



## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
9 A.M. May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

### **OTRA MEETS WESTSIDE COUNCIL ABOUT MANAGED TRAILS :**

Ken Umbarger the President of Okanagan Trail Riders presented the West Kelowna Council with details of the progress being made at Bear Creek transitioning the area from un-managed to a MANAGED Motorized Recreation Area. OTRA shared it's vision of change for off road motorized recreation in the Province of BC. and concepts used to change past motorized riding practices which have raised environmental concerns and caused extensive area closures. The concepts are best described as the 4 E's. 1. Education 2. Engineering 3. Enforcement 4. Evaluation and when implemented in their entirety have proven successful in other North American jurisdictions as the best way to protect resources, mitigate unnecessary conflicts and provide motorized recreationalists a much more fun and safe experience. Since 2005 the OTRA has invested enormous effort by volunteers of this Non-Profit society and coupled with funding from the provincial government and the private sector "PHASE ONE" of the project is complete. A Stewardship Agreement was signed between OTRA and the Province in 2007 and since then several hundred thousand dollars have been spent in planning and developing a managed recreational area. Bear Creek is presently the largest Recreation Site in the Province of BC and this long term plan includes a World Class managed sustainable trail system which will generate millions of dollars to the local economy. Resource protection is a priority as the area is designated in the Land Resource Management Plan as a

Recreation Management Zone (motorcycle emphasis) and is also in the watershed serving West Kelowna residents.

In response to councils concerns over risks motorized recreation poses to drinking water Ken Umbarger responded that “large industries such as logging, mining and ranching presently exist in the same watersheds along with motorized and other recreation and there is no reason they can not all coexist. Any activity has risks that must be managed and a balanced perspective is key. When it comes to managing the motorized recreation in the area water quality is a high priority and education, engineering, best management practices and sustainable trails are the basis to addressing any concerns”.

On May 24<sup>th</sup> OTRA plans to host “TRAILS to the FUTURE” – OPEN HOUSE. Co-Ordinator and OTRA member Bill Hilland has spearheaded this initiative to provide guided tours for off-road enthusiasts and interested parties to display the progress made on the “Phase One” trails. The motive is to showcase what MANAGED off road motorized recreation is all about and why it benefits riders and all stakeholders alike. “These will be the TRAILS to the FUTURE and the preservation of our sport” states Hilland.

As of this year noise restrictions, spark arrestors and staying on the trails are mandatory in Bear Creek. A Trail Patrol program has been initiated by OTRA and enforcement is now under way. “We see this project as a win-win for motorized recreationalists and all stakeholders including those people who drink the water” states Ken Umbarger President of OTRA.

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