



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Lakeview Irrigation District Non Collaborative

Members of the Okanagan Trail Riders Club have been active stewards in the Bear Creek area for over 30 years. We are committed to protecting the environmental and recreational values of the area.

The Okanagan/Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) was prepared by a team of approximately 55 members of the public and government. After 4 ½ years of meetings and approval by the government, the LRMP designated the Resource Management Zone (RMZ) motorcycle emphasis for the Bear Creek area. We believe the Lakeview Irrigation District (LID) was represented at the LRMP table by the Water Supply Association of B.C. The designation of an RMZ motorcycle emphasis in the Bear Creek area was not “*an incidental*” decision but something that was established after 4 ½ years of consensus bargaining.

The Lakeview Irrigation District now claims that they were not represented at the LRMP table. If this is the case then the Lakeview Irrigation District did not practice due diligence. It was well known to the Lakeview Irrigation District that we were in the area and that the LRMP was establishing land use practices for the Okanagan Shuswap area.

The Lakeview Irrigation District has mounted a campaign to remove Off-road riders from their RMZ. In the years 2003 and 2004 our Club held meetings with the Lakeview Irrigation District and also with Don Dobson, their water consultant. In September 2005 we agreed to go ahead with some joint projects. The Lakeview Irrigation District failed to follow through stating in November 2005 that they were not able to secure the necessary funding from the government to go ahead with the projects. These projects would have cost little money. The Lakeview Irrigation District states that they have “*exhausted all efforts*” to work with the Okanagan Trail Riders and others to protect the watershed. In our view, the Lakeview Irrigation District “*tires easily*”.

If there is degradation to the water supply for the Lakeview Irrigation District a significant portion of this is caused by drainage from the roads including mud from Bear

Lake Main flowing into Bald Range Creek. There is no such thing as a pristine watershed. In the spring and during periods of heavy rain, you get heavy runoff.

The OTR believes that watersheds can be used for recreational use as long as they are managed properly. Banning all activities in watershed is not necessary nor even desirable. Forestry is a vital part of the British Columbia economy. Good economy supports good health. Good health is promoted by opportunities to enjoy the outdoors through recreation and physical activity. The watershed should be managed through a collaborative multi-stakeholder process for balancing the environmental, economic and recreational values of the land.

If Lakeview Irrigation District requires a new filtration/treatment plant they cannot blame this on off-road riding in the area. We note that several other water districts have had to upgrade their water treatment systems and there is not heavy Off-road riding in these areas. It is obvious that the LID should be interested in spending a few thousand dollars to provide proactive education in the Bear Creek area versus spending millions of dollars for water filtration systems.

We are still prepared to work with the Lakeview Irrigation District in a collaborative way to develop a well-managed watershed in the Bear Creek area. This potential will only be realized if stakeholders work together. It must be a collaborative, respectful process. Lakeview Irrigation's current campaign is to have us entirely removed from the area. If the LID gets its way, all recreationalists may as well forget turning onto Bear Lake Main.

cc: Local MLAs
Water Supply Association of BC
Terry McDonald, LRMP
Water Source Ministry (IES)