

Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Management Plan



Preamble

Scope of the Planning Process

This Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan is designed to help the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development put in place an access management plan for the area, following cross-departmental review. The management plan will recommend on-the-ground solutions to motorized Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) and other related recreational access issues, while at the same time ensuring the sustainability of public land and resources. Key priorities have included the protection of the watershed, fisheries and wildlife.

The access planning process has looked to address four primary subject areas:

- to ensure public safety
- to ensure sustainability of natural resources
- to minimize conflicts between recreational OHV users and other users, and
- to provide a range of opportunities for summer and winter recreational OHV use

The public input component of the Ghost-Waiparous planning process suggested a number of actions that are outside of the scope of an access management plan. For that reason it is important to clarify what the plan is intended to accomplish and what elements are beyond that scope. Once developed, the plan is intended to reflect the various land uses that are already allowed under the current Ghost River Subregional Integrated Resource Plan. This resource plan recognizes that recreational use, including OHV use, is an appropriate activity.

A Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Management Plan will include:

- recommended actions on how to manage motorized OHV activities in the Ghost-Waiparous area in compliance with existing and proposed legislation;
- Guidelines on how to manage random motorized camping activities;
- Measures that reflect extensive public input and offer flexibility to change over time as resource issues emerge and user conflicts arise, and emphasize local solutions to local problems; and
- Mechanisms to ensure long-term input and involvement of the public in the monitoring of recreational activities on public lands in the Ghost-Waiparous area.

A Ghost-Waiparous access management plan would not be able to deal with the following:

- Alcohol and drug abuse by those using the Ghost-Waiparous area;
- Serious on-road violations such as dangerous driving, driving under the influence, etc.;
- Threats to person or property (Criminal Code violations); and
- Any kind of debate on suitability of various land uses allowed under the current Ghost River Subregional Integrated Resource Plan.

Ghost-Waiparous Access document

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Planning Area Description 3

The Context for Access Management Planning 5

4.0 The Long-Term Vision for the Ghost-Waiparous Area 9

Operating Recommendations

Education 11

Enforcement 13

Engineering 15

Monitoring 17

Appendices

Public Information and Consultation Process

Examples of Responsible OHV Use programs

Glossary

Introduction

The Ghost-Waiparous has been a popular destination for off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail riding since the 1960s due to its close proximity to Calgary and its scenic mountain terrain. Roads and seismic trails resulting from oil and gas exploration and development made this a particularly appealing setting for those wanting motorized access in the area.

OHV activity in the area increased significantly in 1978, when the Alberta government established Kananaskis Country and limited OHV use within Kananaskis Country boundaries. The government subsequently upgraded 170 km of trails in the Ghost area for summer and winter OHV use. A campground at Fallen Timber Creek was built to accommodate OHV users. A campground at North Ghost also provides individual camping pads, fire pits, toilets, garbage bins and firewood. Group camping is also available.

In 1988 the Ghost River Sub-regional Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) directed that an access management plan be developed for the Ghost-Waiparous area. The plan stated that "*OHV use is a legitimate activity and highly valued by many users of the area.*" The plan also stated that "*indiscriminate OHV use has the potential to cause impact on the terrain, vegetation, wildlife and water quality.*" In the meantime, changes to OHV technology and subsequent unregulated use of the area has resulted in renewed concerns about the impacts of OHVs and random camping on the natural environment.

In 1999 the Municipal District of Bighorn No. 8 gathered public and stakeholder views on issues and opportunities concerning public land management in the Ghost-Waiparous area. The purpose of the report was "*to draw attention to the widespread ecosystem degradation caused by random camping and off-highway vehicle use in the Ghost River Forest Reserve.*" The results were documented in a report called the "*Forest Reserve Multi-user Dialogue Report.*" The report recommended a co-ordinated approach to monitoring, enforcement and education, and the development of a strategic plan to address increased use and protection of the Forest Reserve. A wide variety of stakeholders and users of the Ghost-Waiparous area endorsed the recommendations of the report.

In 2000 Alberta Environment announced a program of education and stepped-up enforcement called *Shifting Gears* and made a commitment to develop an updated access management policy for the Ghost-Waiparous area. In 2001 much of the Prime Protection Zone in the Ghost area, an area of 198 sq. km, was designated as Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park. OHVs are prohibited in the Park under current legislation.

In 2003, the *Shifting Gears* program was further augmented by the addition of the *Respect the Land* program, largely targeted at random camping-related issues on public lands.

In December 2002 and January 2003, the Alberta government began consulting with Albertans -- both the general public and stakeholder groups -- on a process for access management planning in the area (see Appendix). Following public consultation and a public telephone survey, a draft directions document was prepared and released to the public for further input. This directions document and input showed strong support for a balanced access management plan that provides clear guidelines and regulations for access while ensuring that resource values are sustained.

For the final stage of consultation, an advisory group consisting of staff from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Public Lands and Forests, Fish and Wildlife), Alberta Environment (Water Quality), Alberta Energy, Alberta Economic Development, Alberta Community Development, Alberta Transportation and a representative from the Municipal District of Bighorn (MD 8) compiled the information collected to date. Based on a review of the input and data as well as information and advice from a number of other jurisdictions throughout North America, the advisory group was asked to develop an Operational Access Plan that would be submitted to the Alberta government.

2.0 Planning Area Description

The Ghost-Waiparous area is located northwest of Cochrane, Alberta and includes approximately 1500 sq. km of public forestland (Figure 1). Additional areas (shown in red) immediately adjacent to the original planning area were included by the writing team during its deliberations to effectively deal with resource management issues that were common to both the planning area and these adjacent lands.

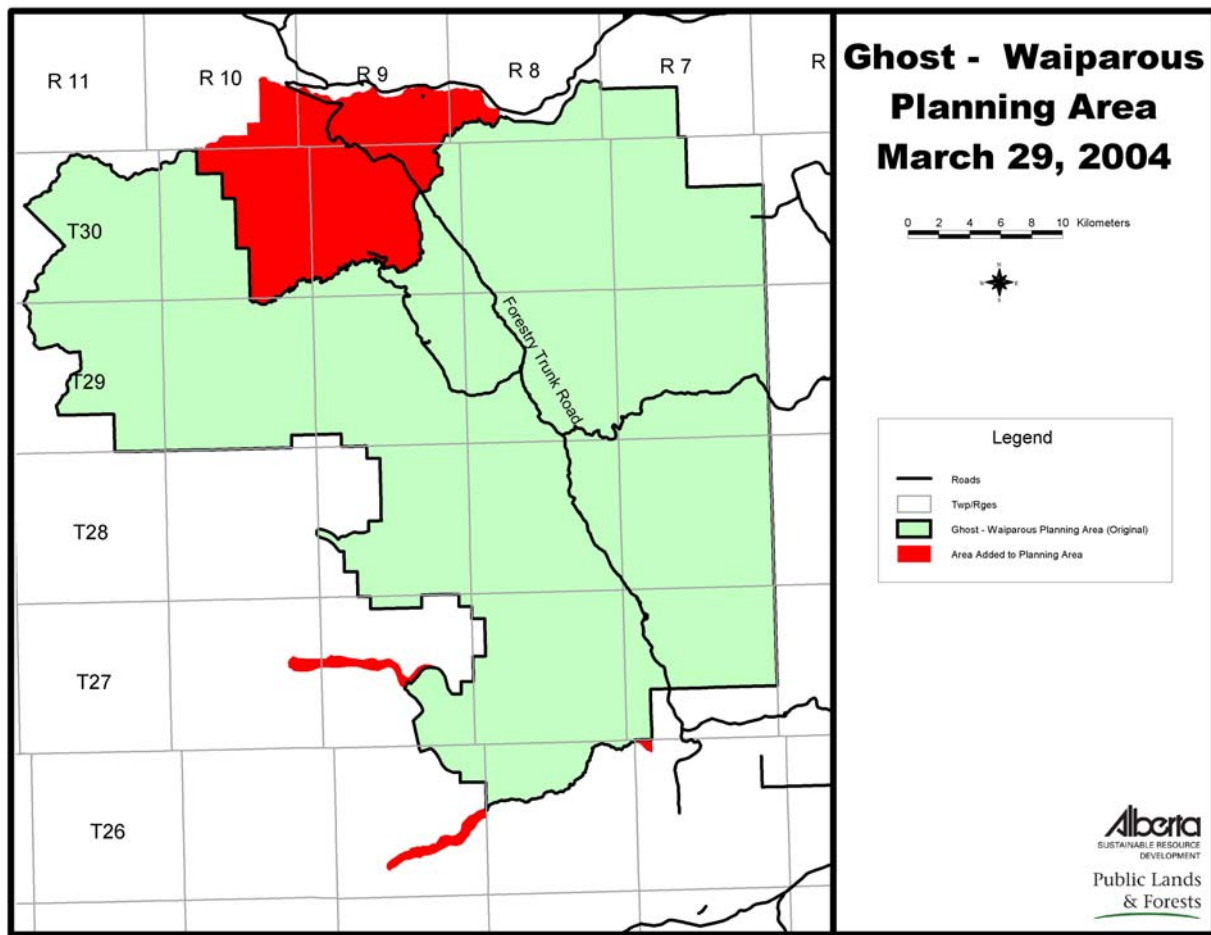


Figure 1

Current Recreational, OHV and Random Camping Use

The majority of off-highway vehicle activity in the Ghost-Waiparous area occurs on weekends between the months of May and September and includes motorcycles, quads, and trucks modified for off-highway use. The level of summer OHV activity is high because of the large number of seismic trails in the area (approximately 1600 km) and the regions close proximity to the rapidly growing City of Calgary. The advent of newer types of larger, more powerful OHVs and the use of studded tires, particularly by motorcycles, is extending the seasonality of use to almost year-round.

Various trails are used primarily during hunting season and to access popular fishing and climbing areas.

Snowmobiling occurs in the area, but in recent years has been hindered somewhat by a lack of snow. Lower snowpack in some years has also resulted in expanded seasons for wheeled OHVs.

A variety of non-motorized recreational users and commercial trail riding operators also make regular use of the planning area.

3.0 The Context for Access Management Planning

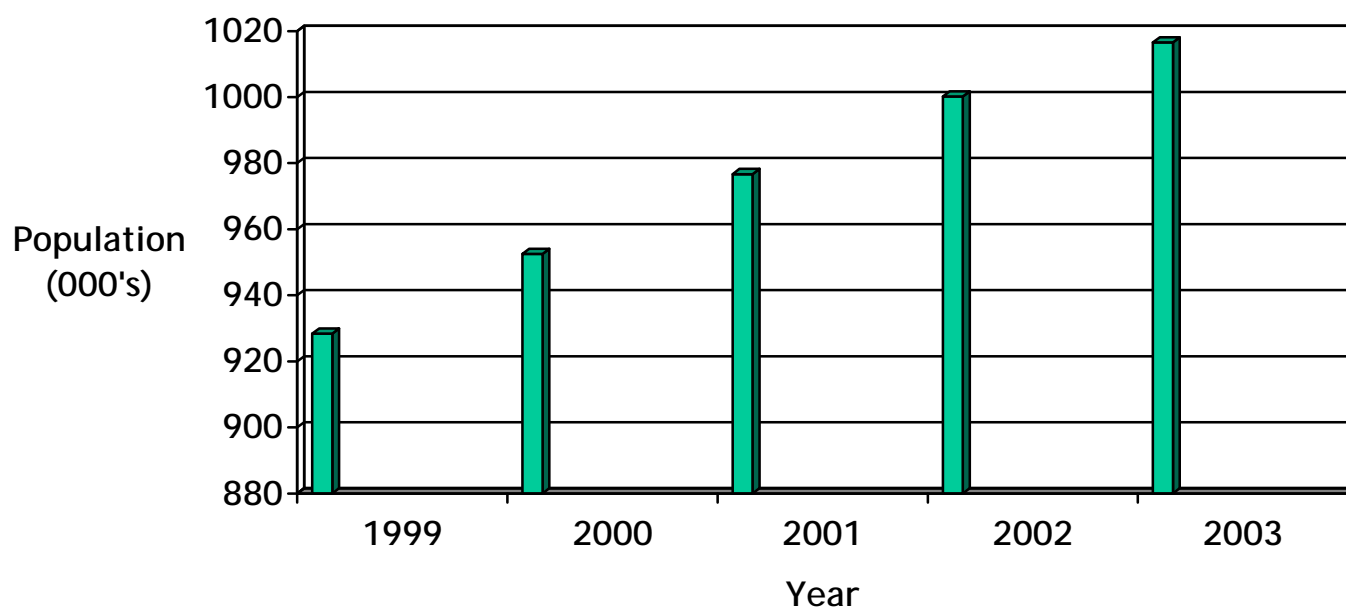
In looking at the context for access management in the Ghost-Waiparous, it was important to look at the trends affecting this area in terms of population growth, increased recreational demand and public concern over sustainability. This information is essential in setting out some of the challenges and opportunities of creating balanced solutions for sustained access in this resource rich area of Alberta.

The Ghost-Waiparous area is highly regarded by local residents and those who live in Calgary and surrounding area as an ideal place to enjoy a host of outdoor recreational pursuits. Based on a random telephone survey conducted as a part of the public input component of the access management planning process, *“the number of unique users of the area is estimated to be between 91,000 and 96,000 (this estimate does not account for repeat use by the same person).”* Repeat use is very common so the suggested number of users to the area on an annual basis is potentially much higher.

Population Growth

The latest Canada Census information shows over 10% population growth in the area between 1999 and 2003. The Town of Cochrane was identified as the fastest growing community in Canada during that particular census period. This recent growth would suggest that the level of use will continue to rise in the future (Figure 2).

Calgary and Area Population Growth



Source: Statistics Canada

Figure 2

This is supported by recently released information by the government of Alberta (2003-04 Annual Report) that shows in fiscal 2003-04;

- *The province led the country in overall population growth.*
- *Alberta continued to have the highest personal disposable income per capita of any province.*

Trends in Off-Highway Vehicle Sales

Motorized recreational use is also rising at a rapid rate not only in Alberta but across Canada. Retail sales of recreational off-highway vehicles have risen by an astonishing 350% since 1995 and continue to grow (Figure 3).

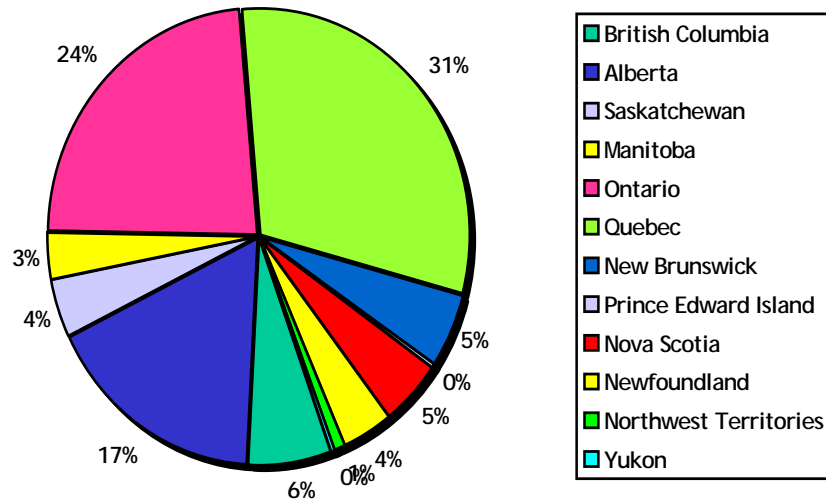


Source: Canadian All Terrain Vehicle Distributors Council

Figure 3

Buoyed by a robust economy and high levels of disposable income, Alberta is the third largest ATV sales sector in Canada (17% of total Canadian sales) with an estimated retail sales value of approximately \$112.8 million in 2003. Snowmobile sales, not included in these figures, generated an additional \$38.9 million in new unit sales in 2004 (Alberta Snowmobile Association).

Retail ATV Sales by Province



Source: Canadian All Terrain Vehicle Distributors Council

Figure 4

On a per-capita basis, Alberta currently has the highest number of OHV sales in the country and this particular sector of the recreation industry is becoming a major economic contributor to local and regional economies.

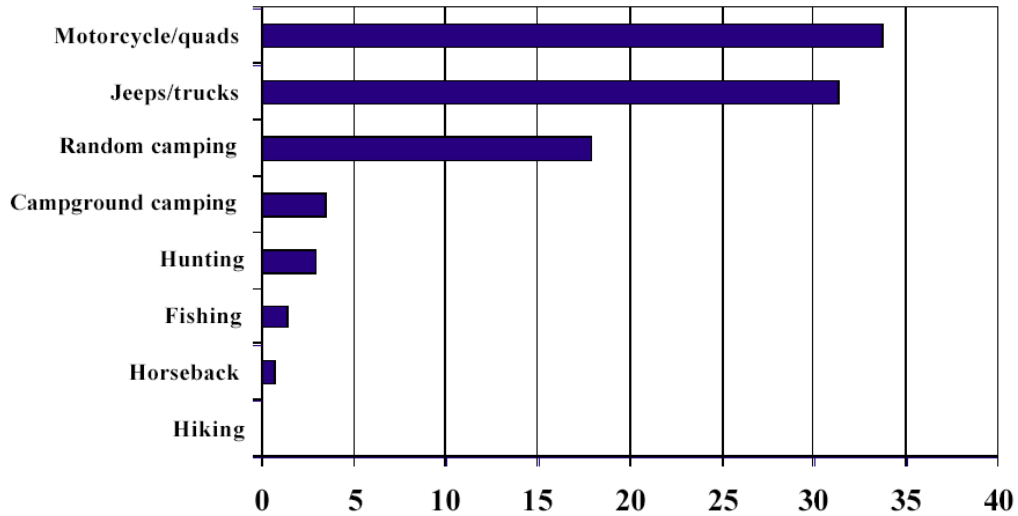
The growth of this particular recreational sector has created issues that were originally referred to in the Ghost River Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan over 15 years ago. The IRP stated that *“Off-highway vehicle use is a legitimate activity and highly valued by many users of the area. Recreational off-highway vehicle use has had some localized impacts in the Ghost River Planning Area. Indiscriminate use has the potential to cause additional impact on terrain, vegetation, wildlife, and water quality.”*

Public and Stakeholder Concerns

The results of the public input process for Ghost-Waiparous access management planning clearly demonstrate that most respondents feel that motorized off-highway vehicle use and random camping are the recreational activities having the largest impact in the Ghost area (Figure 5).

Ghost-Waiparous Access Management Plan
Random Sample Telephone Survey Results

Which recreational activities are causing a threat to the natural environment?

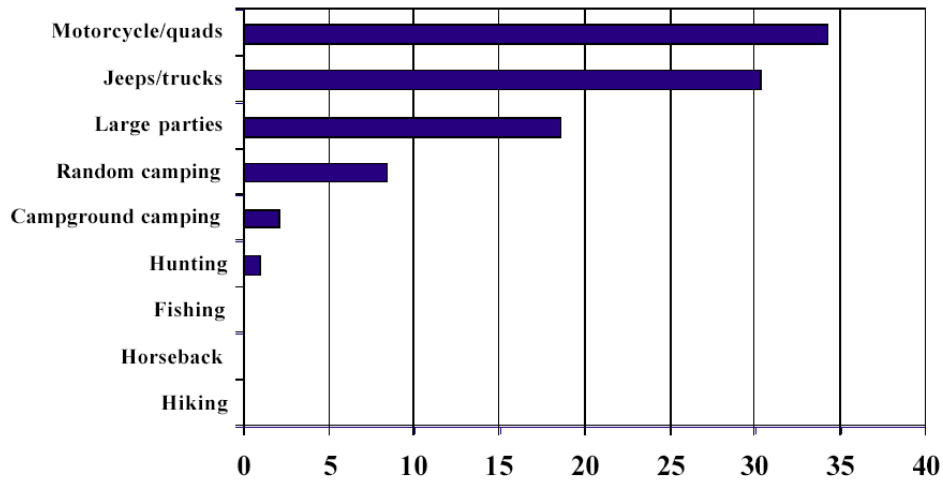


N = 203

Note: multiple responses were accepted

Ghost-Waiparous Access Management Plan
Random Sample Telephone Survey Results

Which recreational activities are causing the greatest impact on enjoyment of other recreational users?



N = 203

Note: multiple responses were accepted

Figure 5

Support from Local Users

Volunteer groups currently donate time and resources to support motorized recreational use in the Ghost-Waiparous area but the area's needs greatly exceed their abilities to maintain trails and related infrastructure. Membership in these groups also represents only a small portion of total usership (estimated at between 5% and 8% of total users based on numbers provided by local clubs). Those that are members of clubs indicated their desire to see plans put in place that would help to support the sustained use of the area

"The UR (United Recreationists) is concerned with developing appropriate management and enforcement plans to preserve the area and ensure accessibility for OHV users in the future. The need for these plans is critical".

MD of Bighorn Multi-Use Dialogue Report, 1999

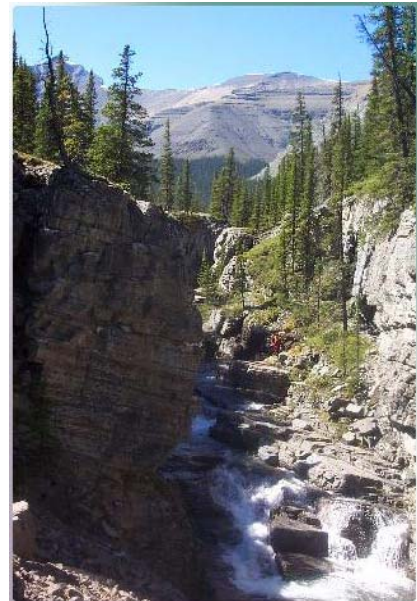
4.0 The long-term vision for the Ghost-Waiparous Area

The public information and consultation process for the Ghost-Waiparous access management planning exercise clearly showed that the core resource management intents of the existing Ghost River Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan are still valid.

"The overriding principle for all zones is to protect the valuable water resources of the eastern slopes and to provide for public land and resource utilization in a manner consistent with principles of conservation and environmental protection."

Ghost River Sub Regional Integrated Resource Plan, 1988

The "*Forest Reserve Multi-Use Dialogue Report*", prepared by the Municipal District of Bighorn in 1999, also showed that the many users of the Ghost-Waiparous area supported a range of uses but in a manner that was both responsible and sustainable.



The recreational pressures that have and are now being placed on this area and that will continue to grow must be dealt with in a proactive manner to ensure that the area's resources and recreational opportunities are sustainable for present and future Albertans. The Government of Alberta's Strategic Business Plan and 2004-07 Business Plan states that "*preservation means maintaining an environment that is unsurpassed in the world. In balance with sustainable economic growth, Albertans value the preservation of the province's clean, healthy natural environment, where the majestic beauty of Alberta is protected for future generations to enjoy. Through careful stewardship, the Alberta government will manage these resources in a sustainable manner....*"

It is important to note that Alberta is not the only jurisdiction facing this issue.

"In the United States the Chief of the Forest Service has identified unmanaged recreation, especially the undesirable impacts from OHVs, as one of the key threats facing the Nation's Forests and grasslands today. Concerns have been expressed over the number of unplanned roads and trails, erosion, lack of quality OHV recreation opportunities, water degradation and habitat destruction from OHV activity."

January, 2004, USDA Forest Service, National OHV Policy and Implementation Team

Many of the recommendations in this Operational Access Plan focus on short-to medium-term objectives that deal with educating users about responsible motorized recreational use and random camping and providing effective means to deal with those who choose not to accept their role in being part of the solution.

Alternative long-term options for management/governance/funding need to be examined to help support sustainable use of recreational trails throughout Alberta.

The vision for the future of recreational access in Alberta must be one *where all recreational users of Alberta's public land have a clear understanding of their role as responsible users and actively participate in educating others and maintaining the area to ensure that the land base can sustain a broad range of recreational activities for future generations of Albertans.*

The following recommendations, largely based on feedback from those who live and recreate in and around the Ghost-Waiparous area, strongly support this vision.



Alberta United Recreationists' Society Volunteers at the Annual Ghost-Waiparous Clean-Up Day

5.0 Recommendations to Support an Operational Access Plan

The recommendations generated by the Ghost-Waiparous advisory group were developed based on public and stakeholder input provided through a variety of means in 2003.

Recommendations have been broken down into four primary categories that cover education, enforcement, engineering, and monitoring. A summary table (Figure 6) has also been prepared that demonstrates how each recommendation helps to address the four key priority areas identified in the planning process Terms of Reference (Appendix).

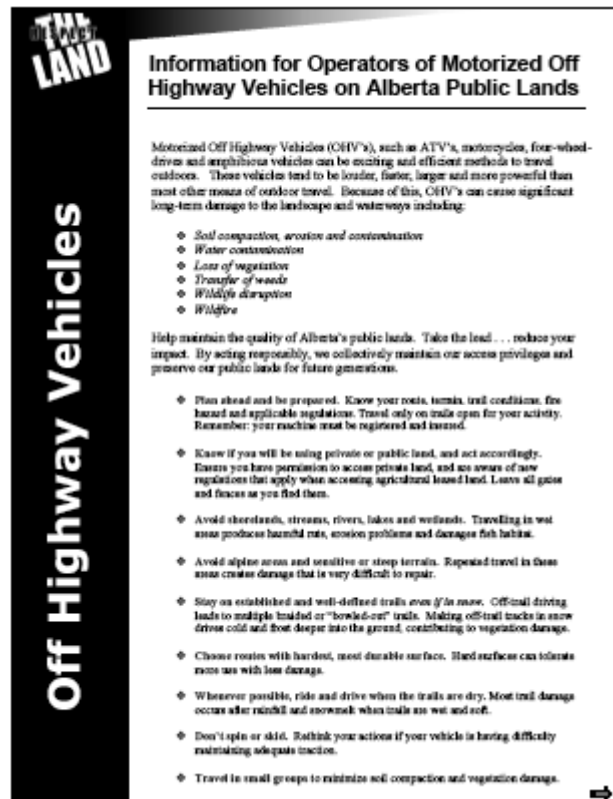
Education

An essential element of the Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan and its successful implementation will be to increase public awareness of the land and natural resource values in the Ghost River area and to reinforce the ethic of responsible use. The advisory group recommends the creation of educational tools including:

Brochures, posters and maps

Produce brochures, posters and maps that indicate motorized recreational use of roads and trails by specified vehicle type and season, including those trails that may have specific timing constraints (e.g., based on fisheries, wildlife, or ground conditions). Supporting information, linked to Sustainable Resource Development's "*Respect the Land*" program, should also be provided on ethics that address social interactions between motorized and non-motorized users; personal safety considerations; random camping guidelines; and natural resource management information.

Distribute this information widely to the public through regional and local offices of Sustainable Resource Development and through other provincial offices. Electronic versions of these publications and the latest maps should also be available on the Ghost-Waiparous access planning website (<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/regions/southwest/ghost>) for quick access and downloading.



Website

Maintain and enhance the current Ghost-Waiparous access planning website as an ongoing source of information on trail conditions and resource management issues relating to access in the Ghost area.

Information kiosks

Construct information kiosks at a variety of key points in the planning area (e.g., primary access points, staging areas, etc.) to provide up-to-date information on designated trails, trail conditions, rules and regulations, and resource management issues in the Ghost area and adjacent provincial protected areas and Banff National Park.

Signs

Construct signs identifying that the area is being managed subject to the access management plan and accompanying **Forest Land Use Zone** regulation at major entry points to the Ghost-Waiparous area.

Locate signs strategically throughout the planning area indicating whether a road or trail is available for **motorized recreational access** and identifying the type of motorized recreational use permitted on each road or trail.

Post signs that identify areas available for **motorized random camping** (on highway vehicle) at sites deemed appropriate for that purpose. These areas, like trails, may be subject to seasonal restrictions or closure depending upon impacts to the site and surrounding area due to over use or misuse. Areas that are not specifically signed would not be available for motorized random camping.

Partnership Opportunities

Establish education and awareness linkages between Sustainable Resource Development and a variety of local governments, agencies, and user groups to broaden the message of responsible use and how each group has a role to play in the successful implementation of the Ghost-Waiparous access management plan. Examples of some of these linkages and the groups that will be involved include, but are not limited to:

- *Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (forest and land management, forest protection, rangeland management, fish and wildlife management)*
- *Alberta Solicitor General (policing and enforcement issues)*
- *Alberta Environment (water quality and monitoring, litter and waste)*
- *Alberta Community Development (campground facilities, adjacent protected area issues - e.g., Don Getty Wildland Park and Ghost River Wilderness Area)*
- *Alberta Transportation (road and related access issues)*
- *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*
- *Parks Canada (adjacent protected area issues - e.g., Banff National Park)*
- *MD of Bighorn (possible bylaw enforcement and general awareness)*
- *Summer Village of Waiparous*
- *City of Calgary Water Works (water quality and monitoring, city resident awareness)*

- *Town of Cochrane (water quality and monitoring, resident awareness)*
- *Various motorized and non-motorized user groups*
- *Local disposition holders*

Continue liaison of field/district staff from Sustainable Resource Development and other related agencies (e.g., Community Development, Alberta Transportation, Parks Canada) with area users through personal contact to provide ongoing information on the access management plan and its intents as well as specific resource management priorities for the area.

Stewardship Monitoring Group

Establish a Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan Stewardship Monitoring Group within 3 months of the plan's formal acceptance. A terms of reference will be developed in consultation with the group. Final decisions will be rendered by Sustainable Resource Development after consideration of the group's advice and input. The group will consist of a broad cross-section of area stakeholders and will act as a conduit back to various sectors to both disseminate information as well as to bring comments back to the group for further consideration.

Respect the Land

- Continue participation in local trade shows with the Respect the Land display.
- Continue with long weekend Respect the Land media releases.

Enforcement

Appropriate regulatory mechanisms would help ensure the long-term success of the plan and the long-term sustainability of the area's resources and related recreational opportunities. The regulatory approach is recognized as secondary to the educational or co-operative approach toward the management of motorized recreational access. However, there is very strong support for enhanced levels of enforcement in the Ghost-Waiparous area. Recommended actions relating to enforcement include, but are not limited to:

Forest Land Use Zone

Create Forest Land Use Zone(s) under the *Forests Act*, with accompanying Forest Recreation Regulations, to effectively implement a Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan. Sustainable Resource Development (Public Lands and Forests Division), through the Forest Land Use Zone and accompanying regulation, will direct motorized recreational access on specified roads and trails in the planning area. The development of such a regulation is considered as an essential element to the success of the access management planning process.

Penalties

Establish and enforce penalties for non-compliance with the Forest Recreation Regulation developed to support the access management plan.

Staff Allocation

Allocate area staff to provide for year-round education and enforcement in the Ghost-Waiparous access management planning area. This would need to include both seasonal enforcement for the peak summer/fall periods and the use of permanent staff to deal with growing year-round recreational use of the area.

Partnerships

Sustainable Resource Development to continue to work with other enforcement agencies (e.g., RCMP) on collaborative enforcement programs and strategies for the Ghost-Waiparous area to address non-resource management enforcement issues with emphasis on long weekends.

Temporary or Permanent Closures

A Forest Officer, under the direction of the Area Manager, may temporarily close a road or trail in the event of an emergency (e.g., wildland fire¹, flooding, wildlife or other environmental concern, etc.). A Forest Officer, under the direction of the Area Manager, may also exercise this right in cases where any road or trail is found to be unsafe or impassable, or in the event that a road or trail would be unreasonably damaged as the result of excessively wet, soft, or unstable ground conditions.

The Area Manager should have the authority to open, temporarily or permanently close, or reinstate existing roads and trails for motorized recreational use. It is recommended that longer-term or permanent closures and additions to the approved trail network will be reviewed with the Ghost-Waiparous Stewardship Monitoring Group prior to implementation.

Identified Trails and Designated Areas

Allow motorized recreational access only on roads and trails that have been identified and specifically mapped and signed for that purpose.

(NOTE: As it is not possible to identify and map all trails in the planning area, those that have not been identified, mapped or signed will be classified and considered as unavailable for motorized recreational use. Use of these trails by motorized vehicles will be considered an infraction under proposed regulation).

Motorized random camping only allowed in areas signed for such use.

Provide signage for designated OHV trails that become unavailable for motorized recreational access or random camping as a result of approved industrial activities. Provide signage for alternate trails or random camping locations that may be identified and provided by the company engaged in the industrial activity for the duration of their operation. It is recommended that the company advise Public Lands and Forests Division of potential impacts on designated trails during the planning and

¹ The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development has the ability to impose fire bans or complete forest closures due to extreme fire hazard or active fire suppression activities that may require such action.

approval process along with proposed remediation plans once industrial operations have been completed.

New access may be developed in the planning area by Industrial/Commercial users through existing review and approval processes. These roads and trails should be evaluated and may be added to the designated trail system by Sustainable Resource Development on a temporary or permanent basis after consideration of input from the Ghost-Waiparous Stewardship Monitoring Group. Closures may be used as a tool to deal with public safety issues such as log hauls or rig moves.

As per the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Regulation, OHVs must have a working headlight, taillight, and spark arrestor, all in working order.

Engineering

This component focuses on mitigative, on-site actions that must be undertaken to fully implement the Operational Access Plan once it is approved. Site-specific improvements will be aimed toward minimizing the impacts of motorized recreational access on roads and trails. These actions will also help to ensure the sustainability of that recreational use in the planning area. Implementation of the proposed measures will happen as partnerships are developed. The advisory group supports a number of recommendations related to engineering including:



Volunteers building a bridge in the Ghost-Waiparous area, 2003
(Alberta United Recreationist Society photo)

Develop trail standards to provide a basis for future maintenance and monitoring programs. Similar standards should also be established for sites identified as available for motorized random camping. This area of work has broader provincial implications and must be considered as part of a broader motorized access strategy for public land.

Maintenance

Roads and trails where motorized recreational access is permitted should undergo repairs such that sustained use of those roads or trails may occur (e.g., stream crossings, drainage features or surface maintenance).

Undertake repairs or improvements in a manner that will respect the natural setting and character of the area while recognizing personal safety concerns for those who recreate within the area.

That recreational/public interest organizations assist, on a voluntary basis, with road and trail repairs as required to maintain and protect the environment.

Develop a rolling 3-year maintenance plan for site specific repairs in the planning area that focuses on resource management and public safety priorities. Sustainable Resource Development should work with the Ghost-Waiparous Stewardship Monitoring Group to define the format of such a plan and the various requirements needed to carry out required work (e.g., approvals from other agencies, trail and maintenance standards, granting and fundraising, etc.)

Partnerships

Develop a specific "Adopt-a-Trail" program for the Ghost-Waiparous area that will provide for identified, approved trails to be "adopted" by motorized or non-motorized user groups. Examples of such a program can be found at http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/regions/southwest/bighorn/pdf/adopt_a_trail.pdf

New Trails

Require user-groups who may wish to propose additions to the approved OHV trail network to submit detailed proposals, including plans for ongoing maintenance and repairs, to Sustainable Resource Development and the Ghost-Waiparous Stewardship Monitoring Group. The specific requirements for such proposals will be defined by this group as a part of its mandate. Trails that may be approved under this process will immediately fall into the "Adopt-a-Trail" category under the sponsorship of the proponent.

Reclamation

Trails or areas classified as being unavailable for motorized recreational access may be reclaimed in recognition of watershed, fisheries and wildlife management objectives specified in the Ghost River subregional integrated resource plan (e.g., erosion, stream sedimentation, wildlife habitat, and/or wildlife security concerns).

Reclaim the area known as the Johnson Creek Bog as one of the first maintenance priorities of the Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan. The reclaimed area will be signed and closed from further motorized use. The ad-hoc development of similar sites will be prohibited.

Monitoring

This element of the Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan recognizes that monitoring will be required to gauge the effectiveness of these recommendations and to support future changes to keep the plan current and in step with the changing needs of the planning area. A well-planned monitoring program will also ensure that the plan continues to address the needs for which it was established. The advisory group recommends the following actions to



Trail monitoring, Bighorn

monitor the plan:

Ongoing Monitoring

Conduct a review of the Ghost-Waiparous Operational Access Plan 3 years after initial implementation and then at intervals as scheduled by Sustainable Resource Development and the Stewardship Monitoring Group. Road and trail classifications may be reviewed and altered in response to changing needs and circumstances within the context of the Ghost River Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan.

Gathering Information

Monitor recreational use levels, resource impacts, enforcement actions, changes in user behavior and attitudes to determine the effectiveness of the access management plan.

The Stewardship Monitoring Group and Sustainable Resource Development should evaluate the need for possible research or baseline data collection to support elements of the access management plan.

Figure 6 - Tabular Summary of Ghost-Waiparous Recommendations and links to Planning Terms of Reference Document

	EDUCATION TOOLS							
	<i>Brochures</i>	<i>Maps</i>	<i>Website</i>	<i>Information Kiosks</i>	<i>Trail Signs</i>	<i>FLUZ Boundary Signs</i>	<i>GAMP Stewardship Monitoring Group</i>	<i>Forest Resource Guardians</i>
Ensure Public Safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure Sustainability of The Resource	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minimize Conflicts Between Users	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Range of Recreational OHV Opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	ENGINEERING TOOLS							
	<i>Road and trail maintenance</i>	<i>Trail Reclamation</i>	<i>Area Closures</i>	<i>"Adopt-a-Trail" Program</i>	<i>Required Spark Arrestor, Muffler, Lighting</i>			
Ensure Public Safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ensure Sustainability of The Resource	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Minimize Conflicts Between				✓	✓			

Users								
Range of Recreational OHV Opportunities	✓			✓				
	ENFORCEMENT TOOLS							
	<i>Forest Land Use Zone Regulation</i>	<i>Designated Trails</i>	<i>Penalties</i>	<i>Forest Officers</i>	<i>Forest Resource Guardians</i>	<i>Authority to Area Manager</i>	<i>Temporary Field Authorizations</i>	
Ensure Public Safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ensure Sustainability of The Resource	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Minimize Conflicts Between Users	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Range of Recreational OHV Opportunities	✓	✓				✓	✓	
	MONITORING TOOLS							
	<i>GAMP Stewardship Monitoring Group</i>	<i>Trail Impact Assessment Plots</i>	<i>Water Quality Monitoring</i>	<i>Forest Officers and Forest Resource Guardians</i>				
Ensure Public Safety	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Ensure Sustainability of The Resource	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Minimize	✓			✓				

Conflicts Between Users								
Range of Recreational OHV Opportunities	✓							

Future Initiatives

There are a number of areas that were identified during the consultation process for the Ghost-Waiparous Access Planning exercise that are provincial in scope. These areas will be included in an upcoming provincial-scale review of access on public land.

- Penalties need to be more closely aligned with those given to industrial users for similar infractions causing environmental damage and must be of sufficient magnitude to act as effective deterrents. The regulation would need to be developed and enacted in conjunction with the field implementation of the access management plan.
- The advent of larger, more powerful off-highway vehicles, particularly modified trucks and specialized units, requires further review and definition in current regulation and in terms of access to public land.
- It is recommended that work be done to augment current OHV regulation to conform to current U.S. Forest Service approved spark arrestor and adequate muffler regulations (+96 DB or less) in an effort to address noise-related issues.
- Sustainable Resource Development has no process to authorize or refuse raves or other large parties that by their very nature have a high potential for illegal activities to occur such as underage drinking and drug use as well as the inherent inability to provide for the minimum infrastructure and safety requirements in a backcountry setting (e.g., all weather access, waste management, First Aid, fire protection). The department should investigate the issue of raves and large parties and develop provincial direction on its acceptability as a use of public land.
- The Ghost-Waiparous access management planning process highlights a need to explore alternative funding mechanisms, such as user fees or donations, for ongoing maintenance and repair of roads and trails identified for motorized recreational access. Sustainable Resource Development should investigate potential funding mechanisms and local user group involvement, evaluate their feasibility, and provide provincial direction to guide implementation.

Appendices

Public Information and Consultation Process

The Ghost-Waiparous Access Management Plan Terms of Reference document, developed at the outset of the planning process, clearly defined the four primary planning priorities:

1. ensure public safety;
2. ensure sustainability of natural resources;
3. to minimize conflicts between recreation OHV users and other users, and
4. provide a range of opportunities for summer and winter recreational OHV use.

To ensure that the views of Albertans were considered during preparation of this access document, an extensive public information and consultation process was undertaken. The components of the process included:

Ghost-Waiparous website
Toll-free information line
Regional newspaper advertisements
Information sessions
Information displays
Public survey
Moderated and recorded discussion groups
Random sample telephone survey
Written submissions
Analysis of the results

The information provided through the public consultation was given to an Interdepartmental Working Group (Working Group) for incorporation into a "draft directions document." This document was released for a second round of public input, and was used to confirm that all pertinent points had been addressed.

Following the completion of the public input process, the results of each consultation activity were compiled. The Working Group used this information, along with available resource management information, to guide the development of the Access Document.

Full summaries from all public consultation activities can be viewed on the Ghost-Waiparous Access Management Plan website at:

http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/regions/southwest/ghost/doc_library.html

Sustainable Resource Development

[Contact Us](#)
[Search](#)



Location: [Alberta Government](#) > [Sust. Res. Dev.](#) > [Public Land](#) > [Using Public Land](#) > [Recreation](#) > [Heading Out](#)

Public Land [Contact Information](#) • [Forms / Publications](#) • [FAQs](#) • [Search Public Land](#)

[Using Public Land](#)

Last review/updated: May 11, 2004

Site Map [ks](#) [ic](#)

Heading Out: Responsible Recreation on Public Land

Recreational users of public land cherish the privilege of enjoying hobbies, sports, pastimes and leisure activities on land that belongs to us all.

To protect our access to these areas, preserve the integrity of the landscape, minimize conflicts between users and to ensure future generations enjoy the same opportunities, we share the responsibility of minimizing disturbances to the landscape, vegetation, wildlife, waterways and other users of the land.

The pages below contain important tips and information on minimum-impact practices, legislation and regulation, and local area information.



Be Responsible. Do Your Part. Do Your Best. Encourage others to do the same.

Respect the Land



Essential Information for:	Important Local Information for:	Special Information for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized Users (4x4's, ATV's, Motorcycles etc.) • Non-motorized Users (Hiking, cycling, climbing etc.) • Campers (RV and tenting outside of campgrounds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bighorn Backcountry (Nordegg and area) • Castle Special Management Area (Crowsnest pass area) • Ghost - Waiparous Access Management Plan (NW of Calgary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing Agricultural Public Land (Important: Special regulation now applies when recreating on public land used for agricultural purposes.)

Tread Lightly (<http://www.treadlightly.org>)

The Tread Lightly Pledge

T Travel and recreate with minimum impact

R Respect the environment and the rights of others

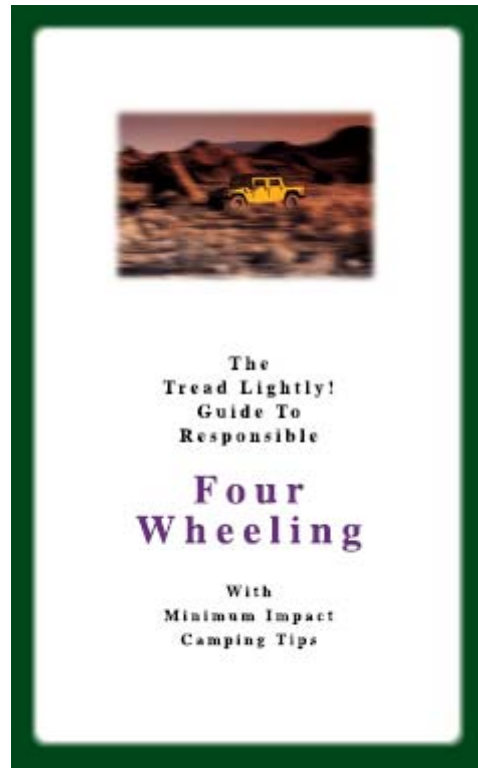
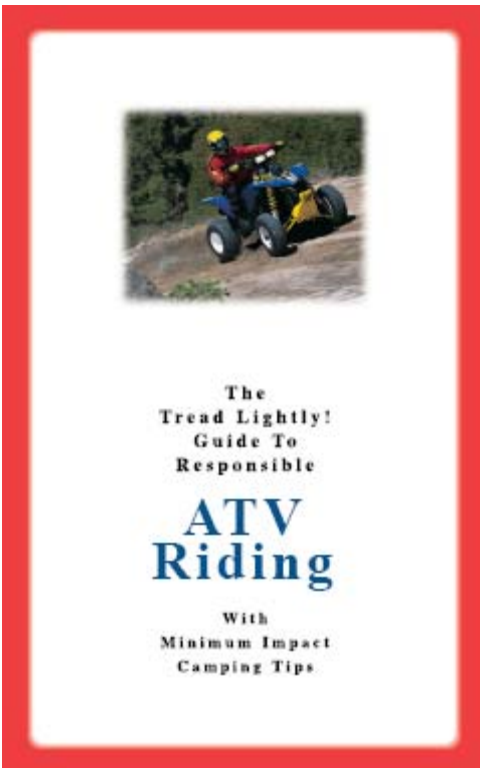
E Educate yourself--plan and prepare before you go

A Allow for future use of the outdoors--leave it better than you found it

D Discover the rewards of responsible recreation

To leave a good impression, you need the right information. Through education and restoration, Tread Lightly! empowers generations to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. If we increase public awareness and encourage responsible outdoor practices, the great outdoors will be accessible, open and well preserved for years to come.

The Tread Lightly! Guidebook Series



Leave No Trace (<http://www.lnt.org>)

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. Leave No Trace builds awareness, appreciation and respect for our wildlands.

Principles of Leave No Trace

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Dispose of Waste Properly

Leave What You Find

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Respect Wildlife

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Glossary

All-Terrain Vehicle

Forest Land Use Zone (FLUZ) Established under Section 46 of the *Forest Act* of Alberta. An area of land to which legislative controls are applied to solve specific land use problems.

A forest land use zone can be used to:

Protect areas containing sensitive resources such as fish and wildlife and their habitats, vegetation, soils and watershed;

Protect users from natural hazards;

Separate or control conflicting recreational activities.

Various levels of control can be achieved through the FLUZ designation, from exclusion to restriction to authorization of motorized and non-motorized access in specific areas.

Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)

Cabinet-approved policy documents that provide broad direction on land and resource management and use. They establish guidelines for allowable activities in certain areas and outline surface access restrictions.

Motorized Recreation

Collectively, motorized users are recreationalists who use Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

Non-Motorized Recreation

Collectively, non-motorized users are recreationalists who travel by methods propelled by muscular power including: hike, ski or snowboard, ride mountain bikes, ride horses, canoe and kayak, climb

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV)

Definition as per the *Traffic Safety Act*. Types of off-highway vehicles need to be defined provincially not in individual access management plans. Access management plans should focus on impacts and appropriate "use"

Random Camping

Temporary use (14 days) with (a) portable "camping accommodation unit(s)" on public land by the general public; i.e., non-commercial use, for which no formal written authorization is issued under the *Public Lands Act* or policies pursuant to the Act. This definition excludes designated campgrounds and Forest Recreation Areas.

Road

Trail

Water Quality