

CANFOR'S PROPOSED LOGGING IN UPPER CLEARWATER

EXTENDED INFORMATION PACKAGE

**Upper Clearwater Referral Group
30 May 2016**

INTRODUCTION

Later this year CANFOR hopes to initiate industrial-scale logging on the western slopes of the Trophy Mountains between Moul (Grouse) Creek and Spahats Creek. Prior to acceptance, CANFOR's plans must be reviewed in light of the Upper Clearwater Guiding Principles document – a local land-use agreement negotiated between valley residents and the BC government, and signed into effect in 1999.

This information package has been prepared by the Upper Clearwater Referral Group for valley residents who have indicated a desire for input on this issue but were unable to attend the public meeting on this issue held on 27 May 2016. Our purpose is to provide the background information needed to make an informed decision on whether CANFOR's plans are in keeping with the spirit and intentions of the Guiding Principles.

After familiarizing yourself with the following pages, you are invited to:

- (1) Vote on the proposition that appears in section VIII, below.**
- (2) Note any concerns you may have relating to one or more of the proposed cutblocks shown in the accompanying sketch map.**
- (3) E-mail your vote and concerns to Trevor Goward at the address given in Section VIII.**

Note: Deadline for submission is Monday, 6 June 2016 at noon.

I: THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Background

In early 1997, the BC Forest Service called a public meeting in Upper Clearwater to announce its intention to establish two woodlots in the valley. This announcement was met with intense opposition by valley residents, who felt that woodlots were inappropriate so close to Wells Gray Park. In response to this, the Forest Service proposed a facilitated, consensus-based process that sought to win public acceptance for the proposed woodlots through a negotiated Local Land-Use Plan that encouraged valley residents to expect a meaningful say in future forestry ventures here.

The Upper Clearwater Public Input Process began in April 1997 and ultimately resulted in the “Guiding Principles for the Management of Land and Resources in the Upper Clearwater Valley”, also known as the Guiding Principles. Technically the Guiding Principles constitute a Local Land-Use Plan under the 1995 Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan. Signed into effect in November 1999 by District Manager Jim Munn, this agreement has since come to be seen as a kind of “Magna Carta” for forestry practice on crown land in the Clearwater Valley north of Spahats Creek.

In effect the Guiding Principles are intended to strike a lasting balance between forestry interests and the rights and needs of other user groups. The negotiations that led to their creation were seen by many as exemplary of participatory democracy. District Manager Jim Munn expressed this in the following terms:

“I believe that through [the Upper Clearwater Public Input Process] we have achieved a new level of understanding and trust in each other as individuals, businesses and government agents entrusted with the task of finding and implementing solutions to a broad range of sometimes seemingly conflicting values. I believe that with the guiding principles, there is a balance with which we can all live.”

In total the Guiding Principles document recognizes seven distinct “Plan Areas” in Upper Clearwater. The largest of these areas of interest is “Area G,” defined as the western slopes of the Trophy Mountains east to the Wells Gray Park boundary, north to Moul/Grouse Creek and South to Spahats Creek. It is within Area G that CANFOR now proposes to undertake industrial-scale clearcut logging.

The following passages excerpted from the Guiding Principles document are intended to provide a summary statement of the BC government’s commitment to a high standard of resource management in the Upper Clearwater Valley, here with an emphasis on Area G:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF LAND AND RESOURCES IN THE UPPER CLEARWATER VALLEY

NOVEMBER 2000

INTRODUCTION

The guiding principles presented in this document are the work of a dedicated group of individuals who have met regularly ... to discuss issues around appropriate stewardship of land and resources in the Upper Clearwater Valley north of Spahats Creek. The Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan identified the Upper Clearwater as a General Resource Management Zone and the Upper Clearwater process was initiated to ensure that any resource development activities in the area were carried out in consideration of the interests and values of local residents.

As part of the process, residents of the valley provided statements of interest outlining their values and concerns. Residents also worked hard to gather and map information about resources in the valley, including information about wildlife habitat, land ownership, commercial uses and values, human uses and values and features of geographical and geological interest. This combined information provided the foundation for a set of guiding principles for land and resource use.

These guiding principles were arrived at through an interest-based and consensus-based process. While not everyone agreed wholeheartedly with all aspects of the guiding principles, participants made a consensus agreement to live with the direction shown in this document in the greater interest of all.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT APPLY TO ALL PLAN AREAS:

- *Maintain the integrity and habitat quality of all wildlife habitat.*
- *Minimize the disruption of wildlife movement within known movement corridors, especially in relation to adjacent portions of Wells Gray Park.*
- *Ensure the integrity and habitat quality of wetland areas is maintained.*
- *The right of the public use of all plan areas for purposes of recreation on and enjoyment of Crown land must be respected, encouraged and not infringed upon. Activities such as hiking, wildlife observation, hunting, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, berry picking and associated activities are recognized as legitimate and appropriate uses of Crown land. All other uses of Crown land must respect the importance of public recreation.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT APPLY SPECIFICALLY TO PLAN AREA G:

- *Water quality and quantity are critical issues. Numerous water licences, both domestic and for irrigation, are held in this area. Maintain water quality, quantity and timing of flow of the following creeks within their natural range of variability: Case Creek, Shook Brook, Fage Creek, Ordschig Creek, Duncan Creek and Bryd Creek. Ensure that any planned activities (e.g., timber harvest, road or trail construction) are preceded by a hydrological study to ensure that water quality, quantity and flow are maintained.*
- *Retain stands of oldgrowth timber in the plan area where these are identified.*
- *Maintain visual quality from Spahats Picnic Area and Green Mountain.*
- *Any activities that occur within Plan Area G must be assessed for their impact on environmental quality, with particular emphasis on soil stability and water quality.*

II: THE UPPER CLEARWATER REFERRAL GROUP

The Referral Group was established in November 2000 upon completion of the Clearwater Public Input Process and at the invitation of the BC Forest Service. Its mandate is to act a vehicle of information gathering and exchange between local residents, government and industry in support of the Guiding Principles. More specifically, it is tasked with ensuring that the terms and spirit of this consensus-based agreement are respected by all parties.

At the present time the Referral Group has five members – George Briggs, Tay Briggs, Tom Dickinson, Trevor Goward, Roland Neave, and Frank Smith – all of whom were active participants in the negotiations leading up to the Guiding Principles document in the late 1990s.

Fifteen years later, it now seems appropriate to expand the Referral Group membership pending eventual retirement by one or more of its members. Following completion of the CANFOR Information Exchange Process, the Referral Group will call an open meeting of Upper Clearwater residents who may wish to join.

III: THE CANFOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE PROCESS

In January 2012, the Referral Group became aware of CANFOR’s intention to conduct industrial-scale logging on the Trophy Mountains north of Spahats Creek and south of Grouse/Moul Creek. As already mentioned, this area falls within “Area G” of the Guiding Principles document.

Since 2012 the Referral Group has held three information meetings with valley residents – one in 2012 and two in 2014 – in which input was sought with respect to possible adverse impacts of the proposed logging. At all three meetings valley residents overwhelmingly endorsed the Guiding Principles and opposed extensive logging in Area G. The first and second of these meetings resulted in letters being sent to the BC Forest Service District Manager, while the third prompted a letter to CANFOR asking for a moratorium on logging. To the best of the Referral Group’s knowledge, none of these letters elicited a response from government or industry.

Beginning in July 2015, the Referral Group entered into a formal information exchange process with representatives from CANFOR and the BC Forest Service, the primary intention of which

was to communicate and review concerns expressed by valley residents. At the outset of this process, all parties expressed respect for the terms and spirit of the Guiding Principles.

A total of six meetings were held, at the end of which the Referral Group brought CANFOR's plans forward to valley residents at an open public meeting which took place at the Wells Gray Ranch on the evening of 27 May 2016. The meeting was attended by 36 valley residents as well as by TNRD representative Carol Schaffer and Clearwater Times editor Keith McNeil.

Of the many questions posed to the Referral Group during this meeting, the most frequently asked was whether CANFOR was really serious about respecting the Guiding Principles, or whether it intended to log regardless of concerns raised by valley residents. In response, the Referral Group pointed out that at least one government official has gone on record stating that the Guiding Principles is a ground-breaking document that might fruitfully be adapted in other parts of the province. This reassurance notwithstanding, the Referral Group was given to understand that at least some members of the audience remain sceptical of the CANFOR Information Exchange process.

At several points during the meeting, the Referral Group invited participants to raise any specific concerns regarding CANFOR's planned cutblocks that had been overlooked. No additional concerns were raised.

Toward the end of the meeting, valley residents were asked to vote (yes or no) on the following proposition: *CANFOR's logging plans respect the intent of the Upper Clearwater Guiding Principles*. The vote was undertaken by ballot and 30 votes were received. The voters were unanimous that CANFOR's logging plans do *not* in fact respect the Upper Clearwater Guiding Principles. Scanned copies of the voting sheets as well as the sign-in sheet have been sent to Carol Schaffer and Keith McNeil for safekeeping. The original documentation will be kept on file with the Referral Group.

IV: CANFOR'S PROPOSED CUTBLOCKS

CANFOR's 2016 logging proposal for the west slopes of the Trophy Mountains (Area G) consists of 11 cutblocks totaling 425 ha (1050 acres), marked on the accompanying map as cross-hatched areas. The adjacent grey areas are existing cutblocks logged between 1978 and the early 1990s. Future ('deferred') cutblocks appear as speckled areas. The CANFOR representatives assured the Referral Group that CANFOR is unlikely to log on the steep west-facing slopes above the Clearwater Valley Road. We note, however, that this assurance is in conflict with CANFOR's 2012 map, which showed five numbered cutblocks here. In any event, it needs to be understood that the plans shown below only one in a series of passes.

CANFOR'S PROPOSED CUTBLOCKS IN AREA G, ARRANGED N TO S (SEE MAP)				
Code	Area (ha)	Status	Cut Date	Notes from CANFOR's hydrologist
125	44.1	young	2016-2017	the only block justifiable as "salvage" "fairly low risk"
160	9.1	young	2016-2017	"moderate risk"
157	23.8	old	2016-2017	"moderate risk"
147	???	old	unknown	"moderate or high risk" DEFERRED
167	???	old	unknown	"moderate or high risk" DEFERRED
113	137	young	2016-2017	further work needed
120	16.3	old?	2016-2017	"low concerns"
111	11.1	old	2016-2017	"issues that need to be resolved"
158	???	old	unknown	"DEFERRED"
159	???	old	unknown	"DEFERRED"
121	32.2	young	2016	"no concern"
106	47.7	young	2016	"isn't going to affect anything"
122	26.4	young	2016	"isn't going to affect anything"
123	37.6	young	2016	"isn't going to affect anything"
161	???	young	unknown	"DEFERRED"

115	39.6	young w vets	2016	“low risk”
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V: ISSUES DISCUSSED WITH CANFOR

The primary objective of the CANFOR Information Exchange Process has been to raise and discuss with CANFOR and the BC Forest Service several concerns pertaining to CANFOR’s plans to conduct industrial scale logging in Area G. A total of seventeen such concerns were raised and discussed over the course of our meetings:

- (1) the requirement to avoid negative impacts on streamflow and water quality affecting property owners located below CANFOR’s proposed clearcuts (Section VI);
- (2) the well known negative impact of logging in proximity to endangered Mountain Caribou;
- (3) the importance of maintaining forest structure in topographic localities conducive to heavy hair lichen production – again for Mountain Caribou;
- (4) the requirement to maintain known wildlife travel corridors;
- (5) the importance of ensuring that post-logging leave strips are sufficiently broad to maintain existing wildlife travel corridors, e.g., in the face of windthrow along the margins of clearcuts;
- (6) the importance of recognizing that local tourism is grounded in wilderness, with a premium on untouched landscapes readily disrupted by industrial logging
- (7) the importance of placing logging activities out of sight of trail access to prominent existing and proposed tourist features;
- (8) the importance of ensuring that future logging does not detract from key features of government-supported initiatives, e.g., (1) the UNESCO GeoPark and World Heritage Proposals (proposed by BC government); and (2) the Buck Hill Regional Park Proposal (proposed by the TNRD);
- (9) the need to avoid logging in locales where competition from regenerating brush (Alder) could create problems for conifer regeneration;
- (10) the strict need to avoid herbicides use anywhere within Area G;
- (11) the critical need to ensure the post-logging stability of soil and, in the case of volcanic substrates, hyaloclastite deposits;
- (12) the requirement to avoid logging oldgrowth forests;
- (13) the requirement to undertake only salvage logging in ‘heavily impacted’ Area G;
- (14) the requirement to avoid creating visually disruptive clearcuts in sensitive areas visible from Spahats Picnic Areas (the “Million Dollar View”) and the Green Mountain Lookout tower;
- (15) the requirement to sustain CANFOR’s public commitment not to overturn landscape objectives set through public planning processes without full public consultation and support (see Section VI);
- (16) the requirement to sustain CANFOR’s public commitment not to impact parks or areas that provide critical habitat for species at risk (see Section VI);
- (17) the question of what happens from a legal perspective in the event of downstream damage to private property traceable to logging by CANFOR; that is, whether it’s possible to name CANFOR and/or CANFOR’s hydrologist in a law suit. (See Section xxx).

In many cases, CANFOR’s response to the above concerns can be inferred from the attached map showing the proposed cutblocks. For example, it was explained to the CANFOR

representatives that participants during the negotiations leading up to the Guiding Principles were given to expect that future logging in Area G would be restricted to small incursions for the purpose of salvage. (While not explicitly stated in the Guiding Principles document itself, this is captured in Jim Munn's letter of November 1999, where he acknowledges that Area G has been "heavily impacted," and notes that "salvage is an opportunity according to the Guiding Principles"). Notwithstanding this, more than half of CANFOR's proposed cutblocks are not only larger than 20 ha, only one actually meets the definition of salvage. (Cutblock 125, unfortunately, is plainly visible from the Green Mountain viewing tower, again contrary to the Guiding Principles). Similarly, while the Guiding Principles specifically state that there should be no logging of oldgrowth in Area G, CANFOR proposes to cut three oldgrowth blocks in 2016-17, and four additional blocks later (shown as "deferred" in Section IV).

Still left unanswered by CANFOR are Items 2, 3, 4 and 5 (pertaining to Mountain Caribou and other wildlife) and Items 6, 7, 8 and 14 (pertaining to tourism). Item 1 (hydrology) and Item 17 (legal ramifications) are covered in the following section, whereas Items 15 and 16 (CANFOR's social licence) will be returned to in Section VII.

Finally, it is important to be aware that CANFOR's logging plans include a number of clearcuts also on the *west slopes* of the Clearwater Valley; and while this activity clearly falls within the purview of the Guiding Principles, the impacts are primarily visual, and hence probably best addressed by representatives speaking on behalf of the tourist industry. In this connection it can be mentioned that the Referral Group on several occasions emphasized the desirability of CANFOR working *with*, rather than against, Clearwater's second largest economic generator.

VI: CANFOR'S RESPONSE TO HYDROLOGICAL CONCERNS

HISTORY OF LOGGING & HYDROLOGICAL PROBELMS

Oldgrowth forests are well known to absorb, retain and slowly release snowmelt and rainwater; hence they stabilize streamflow over the course of the year. Originally the upper portions of most creeks on the western slopes of the Trophy Mountains drained through oldgrowth forests. However, during the decade beginning in 1979, nearly half of the oldgrowth forests here were removed by clearcut logging. The loss of so much old forest – about 1100 ha (2700 acres) – in such a short period appears to have greatly impacted downstream waterflow (see below).

For convenience, the clearcuts in question can be divided into two areas of development. The more southerly of these areas covers about 700 ha (1600 acres) and consists of a single clearcut (“Big Bertha”) located south of Third Canyon Creek. Because CANFOR’s proposed clearcuts in the vicinity of Big Bertha have no direct implications for residents of Upper Clearwater – their main impact is likely to be on the viability of a proposal to have Wells Gray and area designated as a Unesco GeoPark – no more will be said about them. The second area of development consists of about a dozen clearcuts located north of Third Canyon Creek, again with a total area of about 700 ha (1600 acres). It is to these latter clearcuts that attention will be given here.

The first downstream hydrological impact of logging occurred in 1981, when clearcuts developed by Clearwater Timber Projects above Les and Pat Hansen’s place adversely affected their water supply. Complaints were registered, but little was done to alleviate the situation.

About a decade later, in May 1992, logging in what is now Area G caused water to back up above one of the haul roads. When the ‘dam’ finally broke, a greatly swollen Fage Creek washed out the Clearwater Valley Road and at the same time destroyed a water intake system long used by George and Judy Briggs as a water source for irrigating their hayfields. Numerous letters of complaint were subsequently written to the Forest Service who, while admitting to poor logging practices, and promising on several occasions to undertake remedial action, did little or nothing about this situation for several years. Even now, more than two decades later, Fage Creek still generally ceases to flow in late summer, whereas prior to logging it used to run all year round. At a meeting on 26 February 2016, CANFOR’s hydrologist expressed surprise at how little work had been done to rectify the situation “at a time when there was a huge FRBC budget”.

Logging on the Trophies is also implicated in several other washouts along the Clearwater Valley Road. The first of these occurred in July 1997 when a prolonged rain event caused a much-swollen First Canyon Creek to wash out its culvert. The same event caused the culvert at Second Canyon Creek to shift downhill, resulting in expensive repair. In July 1999 another summer rain event caused Spahats Creek washed out the road, while two years later, in July 2001, yet another prolonged summer rain caused Grouse Creek to do the same. At a conservative estimate, the total cost for repairs is in the order of about \$6-\$7 million dollars. This was paid by taxpayers not by the forest company responsible.

MEETING WITH CANFOR'S HYDROLOGIST

At a meeting with CANFOR's hydrologist on 26 February 2016, the Referral Group related the hydrological issues outlined above. In response, the hydrologist emphasized that forestry has come a long way since the 1990s. He described his approach as "conservative," that is, based on ground surveys, consultation with terrain specialists, and analysis of past streamflow based on old aerial photos. According to his research in Area G, only a single "channelized event" occurred (on Fage Creek) subsequent to the great stand-replacing wildfire of 1926. Based on this, he concluded that most of the streams here are fairly resilient to disturbance.

These assurances notwithstanding, it must be stressed that only the lower and mid portions of these drainages actually burned in 1926. As already stated, the upper portions escaped the fire and, as oldgrowth, subsequently conferred a considerable buffering effect on stream flow. The fact, however, that approximately half of these mid-elevation oldgrowth stands has recently been removed by clearcut logging strongly suggests that at least some of their former buffering effect has also now been lost. To varying degrees, this leaves property owners living below these clearcuts vulnerable to the downstream effects of any future stand-replacing fire that might sweep across these slopes. It is the Referral Group's position that the five northern cutblocks proposed by CANFOR – 125, 160, 157, 113, 120 and 111 – can only exacerbate this situation.

Without wishing to be critical, we must note that CANFOR's hydrologist has a disturbingly weak grasp on local weather dynamics and especially on the implications of deepening climate change. After four years of working in the Clearwater Valley, he was still of the opinion that flood events here are generally associated with spring runoff, whereas historic floods events have nearly always been triggered by prolonged summer rain – quite another situation. Moreover, he professed to believe that the current trend to somewhat wetter climatic conditions in inland southern British Columbia is likely to result in lower risk of wildfire – a view that flies in the face of recent and on-going experience. Global warming is above all a transition to more *extreme* weather, i.e., to increasingly frequent extreme precipitation events punctuated by periods of prolonged drought. The predicted trend to a wetter climate, if it occurs, will be discernible only at the scale of decades, whereas wildfire risk varies more or less annually. Looking ahead, valley residents should expect more frequent wildfires, not less. At the same time they should also expect more frequent – and more severe – flood events. Clearly we are entering a period when resource management scenarios based on 'business as usual' can no longer be accepted as prudent.

In summary, the Referral Group was not persuaded that CANFOR's hydrologist has begun to grapple with the implications of deepening climate change. His practice of using past stream behaviour as an indicator of future stream behaviour can no longer be justified. Putting aside the question whether his approach is or is not "conservative," the fact remains that the downstream effects of industrial-scale cutblocks logged today will play out over a multi-decadal period of increasingly extreme weather. Were the streams flowing off the western slopes of the Trophy Mountains not already impacted by extensive logging, the situation would be different. As things stand, however, the resulting clearcuts will not regain full water retention capacity for many decades. In the mean time, adding additional cutblocks to the northern portion of Area G can only exacerbate what is already a long-term experiment in risk management that began with excessive logging in the 1980s. In the judgement of the Referral Group, this would not be in keeping with the terms or the intent of the Guiding Principles.

Whether further logging on the slopes above the Clearwater Valley Road will or will not lead to hydrological problems for downstream property owners is a question that unfortunately cannot be answered until the logging has taken place – and even then perhaps not for many decades thereafter. For purposes of legal recourse, however, the question may be moot. The BC Forest Service, CANFOR, and CANFOR's hydrologist have all made it clear that establishing direct causation between downstream

flood damage and upstream management decisions is, for legal purposes, by no means straightforward. The Referral Group was led to understand that only the most flagrant disregard for proper road construction and culvert layout would likely lead to legal redress. No assurance was given that any downstream impacts resulting from the *cumulative effects* of clearcut logging would be actionable.

VII: CANFOR VIS-A-VIS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Broadly speaking, it seems clear that corporate forestry has certain responsibilities to society in exchange for the right to engage in resource extraction on public lands. In 2012, CANFOR's CEO Don Kayne publicly summarized his company's social license in the following terms:

1. *CANFOR does not support actions that would overturn landscape objectives set through public planning processes unless there is full public consultation and support.*
2. *We will not support actions that impact parks, riparian areas or areas that provide critical habitat for species at risk, or other important environmental values such as biodiversity and old growth.*
3. *We will not support actions that put us at odds with obligations of our registered professional foresters to uphold the public trust by managing forests sustainably.*
4. *And we will not support actions that jeopardize our third-party forest certification, and risk access to domestic and international markets.*

The Referral Group takes the position that CANFOR's proposed logging plans for Area G are in conflict with its social license as expressed in Statements 1 and 2, above. Statement 1 clearly pertains to the Guiding Principles document, as described in previous sections. With regard to Statement 2, it is worth noting that Wells Gray's Mountain Caribou herds is currently in precipitous decline, with a loss of about 75% of the herd since 2002. Given that past clearcut logging in the vicinity of Wells Gray is widely accepted as the ultimate cause of this decline, it follows that CANFOR's planned cutblocks are likely to jeopardize its caribou in even further – clearly not in keeping with CANFOR's stated commitment to environmental values. For more detail on this issue, please link to <http://www.wellsgrayworldheritage.ca/>

Finally, one test of CANFOR's respect for the Guiding Principles is the degree to which their harvesting plans for Area G 'look different' from harvesting plans elsewhere. We submit that the cutblocks shown in the attached map look like business as usual. While it is true that CANFOR has to some extent attempted to adjust its plans in response to concerns raised, the resulting "adjustments" are clearly not within the terms or expectations of the Guiding Principles.

VIII: INPUT FROM VALLEY RESIDENTS

(1) Valley residents are invited to vote on the following statement: *CANFOR's logging plans for Area G respect the intent of the Upper Clearwater Guiding Principles*. A “yes” vote indicates agreement, while a “no” vote indicates disagreement.

(2) Please also take a moment to let us know if you have any additional concerns pertaining to individual cut blocks and not mentioned in Sections V and VI.

(3) Kindly e-mail your vote and concerns to trevor.goward@botany.ubc.ca by noon on Monday, 6 June 2016.

IX: FINAL STEPS IN THE CANFOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE PROCESS

The Referral Group is committed to bringing the outcome of the vote back to CANFOR and the Forest Service for further discussion. If valley residents endorse CANFOR's logging plans, then CANFOR will submit its plans to the BC Forest Service for approval. However, if valley residents reject CANFOR's logging plans, then the next step will be to ask CANFOR to revise its plans or, failing that, trigger the Dispute Resolution Process as specified in the Guiding Principles:

1. *Where an issue is in need of resolution, the first step will be the formation of a subcommittee who will assess the situation and try to develop a resolution. The subcommittee will be coordinated by the Upper Clearwater Referral Group.*
2. *If the subcommittee is unable to reach a resolution, an independent reviewer will be brought in to assess the situation and make recommendations.*
3. *If the decision of the independent reviewer is not accepted, then the decision will be passed on to the district manager for determination.*

At this point it is not clear whether further public meetings with Upper Clearwater residents will be required; it may be possible to proceed by internet. At the end of the Process, the Referral Group will be tasked with informing valley residents of the final decision. At this point the Referral Group will have discharged its obligations and will step back from the CANFOR Information Exchange Process.