
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

LILLOOET, MORICE PLANS TO CREATE JOBS, 15 NEW PARKS

VICTORIA – Detailed proposals for the Lillooet and Morice land use plans have been completed that will open up new jobs and economic opportunities, while adding a total of 15 new parks and protected areas comprising almost 180,000 hectares, Sustainable Resource Management Minister George Abbott announced today.

Talks between the province and First Nations are now the final step towards finalizing land use plans for the regions.

“These recommendations, with their broad community support, will help protect over 180,000 hectares, while opening up new economic opportunities by creating certainty on the land base,” Abbott said. “That gives families who live and work in the area the chance to build a solid, sustainable future for their communities, themselves and their children.”

In the Lillooet area, which includes Lytton and Spences Bridge, the previous government announced a draft plan without any consensus on the part of the land-use table members, and without meaningful community or First Nations support. The province subsequently committed to reviewing this plan, and today’s outcome reflects extensive community and stakeholder input over the last three years.

Consultation with First Nations is the next step. In the case of the St’at’imc First Nation, these talks will be guided by a recently signed government-to-government protocol. In addition, a memorandum with local communities provides for economic cooperation.

The plan will create a new Class A park on 56,500 hectares of the South Chilcotin protected area. The remaining 14,600 hectares will be designated for tourism and mining, but not logging. Eight new parks and protected areas are added, comprising 23,500 hectares. The whole Lillooet planning area makes up 11,000 square km, of which 17 per cent will be park and conservancy.

“This plan strikes a true balance that will provide job opportunities for those families that work and live in the region, while still protecting the natural environment that is such a draw for this area,” Yale-Lillooet MLA Dave Chutter said. “We made a commitment to review the previous government’s plan at the request of people in the communities and we have followed through on that commitment.”

In the Morice area, 15,000 square km lying north and east of Tweedsmuir Park, full consensus was reached at a planning table that started work in 2001. Its recommendations call for 6.4 per cent of the area to be set aside for parks and conservancy areas, 20.5 per cent mining/tourism, but not logging, and 73.1 per cent open to all uses, with some area-specific restrictions.

“Behind these proposals lies the work of numerous people who have devoted years to reaching agreement on the future use of public land in these areas,” Bulkley Valley-Stikine MLA Dennis MacKay said. “They started from very different positions, and wound up on common ground.”

Land and resource management plans apply to Crown land, which makes up 94 per cent of all land in British Columbia. When these plans are completed, 85 per cent of the province will be covered by land use plans.

In the last week the government has announced detailed land use proposals that will add almost a million hectares of new park and conservancy areas to protect some of the most beautiful wilderness sites in the province, Abbot said.

2 backgrounder(s) attached.

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