

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
PREPARED FOR:
THE M-KMA ADVISORY BOARD

Introduction:

This communications plan is intended to support and sustain the Muskwa-Kechika (M-KMA) Advisory Board's goal of raising awareness and support for the M-KMA, both at a regional and provincial level. Specifically, the plan details a strategy, and provides tactics and messaging designed to meet communications objectives. At the same time, it provides recommendations regarding communications and stakeholder relations processes that the M-KMA Advisory Board may wish to adopt. In addition, the plan recommends and provides a timeline for moving forward with the communications plan.

Issue:

- To develop and implement a communications plan that supports the mandate of the M-KMA Advisory Board.

Communications Objectives:

- To increase the level of awareness and knowledge about the M-KMA in those geographic regions in closest proximity to the M-KMA.
- To raise overall levels of provincial awareness about the M-KMA.
- To profile specific initiatives and good news stories about the M-KMA.
- To create support for the work of the M-KMA Advisory Board.
- To raise awareness and support for the M-KMA as a model for land use planning, that potentially can be applied elsewhere in British Columbia.
- To showcase lessons learned from the M-KMA.
- To ensure that the mandate of the M-KMA is consistent with and supported by the provincial government's priorities and initiatives.

Audiences:

- Residents of northeastern British Columbia
 - Mackenzie LRMP
 - Fort Nelson LRMP
 - Fort St. John LRMP
- Residents of British Columbia
- Government of British Columbia
 - Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands
 - Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
 - Barry Penner, Minister of Environment
 - Rich Coleman, Minister of Forests and Range
 - Olga Ilich, Minister of Tourism, Sports and the Arts
 - Blair Lekstrom, MLA, Peace River South
- Local municipal and regional governments bordering the M-KMA
- Government of Canada
 - Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Senior Minister for British Columbia
 - Rona Ambrose, Minister of Environment
 - Michael Fortier, Minister of Public Works and Government Services
 - Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean
 - Jay Hill, MP, Prince George-Peace River
- Industry
 - Oil and Gas
 - Mining
 - Forestry
 - Tourism
 - Guide Outfitters
 - Eco-Tourism
- First Nations
 - Kaska Dena
 - Treaty Eight
- Environmental groups
- News and Trade Media
 - Regional media
 - First Nations media
 - Provincial and national opinion making media
 - Editorial writers
 - Business media
 - Environmental media
 - Tourism media

Situational analysis/Public environment:

- It is clear from public opinion polling and media coverage that the M-KMA Advisory Board has had some success in raising awareness about the M-KMA. Of note is the fact that 68 per cent of local residents were aware of the M-KMA, while 62 per cent express familiarity. Moreover, 75 per cent of local residents had a favourable impression of the M-KMA. This is reflected in the local media coverage, which shows that the advisory committee and administrative staff has been active in terms of public outreach activities, relating to education and awareness building in communities and stakeholders residing near the M-KMA.
- While impressions are favourable, it is clear from polling and media coverage that on a regional basis there is not a specific or detailed knowledge about the M-KMA; only a general awareness. Audiences are aware that it exists but not much is known beyond that.
- When there is a level of knowledge beyond general awareness, one of the more dominant views is that the M-KMA is a wilderness preserve. There does not seem to be an awareness of the fact that 75 per cent of the M-KMA is available for resource development: albeit with higher environmental standards. That said, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of regional residents have a positive view about 75 per cent of the M-KMA being open for resource development, with 25 per cent set aside for parks and protected areas.
- On a province-wide basis, awareness levels are much more limited, with only 13 per cent of British Columbians having heard of the M-KMA. This is not surprising as there has not been a concerted effort to raise awareness levels. This along with the M-KMA geographic distance from major media markets and population centres combined with the media's need to focus on specific issues can account for these low levels of awareness. On the positive side, 80 per cent of British Columbians support establishing areas such as the M-KMA.
- Provincial support for the M-KMA as an area established for both wildlife and resource development is fairly strong at 50 per cent, which is less than overall regional support.
- Another issue having an impact on the M-KMA Advisory Board is the lack of a public spokesperson. Although administrative staff interact with local stakeholders, in order to be effective over the long term, any public entity such as the M-KMA will require a point of contact to serve as a spokesperson. It will also require a key point of contact for media and for stakeholders to identify with it. The Advisory Board represents a spectrum of views and backgrounds from all corners of the province. These are assets which can and must be utilized to highlight the success of the Board and the M-KMA.

- Other issues that could impact on the M-KMA relate to the government's stated desire to learn from and perhaps apply the M-KMA experience to land use planning elsewhere in the province. Similarly, the matter of governance may not have any short-term impact on communications activities, but over the longer term, the potential effects will need to be gauged.
- Given the strong level of regional awareness, combined with strong support for the existence of the M-KMA, the M-KMA Advisory Board is well positioned as it prepares to move forward on communications activities.

Messaging:

Wilderness, wildlife, culture, resource development

- The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area, located in northeastern British Columbia, is a vast area of land, of 6.4-million hectares. It is rich in wildlife, minerals, gas, forests and recreational resources. Specifically, the management intent for the M-KMA is to maintain the wilderness quality and the diversity and abundance of wildlife and the ecosystem while allowing for economic activity.
- The unique wilderness and natural resources of the M-KMA transcends its borders and is integral to the lives of the communities, residents and First Nations who live in and around the area.
- The M-KMA provides a leading-edge approach to managing the environment while allowing economic development to occur in a sustainable manner that maintains the overall integrity of the area.
 - The M-KMA is rich in natural resources, where wilderness, wildlife and cultural values are recognized, respected and sustained, while allowing for resource development in designated areas.
 - There is ongoing research and a variety of initiatives underway to ensure that these values are being respected and adhered to.
- The M-KMA has been legally established to conserve wilderness, wildlife and cultural values over time:
 - 75 per cent of the area is open for industrial resource extraction.
 - 25 per cent of the area has been designated as part of the provincial parks system.
 - The Advisory Board is working to increase awareness of natural resource opportunities so they can be fully realized for the benefit of the province as a whole.
 - The Advisory Board is also working to increase awareness that resource development in the M-KMA is subject to a highest form of environmental standards that conserve wilderness and wildlife over time.

- The experiences in the M-KMA provide lessons that are of benefit to all British Columbians. First, it is a model in land-use planning, which clearly shows the benefits of consensus-based decision making. Second, it demonstrates that resource development, wilderness, wildlife, and cultural values can co-exist. These experiences are invaluable as we move forward and could be applied elsewhere.

Strategic positioning:

- Position the M-KMA as a successful product, involving the development and management of land use planning. The M-KMA is a model for land-use planning, which has accomplished much through consensus-based decision making and provides valuable lessons that potentially could be applied elsewhere in British Columbia, Canada and internationally.

Strategy:

Over the next fiscal year, the M-KMA Advisory Board needs to adopt a two-pronged strategy, focused both on regional and provincial audiences. On a regional level, the strategy will involve raising existing awareness levels beyond the basic level of knowledge that currently exists. Provincially, the objective is to raise general awareness, which is currently quite low. Although the strategy is two-pronged, there is a strong degree of interdependence. For example, by successfully raising awareness at the local level, this will serve as a catalyst to raise broader provincial awareness. Similarly, raising awareness at a provincial level will transcend onto a regional level.

Overall, the strategy is intended to raise regional and provincial awareness while garnering support for the M-KMA as a model for land-use planning. The planning model will demonstrate the importance of providing for certainty of resource development while at the same time maintaining large areas of wilderness.

In subsequent years, building upon the work undertaken at the regional and provincial levels, similar efforts will be targeted at national and international audiences.

In order to achieve the above, the M-KMA will need to adopt a proactive, multi-pronged communication strategy focused on media relations, community relations and stakeholder liaison. On the media relations side, the M-KMA Advisory Board, supported by administrative staff, will need to engage with regional and provincial media on a more regular and proactive basis. On the community relations and stakeholder engagement sides, the M-KMA Advisory Board should undertake initiatives to increase its awareness among stakeholders through formal and informal meetings, stakeholder liaison, outreach initiatives and relationship building with local communities and regions.

Tactics:**➤ Research**

The M-KMA Advisory Board has commissioned polling that provides an excellent base line of current awareness levels about the M-KMA. This polling is valuable as it also provides a context and a rationale for moving forward with communications efforts. At some future point, additional polling should be done as it will provide evidence of the success of the communications plan.

➤ Issues management

While the M-KMA Advisory Board has a positive story to tell, given the very nature of the M-KMA where environmental and economic interests co-exist, there is a possibility that issues may arise which will need to be managed. Therefore, the Advisory Board, via administrative personnel, should establish an effective issues management process that focuses on issues identification, evaluation and response. As part of this, administrative staff of the M-KMA will need to ensure issues are managed and brought to the attention of the M-KMA Board as required. Similarly, the Board will need to advise administrative staff of pending issues. In order for the process to function efficiently and effectively, there will need to be a process structure so that an information exchange can and does take place. This should involve media monitoring and analysis capabilities, establishment of linkages with internal and external stakeholders and a quick and timely approval and response process.

➤ Events and announcements

In order to continue to raise awareness about the M-KMA, especially at the regional level, efforts should be placed on identifying events and/or announcements where its involvement and presence would be of benefit in advancing its mandate. This could include relevant trade shows, community and local business events, such as Chamber of Commerce activities and industry association events.

Participating in these types of activities raises profile along with awareness and can garner media coverage. Opportunities to create current events and activities should be explored, in order to increase awareness.

The main focus should be on local and regional events. However, there may be major provincial events that the M-KMA wishes to participate in. This will be dependent on budget and availability of staff and resources. In order to minimize costs, the M-KMA may partner with other local bodies who are participating in similar events such as the UBCM convention.

➤ **Dedicated spokesperson and stakeholder relations**

The M-KMA Board will need to designate a spokesperson that can respond to the media and be seen as the public face of the Board. At the same time, administrative personnel should be encouraged to develop and maintain relationships with media and to provide background information and basic facts on a routine basis. Administrative personnel have done solid work in dealing with stakeholders and building up local awareness about the M-KMA. They should continue with this work, but should if required, be also provided with appropriate training. They are the front line staff who on a day-to-day basis have the most interaction with the general public and need to be adequately resourced and trained to continue to fulfill their responsibilities.

➤ **Stakeholder outreach**

Establishing and maintaining ongoing contact with key stakeholders is essential, especially at a regional level, in raising substantive awareness about the M-KMA. This stakeholder outreach provides an opportunity to educate stakeholders about the M-KMA. It also provides an opportunity to identify and develop support among third party validators. The stakeholder outreach should be both formal and informal and include some of the activities listed in the community relations section below. Consideration should be taken when dealing with First Nations in order to ensure cultural and traditional practices are recognized and respected.

The stakeholder focus should largely be regionally based, with such groups as local councils, regional districts, environmental groups, educators and business organizations. However, there could also be outreach to larger provincially-based organizations, such as the BC Chamber of Commerce, BC Business Council, and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

➤ **Community relations**

As part of the community relations efforts, the M-KMA Board and administrative personnel should continue to build relationships within those communities in closest proximity to and most affected by the M-KMA. The community relations initiatives could include such activities as open houses, community forums, workshops, speaking engagements, and presentations to various community groups, including business people, students and First Nations. Some of this work is already being done, but needs to be more regularized and focused. This community relations work will need to be linked to the broader stakeholder outreach program.

➤ **First Nations Outreach**

Given the importance of First Nations as a partner in the M-KMA, it is imperative that there be a specific outreach program geared to First Nations in and around the M-KMA. This would involve various activities, ranging from forums, open houses, informal meetings as well as outreach that incorporates and respects First Nations cultural practices. These activities would be targeted specifically at First Nations and would reflect the vital role that First Nations have historically played and will continue to play in the management of the Muskwa-Kechika.

➤ **Direct Mail**

Polling, especially at the regional level, indicates a strong desire for increased information about the M-KMA. The polling also indicates that one of the most preferred methods to receiving this information would be through some type of direct mail, be it a regular news letter and or insert in local newspaper. This option should be utilized, but its effectiveness will need to be assessed given the costs and times required to prepare such materials. Given cost factors and the desired objective of raising awareness locally, direct mail should be targeted strictly at a regional level.

➤ **On-line engagement**

The M-KMA's current website is an effective tool that provides relevant current information. It may need to be updated to ensure that its content is reflective of the more proactive communications activities that the M-KMA will be undertaking. As part of this update, an email sign-up function should be considered (for email distribution of news releases or announcements). As well, a new section of the site should be developed for news media ("Media Centre"). In terms of marketing the site, it is important that the web programmers for the site ensure that the site is set up to be effective on search engines. Wherever possible, links to M-KMA's website should be included on other sites.

➤ **Ministerial communications**

As responsibility for the M-KMA is under Pat Bell, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, his office should be kept abreast of the communications activities of the M-KMA. Moreover, given the Minister's profile and the riding he represents — Prince George North — his status as a minister can be strategically utilized to support overall communications activities.

Furthermore, other ministers who have an interest in activities in the M-KMA, such as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Minister of Environment, Minister of Forests and Range and Minister of Tourism are important stakeholder who should be kept abreast of the current issues and events taking place in the M-KMA.

➤ **MLA communications**

MLAs, especially those in closest proximity to the M-KMA should also be utilized in helping to raise awareness about the M-KMA. They can be provided with briefings and kept abreast of the key events and activities taking place with the M-KMA. They could also be provided with supporting collateral materials to encourage and assist them in their own stakeholder and community relations activities.

➤ **Earned media relations**

Earned media is an effective tool that can be used to raise awareness about the M-KMA. The focus on earned media should be based on both proactive and reactive media relations activities.

Proactively, the M-KMA Advisory Board should work to establish and cultivate ongoing relationships with key media outlets and reporters who have an interest in the M-KMA. These relationships should be established through administrative staff and dedicated M-KMA Board spokespeople. The media relations activities should occur at both regional and provincial levels. Regional media activities should be targeted focusing on specific initiatives that the Board may wish to publicize. On the provincial side, media activities should be geared at awareness building, with a focus on what the M-KMA is and its uniqueness and the lessons it provides. Media relations activities at both levels can be augmented through the use of press release, op/eds and letters to the editor.

M-KMA administrative should ensure key media are contacted for all major announcements and initiatives that the M-KMA may be involved with. On the reactive side, it is important that designated spokespeople for the M-KMA return all media calls on a prompt basis. A process should be established to create a "chain of command" to ensure media calls are dealt with in a timely manner.

➤ **Advertising**

Paid formal advertising can be used, budget permitting, to support communications initiatives. For example, information-based advertising such as advising of upcoming events and activities in a community, open houses invitations and notices of stakeholder meetings can be considered.

Supporting communications products:

- Brochure/media kit
- News releases
- Backgrounders
- Facts sheets
- Message sheets
- Minister's speeches
- Speaking notes
- Board members' biographies
- Key contact/stakeholder lists
- Key media lists
- MLA communication kit
- PowerPoint and other presentations
- FAQs
- Letters to editor
- Op/eds
- Video
- CD Roms
- Mall displays
- Pop up displays for trade shows/events/open houses

The supporting public collateral materials should be consistent in look and feel.

Horizontal Coordination and Communications with provincial government:

In addition to external activities, efforts will also need to be placed on establishing linkages and raising awareness within the provincial government. This could include regular briefings of ministers, MLAs, ministry executives of affected and/or interested ministries, Crown corporations or agencies.

Communications Calendar:

M-KMA administrative personnel should maintain an ongoing current calendar containing information on events, activities and milestones.

Timing:

Upon approval of the plan, work should commence beginning on April 1 on implementing various elements of this plan.

Action list:

Below is an action list broken down by activity, timing, responsibility and budget. It should be noted that production costs are categorized under expenses and at this time, are only an estimate.

Further, the items noted with an asterisk (*) have been bundled into a one-day planning session with the Board and M-KMA staff. The planning day results would be summarized into ready to use products (i.e. issue management protocol) by NATIONAL.

The budget for the 2006-2007 is \$ 47,000 – \$ 59,700. Of this, approximately \$24,000 will be spent on monthly fees which are expected to be between \$1,800 and \$2,000/month for ongoing communications support. It should be noted that any production costs (i.e. printing of brochures and collateral materials) are separate.

ITEM	TIMING	RESPONSIBILITY	FEES	EXPENSES
Research	2005	Ipsos Reid	n/a	
Develop and implement an issues management process	Immediate	NATIONAL with M-KMA	6,000 – 8,000*	1,500 travel for planning day
Spokesperson media training	Immediate	NATIONAL	2,500/half day session	1,500 travel for media training session
Identification of possible speaking opportunities for members of the Board and staff, pursue speaking opportunities	Ongoing	M-KMA and NATIONAL	500	
Develop a stakeholder relations program	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Events and announcements list development including participation in trade shows	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Develop a community relations program including informal meetings with community stakeholders, especially in the communities of, including Mayors, Councilors, Chambers of Commerce and community groups	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Develop an educational piece for use in schools and outreach initiative	60 – 90 days	NATIONAL with M-KMA	6,000 – 8,000*	Printing costs TBD

Develop direct mail piece	60 – 90 days		1,500 – 2,000	3,500 for mail drop + production
Formalize relationship with Minister's office	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Develop MLA communications program	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Review and update website			500 – 600	
Develop media relations program including op/ed opportunities, both regionally and provincial	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Assess advertising needs	Ongoing	M-KMA and NATIONAL		2,500 per ad buy
Finalize messaging	Immediate	NATIONAL with feedback from M-KMA	1,200 – 1,500	
Develop an M-KMA "tag line"	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	6,000 – 8,000*	
Establish a communications calendar	After all above	M-KMA with support from NATIONAL	400 – 800	
Develop stakeholder lists	Immediate	M-KMA with support from NATIONAL	400 – 800	
Develop internal Qs and As	Immediate	M-KMA and NATIONAL	2,400 – 4,000	

<p>Review and update collateral materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochure/media kit • News releases • Backgrounders • Facts sheets • Message sheets • Minister's speeches • Speaking notes • Board members' biographies • Key contact /stakeholder lists • Key media lists • MLA communication kit • PowerPoint and other presentations • FAQs • Letters to editor • Op/eds • Video • CD Roms • Mall displays • Pop up displays for trade shows, events, open houses 	30-60 days		10,000 – 15,000	15,000+
Ongoing communications support	Ongoing	NATIONAL	21,600–24,000 (1,800–2,000 per month)	1,500 travel to meetings

Monitoring and Evaluation:

M-KMA administrative staff should implement both a media and stakeholder monitoring process. This could include regular media monitoring supported by monitoring of specialty and trade publications. As well, stakeholder websites should be monitored on an ongoing basis.

In addition, there should be ongoing evaluation of the public environment through analysis and tracking of:

- Media coverage;
- Public opinion surveys;
- Stakeholder feedback;
- Correspondence; and
- Website hits and feedback.

APPENDIX I**Muskwa - Kechika Media List**

BC MAJOR MEDIA			
First Name	Last Name	Position	Company
Print			
Dean	Broughton	Editor	24 Hours
Tracy	Tjaden	Assistant Editor	BC Business Magazine
Tim	Renshaw	Editor	Business in Vancouver
Andrew	Petrozzi	Reporter	Business in Vancouver
Steve	Mertl	Reporter	CP
Chantale	Eustice	Editor	Dose
Charlie	Smith	Editor - News	Georgia Straight
Peter	Kennedy	Assignment Editor	Globe and Mail - Vancouver Bureau
Mary Lynn	Young	Columnist - BC View	Globe and Mail - Vancouver Bureau
Gary	Mason	Columnist	Globe and Mail - Vancouver Bureau
Fernando	Carneiro	Acting Managing Editor	Metro
Susanna	Ng	Editor - Assignment	Ming Pao Daily
Jason	Kirby	Reporter - Vancouver Bureau	National Post - Vancouver Bureau
Ashley	Ford	Reporter	Province Newspaper
Brian	Lewis	Editor - News	Province Newspaper
Suzanne	Fournier	Reporter - Aboriginal/First Nations	Province Newspaper
Hang Ye	Wong	Editor - News	Sing Tao Daily
Paul	Bucci	Editor - Business	Vancouver Sun
Valerie	Casselton	City Editor	Vancouver Sun
Fiona	Anderson	Reporter	Vancouver Sun
Larry	Pynn	Reporter	Vancouver Sun
Vaughn	Palmer	Columnist - Political	Vancouver Sun - Victoria Bureau
Les	Leyne	Columnist - Legislature Press Gallery	Victoria Times Colonist
Darron	Kloster	Editor - Business	Victoria Times Colonist
TV			
Tim	Weekes	News Director	CBC TV
Melanie	Nagy	Reporter	CBC TV
Kim	Emerson	Reporter - Legislative Affairs	CH Vancouver Island
Thomas	Lou	News Director	Channel M
Carrie	Stefanson	Editor - Assignment	Citytv - Vancouver
Jim	Peters	News Director	CTV
Jim	Beatty	Reporter - Legislature	CTV - Victoria Bureau
Clive	Jackson	Editor - Assignment Desk	Global TV BC
Nicole	Roek	Acting Producer	Shaw TV

Radio			
Gord	MacDonald	News Director	CKNW/CFMI/CFOX
Sean	Leslie	Reporter - Legislature	CKNW-AM 980 Vancouver
Jacquie	Donaldson	Director - Programming	CKWX-AM 1130 Vancouver
Brett	Ballah	News Director	CBC Radio
BC REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY MEDIA			
First Name	Last Name	Position	Company
Chetwynd			
Rob	Freeman	News Director	CHAD-FM, CHET-FM
Stan	Siegenberg	Editor	Chetwynd Echo
Dawson Creek			
Brad	Lyon	Editor	The Dawson Creek Mirror
Brad	Lyon	Editor	Peace River Block News
Fort Nelson			
Judith	Kenyon	Editor	The Fort Nelson News
Brian	Hill	News Director	CKRX 102.3 FM radio
Fort St. John			
Dustin	Walker	Editor	Alaska Highway News
Brian	Hill	News Director	CHRX-FM, CJDC-AM, CJDC-TV, CKNL-FM CKFU-FM
Michael	Heintzman	Editor	North Peace Express
Paul	Frey	Editor	The Northerner North East News
Mackenzie			
Jackie	Benton	Editor	The Mackenzie Times
Pat	Staron	Host	CHMM Mackenzie community radio
Prince George			
Betsy	Trumpener	News Director	CBYG-FM (CBC)
Eryn	Collins	News Director	CIRX-FM, CIVH-AM, CJCI-FM
Mike	Woodworth		CKDV-FM, CKKN-FM, CKM-KMA-AM, CKPG-TV
Neil	Godbout	News Editor	The Prince George Citizen
John	McKenzie	Editor	The Prince George Free Press
Christine	Skorepa	Editor	Prince George This Week