



771 Torrs Road, Kelowna BC V1W 1B4 www.okanagantrailriders.com
Ph. 250-878-9111

OTRA Response to West Kelowna Council Press and Resolution

Attention Mayor & Council;

On behalf of Okanagan Trail Riders Association (OTRA) please find our response to a recent resolution passed at March 10th 2009 West Kelowna Council Meeting and comments made by Mayor Doug Findlater and Councillor Carol Zanon after a recent tour of Bald Range Creek.

We are in agreement that water quality is a priority resource and the existing user-created trails in the Bald Range Creek are unacceptable. As a point of clarification, ***the trails you viewed were not constructed by the Ministry of Tourism or with any grant money provided by taxpayers.*** They were created by un-managed motorized use over the past 40 years.

While we both agree on addressing the issue of water quality we seem to differ in our approach to the ***solution.***

I trust you will agree that strong leadership requires a focus on solutions and the capable execution of action items that create a desired outcome.

At your May 12th council meeting the undersigned and Mr. John Glaspie presented your council with information on a model for a Managed Trail System. Council was invited to attend our "Trails to the Future – Open House" on May 24th 2009. Some 200 plus people attended this function and 60 tours of the sustainable trails constructed in the fall of 2008 were conducted. This event was documented very favourably by CHBC. It is regrettable that neither you nor any of your councillors were able to attend these tours. Had you seized this opportunity you would have seen a much different result than the user-created trails that are of concern to us all.

At this meeting OTRA heard your concerns with new turbidity criteria set by Interior Health and the monumental cost of filtration and treatment systems needed. Surely council does not believe that eliminating soil disturbance from motorized recreation will eliminate the need to invest in adequate water treatment for the residents? While OTRA concurs we must all use best management practices, we object to anyone implying that motorized recreation ranks near the top as a source of sedimentation in water. To this end we have engaged an independent expert to quantify sedimentation sources. As well we continue to press MOTCA to urgently move

forward with an engineered bridge crossing and sustainable corridor trail in Bald Range Creek and we encourage council's support of this measure.

On the issue of *consultation* the Ministry of Tourism organized an Advisory Committee made up of numerous stakeholders including LID to provide comments on individual interests. I submit an extensive operating plan which delineates these interests and guides the implementation of the planned trail system. This is a living plan which will include long term monitoring. To this end OTRA have attempted to work in a collaborative spirit with stakeholders to insure each interest is being addressed.

Our solution to the *sedimentation issues* you have identified in the news story entitled "TOURISM BLAMED FOR WATERSHED DAMAGE" was to be funded by a grant from the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council and not rate payers of the water district. I attach a grant proposal and an approval letter for funding same. In addition I submit the plan which was prepared at considerable expense. Prior to preparing this plan there was agreement between OTRA and LID to place a bridged crossing at Bald Range Creek and a corridor trail to connect the lower staging area (8km) and upper staging area (12km). This agreement was facilitated by Integrated Land Management Bureau as evidenced by the attached minutes summarizing a meeting held on March 2nd 2007. This solution was a priority not only to protect water quality but to provide a safe route between these two points without having riders use Bear Forest Service road. Riding vehicles without liability insurance on this road is both illegal and dangerous. It also exacerbates the noise for Rose Valley residents.

We submit to you that Lakeview Irrigation District have in fact frustrated the agreement for OTRA to address rehab and construction of a well designed and engineered sustainable corridor route through the Bald Range Creek area. Once again I submit correspondence and a newspaper article in which LID's water consultant, Heather Larratt is quoted as stating that they will not accept a crossing over Bald Range Creek.

When this priority item was thwarted OTRA once again went back to the planning stage and submitted plans for "demonstration sustainable trails" to be constructed in a new staging area 1.2 km north of the 8km staging area. This was approved by LID and residents at the Advisory Planning Committee meeting on October 2nd 2008. Subsequent to this meeting and after the demonstration area was completed at an expense of approximately \$60,000 LID once again withdrew its approval (see attached).

OTRA are in agreement to *register and licence off-road vehicles* and have been an integral player in the 47 point coalition report to government in January of 2006. (see attached). Councillor Zanon's motion was framed to give the water purveyors the right to collect user fees to offset operating and maintenance of the watershed. This is not a model that OTRA believes would be efficient or successful in managing off-road vehicles. On the other hand there are a multitude of successfully managed sustainable trail systems in North America using the model being implemented by OTRA. Many of these co-exist in watersheds and mitigate water quality issues. The cornerstone of this model is the *4-E's. Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Evaluation*. Changing riding and behaviour patterns is a monumental task and experience

shows that it takes approximately 3 years when the 4 E's are applied. We are presently one year into this program and it would not be prudent to focus on what is yet to be corrected without studying the changes that have already started to occur. The result in the end is riders staying on signed sustainable trails (no user created activity). You should be aware that provincially a **TRAIL PASS** program is under way and will be mandatory at Bear Creek in 2010. Funds from this program will be used to develop and maintain engineered sustainable trails and provide money for education and enforcement. These engineered trails provide resource protection and at the same time enhance the fun and safety of the participants. This creates a win-win for the whole community.

While you have invited Mr. Don Dobson to address your council for suggestions you would be remiss if you did not also hear from managed off highway vehicle consultants Dick & Joani Dufourd of Rec-Connect to describe the success of the above strategy.

OTRA invites Mayor & Council to tour the sustainable trails, review other community models and consider supporting OTRA's implementation of the 4 E's. We also encourage you to review our response to issues in Bear Creek and the corresponding action steps. Let's stop focusing on the problem and start focusing on the solution.

Yours truly,



Ken Umbarger
President
Okanagan Trail Riders Association



Cc: Hon. Kevin Krueger, John Glaspie, Jim Edgson, BC Municipal Councils