

To prepare for our call on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM PDT, I did some research into this item to help with refreshing the working group's collective memory. Here is what I have learned:

**A.** A letter from the Board to MFLNRO (attention Heather MacRae) was sent on June 9, 2014 (letter is attached for your convenience). The letter included the LGL report that the Board had commissioned to determine the number of existing tenures/permits that were currently active in the M-KMA and to identify the challenges and constraints that may exist for new tenures/permits to be issued. Aside from making the ministry aware of the LGL report and the fact that the Board had accepted the report along with direction on each of the recommendations and considerations that LGL identified there were two additional purposes to the letter. They were:

- 1)** To provide a recommendation to the ministry that the renewal process for permits and tenures for adventure tourism be both timely and clear for existing operators so that they could plan, prepare and conduct their business in advance and know whether they would be permitted to operate well before their operating season began; and
- 2)** To establish a meeting with Heather and senior Ministry staff to review and discuss the report's recommendations and the Board's findings or responses to them (see below). In the meeting, it was suggested that there be a discussion regarding the provincial tourism strategy "Gaining the Edge". The Advisory Board was interested in hearing how this tourism strategy applied and linked to the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area.

The letter invited the ministry to contact the MKMA's secretariat to establish a meeting, which did not happen, nor was there any follow up to establish the meeting by the Board or the secretariat.

**B.** The findings in the report were as follows:

*"... that in spite of the magnitude of tourism values in the Muskwa-Kechika and the opportunities for economic growth for the adventure tourism industry, there are challenges and constraints that are impeding the growth of the adventure tourism industry in the Muskwa-Kechika at this time.*

*While some of the challenges, such as global economies and changing demographics/trends are a sign of the times and impact the tourism industry as a whole, there are certain regional challenges that can be managed and/or mitigated".* They were:

- 1. Lack of awareness of the Muskwa-Kechika as an adventure tourism destination;** (The Board's finding for this challenge was *"The Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board has a mandate to "facilitate provincial, national and international exposure of the values and management of the M-KMA". The Advisory Board will continue to meet this mandated role but will not single out any specific activity and will entrust that the values in the Management Area will be more widely known and have a future positive effect on adventure tourism"*).
- 2. Cost of doing business in the remote northern part of BC;** (The Board's finding for this challenge was *"The Muskwa-Kechika. Advisory Board acknowledges this is something that all*

sectors realize in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area and that this has to be built into the cost of undertaking any activity”).

**3. Lack of a Recreation Management Plan and the direction such a plan would provide;** The Board’s finding for this challenge was *“The Advisory Board will take the initiative to meet with Provincial adventure tourism staff to review the recommendations in the 2005 draft Local Strategic Recreation Management Plan for the Muskwa-Kechika and come up with a recommendation on how future recreation management can be planned for and managed for the Management Area”*).

**4. The over-riding perception that northern BC is “Oil and Gas” country and the impact this has on tourists’ perceptions of northern BC;** (The Board’s finding for this challenge was *“The Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board has a mandate to “facilitate provincial, national and international exposure of the values and management of the M-KMA”. The Advisory Board will continue to meet this mandated role but will not single out any specific activity and will entrust that the values in the Management Area will be more widely known and have a future positive effect on adventure tourism”*).

**5. Challenges with the permitting system to not only the applicant, but to those reviewing and processing the permits;** (The Board’s finding for this challenge was *“The Advisory Board will provide an advice letter to the Province of BC Tourism ministry and request a written response to these challenges and how the Province may be able to address them in the future”*). And

**6. Impediments to First Nation involvement in the adventure tourism industry and the economic benefits that could be realized;** (The Board’s finding for this challenge was *“The Advisory Board will provide an advice letter to the Province of BC Tourism ministry and request a written response to these challenges and how the Province may be able to address them in the future”*).

C. Finally, there were the following “Steps to Consider” in the report (and the Board’s response to them in parenthesis):

**1) Support the work of the Advisory Board by ensuring tourism representation on the Board;** *(The Province of BC determines the representation for membership on the Advisory Board consistent with the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act and Muskwa-Kechika Management Plan Regulation. The Advisory Board will provide this to the Province for their consideration on the next round of appointments);*

**2) Improve access to information re: adventure tourism activity in the Muskwa-Kechika to serve as a mechanism to monitor the health of the adventure tourism industry and economic contributions to the local and provincial economy;** *(From the discussions with provincial staff, the Advisory Board will work to provide this type of information through the Advisory Board’s website and links for provincial data);*

**3) Update, finalize and implement the Recreation Management Plan;** *(As noted above, a meeting with Provincial staff on the draft 2005 Plan will be undertaken with an objective to*

*come to terms with the recommendations in the draft and some clear direction for the Province on future management for adventure tourism in the M-KMA);*

- 4) Negotiate with Tourism BC with respect to inclusion of the Muskwa-Kechika in their tourism development and marketing strategies;** *(The Advisory Board will table this with the meeting of Provincial Tourism staff and look for some specific ways to accomplish this);*
- 5) Create a tourism development plan and marketing strategy for the Muskwa-Kechika, including implementation funding;** *(The Advisory Board will discuss this with Provincial staff and determine how appropriate this would be in context of the provincial plan. If this is supported at these discussions, and followed by support of the full Advisory Board, it will be included for the 2015-2018 Strategic Direction and Business Plan for the Advisory Board);*
- 6) Provide a detailed analysis of the issues and recommendations regarding the commercial recreation tenure system to address and mitigate the issues for operators, provincial government agencies and First Nations;** *(The Advisory Board will table this in the discussion with Provincial staff and request a written response to the issue based on those discussions);*  
and
- 7) In consultation with First Nations, develop recommendations regarding First Nation access to tenure to address the challenges that have been identified in this report;** *(The Advisory Board recognizes that this is a government to government issue and responsibility to be dealt with. The Advisory Board will request that the Province address these challenges that are identified in the report).*