandate only for wood fibre management. Should be more.
- Integrate TPR with SRD Forestry, Fish & Wildlife
- Centralization hasn't helped
- Create a "global" budget rather than fighting over who gets what
- Pride for Albertans
- Tourism safety: people don't feel safe, lack of presence of authorities
- Careers for college / university students to become rangers
- Directed fines go back to enforcement agency
- recreation, ecological integrity and forest production in the area should be managed on an equal basis
- · put students to work, doing something they can be proud of
- mentoring of young rangers by seasoned rangers
- we need stewards on the landscape: guardians, volunteers
- Being a Ranger is a "cool" job

Key Take-Aways:

- We need to bring back Rangers to the landscape; manned Ranger stations
- Different departments working in silos need to come to work together under a common mandate, integrating forestry, ecosystem management, recreation
- creates meaningful jobs out in nature
- shows our pride for the beautiful land we have
- should be able to finance itself
- funding will come when made a priority

8.0 Ghost Watershed as a Special Place, Education and Advocacy

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

- If we advocate to get the Ghost Lake Watershed declared a "sSpecial Place", there is still a need to formalize an agreement with the Government to manage it for them (ensures that the area will benefit from care tailored to suit its uniqueness).
- Photos taken in the past prove that the watershed has already been altered. The forest areas have been over-managed in that tree planting has been too successful which results in less biodiversity and less moisture retention (i.e. the coniferous trees shield the ground from moisture and soak up what does get to the base). Prescribed burns are not necessary!!
- Ecological capital for sale. Economics of security of the watershed for urban benefit i.e. Water source, healthy ecosystem, recreation and renewal.
- Now is the time to advocate for this area since change is now occurring more rapidly. There is a need to stop the declining baseline of purity in the system by making a concerted effort to locate and mitigate pollution sources.

Key Take-Aways:

- There is a delicate balance to be struck so that wildlife habitat can be maintained and the watershed is able to recharge and at the same time our human use is allowed.
- The declining baseline needs to be propped up and improved!!
- Human intervention has already lead to some imbalances in the watershed which need to be understood and corrected based on scientific measurements
- We need a strong group of advocates to get government cooperation in this effort.

9.0 Ghost Reservoir/River Watershed Stewardship Group

- Acknowledged that the Ghost River Watershed Alliance is already a wellestablished watershed planning and advocacy group, involved in awareness, outreach, advocacy, education, environmental promotion, etc.
- Mentioned that the Summer Village of Ghost Lake had just completed and approved a Village Sustainability Plan in March 2012, and that a significant implementation stream of that plan is to encourage and support the development of a Ghost Reservoir Stewardship Plan and forum for affected/interested stakeholders, businesses and government agencies.
- Focus was on whether it made sense, in developing a Lake Stewardship group/plan for the Ghost Reservoir, to intentionally frame it as an integrated plan for both the Ghost Reservoir and the Ghost River – a more complete view of the Ghost watershed?
- Discussed the need for good communication, involvement of Provincial departments (especially Sustainable Resources & Development, Alberta Energy, Forestry and Fisheries departments)
- Noted that a 5 year "Detailed Forest Management Plan" is being updated by Spray Lakes Sawmills for SRD, and that planning process represents a very significant window in license implementation and public engagement for forestry activities in the Ghost Watershed area. Noted that an open house for the Spray Lakes Sawmills plan update is, coincidentally, being held next week, May 9th, 2012, from 2pm – 7pm in Cochrane.
- Generally, there was a sense that staff from Alberta Environment are more engaged with community-based groups doing watershed stewardship activities in the Ghost watershed area than are other departments
- Discussion of how to engage users (e.g. ATV/bikers, fishermen/water skiers) in a positive way in planning for the watershed / river / lake areas and being part of watershed protection and enhancement activities.
- Initial discussion of whether it would be more beneficial to expand the scope of
 the existing Ghost River Watershed Alliance to embrace the reservoir in its
 scope OR to create a separate (though aligned and connected) group for the
 Reservoir (perhaps a "Friends of the Ghost Reservoir" planning, action and
 advocacy group) OR some other structure / process? (no suggestions, just put
 the question out on the table for now).
- Acknowledgement of the GSMG Ghost Stewardship Monitoring Group but little known of its current activities, membership or effectiveness – another group to connect with.

10.0 How to do/use better planning, research and data to support effective watershed management and public education?

- Sometimes actual research findings / facts are dismissed out of hand by people on the basis of their own, more limited experiences (or their not wanting to acknowledge the facts), as to say, "that can't be true because it's never happened to me" or "the river can't be getting more polluted because it still looks clean to me (and I don't want to stop doing what I'm doing!)"
- We should be using research and good planning to educate people with the wisdom gained from the facts and analysis – to educate with "carrots" more so than blaming like "sticks"
- Start with teaching the children to have their own personal experience with nature so they might grow to appreciate and value it – to learn about nature by actually getting out of their neighbourhood and into the forest!
- Beyond education, create opportunities for people to experience nature as families, or through retreats/conferences/meetings in a forest setting
- Weave the science and facts into the stories we all like to tell our testimonials about the experiences we've had (e.g. places we've been to in the Ghost watershed) and have appreciated – maybe put them on a Facebook page, or YouTube or websites
- Have photos blended in with our facts and stories make it as visual and heart-touching as possible
- Create "hosts of the river & reservoir" assisting users, telling them some facts and stories about the watershed through our conversations with them, politely challenging and then reporting on unacceptable behavior, monitoring trail and watershed conditions a group of community volunteers committed to watershed protection, awareness and education the importance of peer-enforcement and value of "environmental ambassadors"
- Find volunteer groups who already are "ambassadors" and align with them, inviting them into the Ghost area
- Acknowledged that the Ghost Watershed Alliance already has an active program of outreach to the schools
- How to keep the important messages "front and centre" in the awareness of decision-makers

- Show "reality check" pictures to groups like Tourism Calgary who are trying to market a clean, natural and even pristine "Alberta environment" but then realize that Albertans are not taking very good care of this tourism asset – to get another (Tourism) voice advocating for improved Provincial enforcement, park development, better watershed management, etc.
- Province should strengthen the role of the MD's / Counties in managing the day to day impacts of activities in the watersheds – allowed to set standards, enforce, care for facilities and natural areas, actively support environmental and watershed stewardship activities
- Use available research to lobby for stronger Provincial legislation and planning for natural areas and watersheds
- Create local volunteer organizations like "Friends of the Eastern Slopes", formed in 1994 with volunteers to maintain four Provincial parks / campsites (situated by the Yahatinda ranch) now has approximately 550 members who pay annual membership fees and make donations create website/blogs to host peoples' comments/experiences in using the areas, all to increase awareness and discussion and give voice to the realities of what's happening in the watershed areas (good and bad) based on their own experiences and observations develop mechanisms like Memorandum of Agreements with the Province. Jay shared experience they've had with ATV groups coming out as volunteers to maintain trails, with capital funding provided by industry (e.g. Shell)
- Importance of having the Province take responsibility in committing to the capital investment needed to ensure properly maintained park facilities
- Need to get access to existing Provincial environmental data (e.g. orthophoto, LIDAR data) about the Ghost watershed area
- MD's / counties could more actively support the logistics (e.g. mailing lists, meeting notices, occasional newsletters, events) of the watershed stewardship groups – that would make volunteering easier and more attractive
- MD's/Counties/Calgary Regional Partnership could be helpful in getting current data from Province (and their own sources) and making helpful map products that watershed groups could use to do analysis of watershed issues, use for storytelling/presentations and use to build greater public awareness about the importance of watershed stewardship
- Could map the environmental inventories conducted by Cows and Fish

- Spray Lakes Sawmills seems to have great data and maps; appears to get data from the Province that is, for some reason, not made available to watershed protection groups?
- Province has very detailed LIDAR data sets (shot from airplanes) that is provided to forestry license holders but probably could as easily be made available to citizen groups involved in watershed stewardship – that would just make sense
- Ask AUMA (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association) and AAMD&C
 (Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties) to advocate to
 the Province in support of getting access to existing Provincial data about
 watersheds, licensed resource extraction operations, environmental
 knowledge, etc.
- Acknowledged other river watershed stewardship groups for Jumping Pound Creek, Horse Creek, Elbow River watershed – but nothing for the Ghost Reservoir
- Appeared that environment was not much of an election issue/focus this time around
- Sentiment expressed that if people don't <u>care</u>, the research/planning data won't be meaningful or useful to them anyway so how do we get people to care more? (or perhaps they just lack the awareness that there is something very important in the watersheds to care about !)
- Importance of getting people in these watershed areas to experience the watershed environment firsthand
- Make more effort to get school children into the watershed areas; field trips that create experiences, shape values and buy-in – invitation to children to bring their families out to the watersheds for a family outing
- Advocate for increased resources for outdoor education programs
- Make the effort to get all the local watershed advocacy groups together –
 in one room invite the MLA's to attend and ask them "how can we help
 YOU, the MLAs representing us, to be stronger advocates for the
 environment and watershed?" might even take the MLAs, and their
 staff, out for an overnight in the Ghost River Watershed!
- Need funding to support volunteer-based activities

11.0 Societal Responsibility to provide places where people can get out and connect ... Eastern slopes declared by province as prime protection zone

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

Theme of the discussion seemed to be the tension between completely shutting down OHV's vs. managing opportunities for all types of recreation

- There is a great deal of disconnect between city and rural populations
- Urban people need encouragement to get out of city and connect with the natural environment
- Some direction is needed for users of the back country to be receptive to using it in a responsible way.
- There seem to be two types of users: Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) and hikers, equestrians, campers and naturalists.
- There is an increasing pressure on the environment from irresponsible use.
- Ideas:
 - Identify all the activities that happen in the Ghost Watershed that connect people with the outdoors.
 - o Identify where it is appropriate for different groups to gather.
 - Find knowledgeable people who are experts in their areas for input into usage and ideas for education:
 - promote individual responsibility
 - promote healthy living practices
 - develop more groups "Friends of.....
 - education on how to leave less of a footprint
 - Develop interest areas that people could join
 - More controls on backcountry usage:
 - limit placed on numbers of users (like the West Coast Trail)
 - limit numbers of ATV's
 - identify usage areas and enforce
 - close areas that have been compromised
 - users pay a fee for usage
 - seize OHV that haven't paid
 - book ahead for reservations
 - more enforcement from all parties (fish and wildlife, forest rangers, RCMP, sheriffs
 - no alcohol
 - enforce use by having officials at certain entry and exit points
 - declare the Ghost Watershed Area off limits to OHVs.
- Could the Ghost Watershed Area be declared a prime protection area?
- Industries should begin to share ideas re: environmental protection

12.0 How do we increase engagement from more diverse user groups?

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

- E-mail was sent to GSMG and other groups
- Are the time slots and length of session not convenient?
- Information posted to website forums such as the Alpine Club
- Send out full list, engaging discussion, need to see if other groups want to be involved in process
- GSMG people not thinking that there will be much done after these meetings as the government is not involved
- Lack of government involvement -- did not make enough effort to get the government to buy in -- future challenge
- Access management plan -- government initiated, good turn-out, separate sections for different user groups
- Results of planning not implemented -- designated trails not user friendly, need to review how the access management plan was developed and how it was successful getting user group turnout

Key Take-Aways or Actions:

- Upcoming meeting Signs on highways advertising time/location
- Meeting at trailhead- directly engage at site
- May long weekend- engagement at railhead
- Post on internet forums- websites, Twitter, FaceBook- call people directly
- Contact different dealerships/representatives of different user groups;
 Bowcycle Motors, Bow Cycle, Calgary Cycle, Mountain Equipment Co-Op etc.
- Get the local MLA to come out to a meeting to discuss his plans for the Ghost River area

13.0 How do increasingly diverse interests equitably share a diminishing resource?

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

- The conversation started with relating bad experiences encountered in the Ghost watershed due to poor trails, conflicts with OHV users, and noise from quads and motorbikes.
- It was suggested that enforcement of the rules would solve problems of inappropriate trail use and noise bylaws etc. Current enforcement by SRD is weak.
- Other suggestions arose from implementation of funding mechanisms for user payments/fees that would then be directed towards enforcement, signage, and educational facilities.
- A key principle was to be non-exclusionary.
- It was also established that leadership is needed to for appropriate trail planning and usage.
- Conflict will likely remain with growing intensity of use.
- The concepts of:
 - o over harvest of the resource from cumulative use,
 - o rationing of use, and
 - satisfying ecosystem needs with balanced and managed use were discussed.
- One solution is to erase the current trail system, plan a better system and seek to create an outcome that improves enjoyment for as broad a user base as possible.

Key Take-Aways or Actions:

- Seek better messaging strategies in getting these views circulated.
- Ensure a non threatening dialogue, but do not waste time with groups that do not want to participate.

14.0 How can SRD [=government] do their job?

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

- Should an area so close to Calgary and used by Calgarians for various forms of recreation receive special "recreational" designation? This could be done through some form of legislation.
- More adequate funding would be needed
- A good opportunity could arise if after the adoption of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, probably another round of regional planning will take place
- But there is still the problem of getting to act (they see it as a hornet's nest)

Key Take-Aways or Actions:

- There is a need to push the government
- The GWAS could get the newly elected local MLA Ron Casey involved, and maybe also the local candidate of the Wildrose opposition party Tom Copithorne.

14.0 How can I enjoy my sport or activity in the Ghost area without coming into conflict with other legitimate recreation users?

(These include motorized and non-motorized activities and industrial use.)

- Separate well designed motorized and non-motorized trail systems. Well signed and marked.
- We need separate trails for motorized users that are fun and provide different levels of challenge.
- Education to help build respect for other activities.
- Enforcement of rules. Adequate numbers of enforcement personnel in the area.
- Total redesign of the trail system for motorized use as current trails do not meet the needs of users as they are just a collection of existing linear features that are not optimal for motorized use. Therefore, there is a lot of use on non-designated trails and this leads to potential disturbance of non-motorized users.
- Non-motorized users feel they are unable to use the Ghost area, especially
 on weekends, as they are driven away by the noise and disturbance of
 vehicles. This is not in keeping with the concept of multiple use where
 everyone has a right to enjoy the area.
- Design and construction of equestrian, hiking and mountain biking trails separated from motorized use trails.
- Motorized users need a place to enjoy their sport on well designed trails that they don't have to worry about encountering non-motorized users and therefore minimize conflict potential.
- TransAlta road needs maintenance as some recreationalists find access into the area difficult due to the poor condition of the road.
- Ensure that logging does not significantly reduce or destroy the recreation attributes of the area.
- Spray Lake Sawmill should be actively engaged in ensuring the needs of recreationalists are optimized and not damaged during their operations. Current practices are seen as being in conflict with recreation use in the area.

16.0 What are the issues?

- Visible silt in Ghost River following May long weekend. Recreation causing water quality degradation.
- Lack of understanding amongst users. Lack of enforcement to restrict use by ATVers to designated trails.
- Number of person-use-days is very high relative to other areas. Police cite figures of over 10,000 motorized users in one weekend.
- Concerns about environmental impact, enforcement, education and awareness, lack of respect among users.
- South Saskatchewan regional advisory council advice was to limit motorized ATV use. How can this be achieved, though?
- Solutions could include user-pay system.
- Suggestion for different classification of Ghost region to better convey need for protection.
- Amalgamation of the departments of Environment and SRD and the transfer of enforcement officers to Solicitor General's dept could mean even less enforcement on public lands (though it is hard to say what impact this will have).
- Need for more specific and extensive water quality monitoring. City of Calgary should have special role in this.
- Aerial photos needed to assess undesignated trail use in the area.
- Suggestion for increased communication with ATV community. Emphasis preferred on education, rather than enforcement. Proposal for hosting a meeting at ATV dealerships.
- Inventory of plant species, fish and wildlife needed.
- Participants pointed to multi-uses of area, other than by motorized users.
 Forestry industry, oil and gas, ranching, even communication towers, hiking, equestrian, all part of competing uses.
- Forestry needs to be regulated better to maximize other compatible beneficial uses such as tourism. Government and forestry need better information about these potentials.
- Pipeline right-of-ways should be reclaimed using native species only.
- Riparian assessments (by Cows and Fish) show impacts from ATV use are small in actual area, but large in terms of water quality.
- Funding needed for rebuilding of trail system. Who pays?

- To help change public attitudes toward Ghost, participants urged the establishment here of the concept of natural capital or natural value in the region.
- Need for identification and mapping of wetlands. Follow that with study of impact on wetlands. That could then lead to establishing a tangible value for natural wetlands.
- Reference made to user conflicts and even threats of violence among different users.
- Sense of entitlement some people have about so-called public lands.
- Sales and use of motorized recreation vehicles almost guaranteed to keep rising. Dilemma of politicians in government taking a stand to restrict use in the face of such a large and growing constituency.
- It was pointed out that families go to Ghost area to ATV. But even they stay away from areas where totally unruly behaviour is occurring.

Key Take-Aways:

 Who is actually responsible for enforcement on public lands, now and in the future?

17.0 At Risk Wildlife: Grizzly Bears and Native Fish

- What is place of grizzlies in the Ghost? Is it critical?
- Linear disturbance –scientists have suggested thresholds within which multiple uses should fit – 0.6km/km2, 1.2 km/km2
- Is the Ghost a plug or mortality sink?
- Look at decreased recreation access in areas
- Need for enforcement accompanying rules need quality private alternative (i.e. StreamWatch or report a poacher) random camping and mud-bogging
- Implement licensing process to pay for enforcement (Ontario snowmobile)
- Regional land use planning important
- Private guides could benefit from better managed landscape (improved user experience)
- Change in forestry land use practices to be more ecosystem based for example larger buffers, or habitat production as a part of goals
- For native fish reducing in-stream vehicle access and roads and trails important
- Do the watershed values (the importance of the intactness of the watershed and its functionality) justify a higher level of formal protection?

18.0 What was the Ghost Watershed like 100 years ago?

Discussion Notes, Understandings, Observations, Key questions:

- Fewer trees, more meadows
- Grasslands probably bison grazing; good winter range
- Less human disturbance (footprint)
- Few linear disturbances: roads, fences, power lines, gas lines,
- Final Minnewanka dam built in early 1940's but lake was first dammed in 1895 and then again in 1912.
- Ghost Dam built 1929
- Original Fisheries would **not** have included: Brown Trout, Brook Trout or Rainbow Trout.
- Original Fisheries: Cutthroat and ?
- Timber harvested by Eau Claire Lumber. Logs floated down river to saw mill in Calgary. (1886-1944) (Glenbow archives has lots of photos)
- Fire suppression has resulted in more trees

Key Take-Aways:

- Every generation lowers its expectations of what the ideal is. (water quality, fisheries, landscape, wildlife etc.) There is often an expectation that technology will remediate or mitigate things to an acceptable level. We need to measure the impacts of the various uses and then establish firm benchmarks.
- 2. Having some idea of what the landscape looked like prior to increasing human footprint begs us to ask what we want the area to look like going forward.
 - Have to decide why: what purpose(s) do we want the area to fulfill?
 - Will we have to prioritize the purposes?
 - If water production has the highest priority will other uses have to be limited or disallowed if they are in conflict.
 - May have to buy back land to allow for flooding.
 - Water will become more and more valuable especially with the effects of climate change on world food production.
 - Discussion around whether forest or grassland is better for water production or what mix of the two would provide for recharge and other

hydrological functions. Perhaps returning the landscape to more grasslands with some biodiverse forest.

- Issues around logging:
 - Roads that allow greater access
 - Soil compaction
 - Monoculture forests
- Present forest shows good natural succession (diverse species and ages) and would be ideal for "thoughtful" logging. Someone thought this could be called **soft logging.** This might include some clear cutting.
- Pay forestry companies to become "Ecological Land Managers." They
 would be responsible for ensuring ecological benchmarks. (ie. Water
 quality, biodiversity.) They might also be responsible for provision of
 some of the low- impact access demands. (hiking, X-country ski trails.)
- Biggest changes in the past 10 years:
 - ❖ Accelerating OHV use. Used to be a weekend phenomena but has become a 24-7 issue everywhere.
 - ❖ More oil and gas activity resulting in more roads, more pads
 - Clear cut logging
- 5 year vision:
 - Less access
 - Remaining roads must be designed or redesigned to minimize erosion
 - Clear regulations and enforcement of OHV use.
 - Provision of connectivity for wildlife; less fragmentation.

19.0 Protection and Regulation

- TRP primary responsibility Provincial Protection Areas, Campgrounds, Wildland Parks Fish and Wildlife and Forestry look after the other areas.
- OHV use the biggest issue for TRP in the Ghost Dirt bikes go into Ghost Wilderness and Don Getty Park
- Hard to enforce and dangerous, Safety issue
- More manpower needed
- So many agencies involved in the Ghost and they are not coordinated difficult to have a plan
- Need public involved in enforcement
- Need communications system in being put in place to ensure officer safety. Communications Towers for provincial and municipal entities
- No CIPIC available to TRP officers
- We are in a game change how do we manage so many people, huge safety issues for all EMS agencies, especially in regards to fire. Safety personnel do not know how many people are in the area or where they are.
- Require a coordinated effort by all agencies,
- Clear goals required for all enforcement personnel in the area,
- Infrastructure not designed for current population and use,
- Government has not caught up to what the public is wanting in management for the eastern slopes areas especially in high use areas,
- 50% of the M.D. of Bighorn is designated as park and the working relationship with ATPR needs improvement to better reflect this.
- Should create an entrance gate or checkpoint for safety and enforcement reasons. American forest service system with entrances gates informs users of rules, promotes safety and respect for the area,
- Enforcement is strongest on the weekends which is inadequate,
- Checkpoints are politically sensitive,
- If we don't have an entrance gate and meet people we are condoning their behavior,
- Critical for safety to have a system which help identify where people are and how many there are in the area,

- Two fatalities in the Ghost last year which were managed by the M.D. however the big concern is fire,
- It is costly for the M.D. to respond to the public safety needs under the current system.
- American state forest management seen as a good example to follow for management,
- Many non-motorized uses cannot use the Ghost due to lack of enforcement,
- Less enforcement personnel than in the 1980's,
- High use area like the Ghost need more enforcement using full time officers as seasonal rangers have somewhat limited effectiveness,
- The RCMP has a public ride along program, perhaps a ride along system with the conservation officers would help with officer safety.
- Con to this is that volunteers can be hard to manage and may take time away from enforcement,
- If the Ghost area was properly organized and the problems cured the use/abuse will move somewhere else – need a regional plan for the Eastern Slopes to deal with enforcement and land use issues,
- Sustainability requires proper trails for all users and proper education and enforcement,
- The Ghost is the wild west and needs controlling,
- People feel it is their right to go everywhere and this attitude needs to be changed,
- TRP backcountry cabin presence required as day time enforcement shifts do not work need an overnight presence,
- It would be a good idea to have enforcement officers living full time in the area as in the past at the forest service ranger stations,
- Helicopter enforcement is expensive and lack presence,
- Enforcement officer cabins required,
- Lawless behavior in Spray and Kananaskis was fixed by changing thinking and organizing effective programs. Gates, signage, public involvement, manned information booths, organized campgrounds,
- Finite landscape cannot supply infinitely. Ghost does not work the way it is,
- Land Use Framework important for regional planning as we will keep moving the problem to other areas without a regional plan. However,

with no plan in effect there is a need to keep moving forward and not wait,

- Make smaller recreational vehicle parks with mud, steep climbs and boulders to contain high impact use,
- McClean Creek is a sacrifice area use it to protect everything else,
- Contained sites reduce environmental and safety risks,
- Should not pick on POHRV,
- Need to make decisions with imperfect knowledge, something need to be done now,
- Worst thing is to make no decisions and not move forward the problem then just keeps getting worse,
- Best management practices, action and policy needed for every activity and industry. Make positive steps. Current system seems to be aiming for the lowest bar not the highest. Current situation not meeting any user groups needs,
- All land uses have impacts. Set limits on use, or thresholds and move towards them,
- Don't wait get it done now,
- Environmental conservation/stewardship is good for the economy, public, health etc.
- Is illegal hunting a problem? Poaching a potential problem in Parks areas where poachers using motorized vehicles go into the parks,
- User pay for ATV use and for funding enforcement,
- Many OHRV group good at building trails, bridges and cleanup, user fees and fines from enforcement could be used to help fund such efforts,
- Signage and rules in the Ghost hard to understand, need clearly defined rules and boundaries and improved infrastructure
- Status quo will not exist 50 years from now,
- City of Calgary responsible to help with costs of management for a clean water supply for urban consumers.
- Course (for proper behavior while recreating, particularly aimed at OHV users) / License to operate OHV in the area. Sponsored by City of Calgary?
- Challenge: Aggressive behavior is often rewarded, particularly in business/corporate world, including going into grey areas (bending the law)

- Funding for training courses could be partially realized with user fees/ fines
- Solutions need to be found not to push users into new areas;, however other areas need to be regulated proactively instead of implying regulations later.
- Enforcement may not change behavior immediately, but will over time.
- Intermittent enforcement proved to be most effective

Topic: Random Camping

- Desirable for some folks, opposed to organized campsites
- "Random" campers often stay in single location for extended period of time
- Improper sewage installations that direct sewage into creek have been observed
- Forestry is supposed to enforce, not TPR, but often ignore campers
- Damage to vegetation: tree notching, to provide for next year's firewood deforests favorite campsites over time. Observed e.g. at Indian Graves.

20.0 Source Water Protection

- Ghost and its tributaries represent 10% of Bow water sources for the City of Calgary. Significant for the City.
- Province should make source water a priority in headwaters.
- Call for large fines and impounding of vehicles as a real deterrent to irresponsible ATV users. Enforcement has to be consistent. Have to be more "boots on the ground." More enforcement personnel could be funded through fines and/or registration fees. This could be presented to government in business plan.
- Suggestion for overall plan for the Ghost region, showing all currently designated uses.
- Province still committed to overall Land Use Plan for whole region south
 of the South Saskatchewan, despite political controversy. The process of
 enacting a Land Use Plan would rely in part on regional plans and other
 work being done by non-governmental groups for specific areas. Some
 optimism that an overall plan would embrace recommended actions
 arising from plans created by volunteer groups. Eastern Slopes seen as a
 priority.
- Conversation then turned to adopting concepts of an ecological goods and services value assessment for lands such as the Ghost.
- Modeling of value of ecological goods and services is problematic, however, as numbers are so big that they are hard for citizens to comprehend.
- One method of source water protection in general would be tax credits for ecologically functioning landscapes for landowners or users of land.
- Some kind of tangible value system needed to change attitudes toward land, Costa Rica among countries, for example, that pay upstream land owners to keep land intact. So, why not pay landowners for their efforts in source water protection?
- Forest Reserve was created with watershed protection as the highest priority 100 years ago. It seems that this was forgotten about since
- Currently, land is considered "worthless" if it can't be developed.
- What if City of Calgary paid Spray Lake Sawmills to cut less timber and create larger buffers with streams, wetlands and other sensitive areas?
- Tax credits and incentives for source water protection

- How about offering money to ATV users to build their trails or an ATV park?
- Then establish measurable standards for determining impacts on land of motorized users. For example, thresholds could be set for sediment loading in rivers and tributaries. Registration fees are then introduced for use of area. As users meet thresholds, a formula can be applied annually to reduce the fees.
- This process should include disincentives to bad behavior, Fees would go up if land is abused, or reduced or waived if thresholds are met.
- What about actually offering funds to users, such as ATV riders or forestry industry, if their actions and activities lead to improved ecological conditions? Directly reward good behaviour. This makes sense if we can establish a value for the land's ecological goods and services.
- Some objections to this idea. If money is simply given out, the result could be more destruction. Offers of money might not be an incentive for wealthier users whose behaviour would not change or might worsen.
- Response was that peer pressure would apply in a system of financial incentives or disincentives. No evidence that "bad" behaviour is particular to so-called wealthier users or that wealthier users would be less susceptible to peer pressure.

Key Take-Aways:

• There is hope for the future. New ways of thinking can be encouraged.

21.0 Feedback at Open House

In order to provide maximum flexibility for users to provide input, two questions were posted on flipcharts and beside each was a blank flipchart for participants to offer their viewpoints. In addition, some GWAS volunteers engaged in conversation with people who came to the open house. Some of those conversations were subsequently recorded. The questions, responses and notes from the conversations follow.

21.1 How do you envision the Ghost watershed 50 years into the future?

- Mountains
- Scenery
- Getting out
- Technical challenge
- Management and enforcement
- Sustainable network of trails
- An integrated management area where various users can use the land in a sustainable way and to a pre-determined standard in terms of construction and maintenance of trails, accompanied by monitoring.
- Some areas dedicated to off road trail use, horses, hiking and sensitive areas left as is. (lots of unused areas with concentrations of formal use areas)
- Hope my grandchildren can still walk and enjoy flowers in the area
- Walks along rivers and through healthy forests with great mountain views.
- Desecrated barren landscape if pine beetles are left to do their own thing (they can attack spruce too)
- Quiet place with wonderful clean air
- Healthy balance of natural landscapes with healthy riparian habitats, juxtaposed with carefully managed human activity (non-motorized recreation, livestock grazing, retreat centres, well-managed and selective forest harvesting, human habitation)
- Retain significant undeveloped areas (or "rebuilt"/replanted wilderness where pine beetle has killed forest)

21.2 What will it take to make that future a reality?

- Education
- Money
- Commitment for government to re-open and support trail sustainability
- Volunteer time and input from off-road community
- Standards developed and used for various types of trail use
- Monitoring and maintenance
- Integrated management plan developed in cooperation with other users
- Many different interest groups enjoy (or used to enjoy) the area. It is not the peaceful area it used to be.
- Let's have some balance and responsibility
- Willingness of GWAS volunteers and others to work with all stakeholders to take the time to develop a well-thought-out management plan and execute it well.
- For example:
 - taking time to work with SLS to identify sensitive riparian habitat to ensure that appropriate buffers are developed and honoured;
 - work with ranchers to ensure runoff from grazing or hay areas does not introduce waste residue and chemicals into rivers and ponds;
 - limit motorized off-road access to selected areas; manage/limit random camping (some OK in wilderness with appropriate care)
- Continue regular engagement with all stakeholders

21.3 In-depth interview with an OHV rider – 4 wheeler and quad

- Never saw any advertising or posters
- Would not have come except suggested by a friend to attend
- Grew up in the area and has been coming to the Ghost since he was a "kid"
- Riding for 16 years or more now
- 4-wheeling let him bring kids along, strapped in back seat
- Now kids are older and don't want to go along, so he's quadding more often
- Still brings kids out though because they love camping in Ghost; they stay back at camp while he rides.
- Would not use campsites; gravel pad is unattractive; like to be in grassy field like airstrip; has an RV so has own facilities
- Maybe tenters might appreciate more facilities in various locations
- The draw of quadding and off-roading is to get into nature, to get to scenic spots, accessibility
- Some amateur photographers guad to get photos of scenery.
- As for the 4x4 experience, one club has a tire size limit of 39", hence somewhat lighter and smaller vehicles – they tend to seek technical challenges on the trail, such as rocks and boulders, not so much mud. His group only goes through mud if it's on the trail. Tries to evaluate if going around mud hole is less destructive than to drive / winch through.
- Mod bogging, such as on Johnson Creek, is preferred by bigger trucks –
 "big trucks" on 44" tires and bigger.
- Engineered obstacle courses would interest him, but would not replace the experience of the scenery and "wilderness"
- Used to be that guys would build their own machines; come out on weekend to see how machine worked; then go home and tinker some more; a challenge both in shop and on trail.
- This building of machines allowed riders' skills to grow along with their machines; now people buy stock machines with lots of power, etc., and their riding skills are not up to the machine's capabilities, resulting in more damage to environment by inexperienced riders.
- Calgary a moneyed place; easy to buy machines.
- People who ride with clubs tend to be more responsible.

- Positive peer pressure along the trail to clean up, use bridges, cross wet areas but don't play in them or dig them out.
- More people riding on their own now than ever before so more experienced people no longer having influence on new riders; less chance of new riders to learn trail etiquette.
- Bridges should be designed and built to sustaining weight and size of 4x4s, not only quads, in order to keep them out of the stream as well.
- Dealers don't really push club membership
- Clubs don't have dealers publicizing the clubs in the area to get purchasers connected with a club
- Exception is one Jeep dealer at one time in the past which included club membership in price of purchase. Seems that dealership must have employees in a riders' club who will then let buyer know of opportunity to join club.
- Groups like Ghost Watershed Alliance Society tend to be seen as "environmentalists" by most riders.
- "Environmentalists" are blamed for GAMP and for shutting down trails by catching the ear of the government.
- Riders only want one thing to get their trails back, to see trails reopened.
- Groups like GWAS are not necessarily seen as part of the riders' solution because GWAS does not have the power to reopen trails; only the government does.
- GWAS could only really get riders' attention if GWAS pushed to have trails reopened.
- He was unsure about the procedure to get trails approved through GSMG.
 Believed that work on the ground (including bridges) needed to be done
 before application for a new (or reopened) trail could be submitted and
 approved (or not). Upon explanation of current procedure, he still felt it to
 be very lengthy and complicated.
- Riders were angered terribly by GAMP; like a slap in the face. Felt they
 were making progress in managing their activity in the Ghost:
 - o getting riders into clubs;
 - doing two annual clean-ups with attendance of 100 riders at one of them;
 - o organized in advance to bring equipment; then camped at airstrip;

- assigned specific clubs to clean-up specific trails, first trash, then back in with lumber and tools for bridge repair and vehicle extraction;
- o felt it was making a big difference and gaining momentum
- Then GAMP happened; hard to see why right then when they were making improvements; destroyed morale; AURS (Alberta United Recreationists Society) no longer received funds; clean-up efforts ended.
- Attitude was "you won't let us manage it, so forget it, you're on your own; we're not participating."
- Even club membership dropped right off.
- About 80% of riders used to be in clubs; now it's down to less than 50%.
 One 4x4 Club memberships dropped from about 50 members to 25.
- When trails were redesignated, the 4-wheel riders felt that the quad riders got more trails, that 4-wheel lost out to quads, that government minister in charge favoured quad riders because he'd been seen riding a quad, etc; bad blood between various groups. However, 4x4 groups stick together and help each other, independently from vehicle brand.
- As consequence of very few trails being designated for 4x4 use, many former 4x4 users bought quads.
- Now no enforcement to speak of; hardly see anyone out there when there
 used to be all kinds of officers ten-fifteen years ago
- Will run into officers who say, "Not our jurisdiction"; will see officers when riding on closed trails and they'll say, "you're not doing anything you shouldn't so don't worry about it."
- It's older more experienced riders on closed trails; feel those are their trails; still remember where they are; see no reason many of them can't stay in use.
- Less experienced riders will be on designated trails; don't usually know where closed trails are.
- The 4-wheeler club is mainly "older riders" who don't see why things were changed and who are turned off by everything that's happened.
- Perceived that groups like GWAS might have better luck when approaching younger riders, like the Jeep club. The Jeep club is still doing some trail work (clean up and improvement), so they might be more open to work collaboratively with GWAS.

22.0 Facilitator's Comments

It was an honour to serve you people. These workshops were characterized by a consistent tone of respect among friends and strangers, a desire to listen to each other's perspective, and a caring and passion for the Ghost area.

Thank you all. Working with you was most enjoyable!

Best regards,

Doug

Doug Marteinson