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Our Mission: To be a catalyst to achieve and maintain healthy Horsefly community watersheds, through coordinated management of all resources, respect for all concerns and cooperative, positive action.



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July 17, 2018

TO:

Michael Pederson,
Regional Executive Director
Forests, Lands Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development,
640 Borland Street,
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Dr. Sorley
Cariboo Regional District
File No. 400-20

JUL 19 2018

Referred To CAP/DIV/SORLEY

RE: Horsefly River watershed and communications around integrated resource use

The Horsefly River Roundtable is a Society of community volunteers that have an interest in maintaining healthy Horsefly area community watersheds through coordinated management of all resources, respect for all concerns and cooperative, positive action. The purpose of this letter is to request that the provincial government work together with us in reaching this goal.

Not one fire got going in the Horsefly River watershed in 2017. Fires occurred in Beaver Valley, Quesnel Lake and other drainages, but not in the Horsefly itself. The fires cut off the community for weeks and proved to be very damaging in different ways. In the aftermath, citizens participated in continuing wildfire recovery and emergency planning sessions that are necessary, appreciated and productive. However, there is still a sense of confusion and the feeling that we are sometimes working against one another. In particular:

1. There is an inappropriate level of logging that is not a timber salvage matter. After the fires, logging immediately accelerated in the Horsefly coincident with the loss of harvest opportunities elsewhere in the interior. Some of the areas now flagged for logging were protected under previous land use plans. This needs justification.
2. There are unresolved safety issues with industrial truck traffic on local roads. Residents have expressed concerns with poor driving habits/performance, new large truck configurations and public access to road radio frequencies. There are government agencies charged with regulating these matters, please ask them to step up.
3. Civic emergencies include floods. Good watershed management must also consider river bank erosion, land loss and flooding, with the risk of loss of road access and infrastructure. The reality of having multiple users in the watershed superimposed on one another requires careful assessment of complex hydrology. There seems to be an absence of clear professional responsibilities and residents remain vulnerable. This must change.

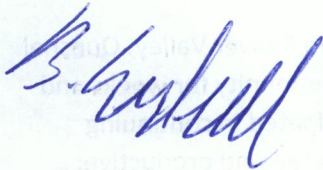
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4. Recognition of the Horsefly River as a fisheries sensitive watershed (May, 2018) carries with it an expectation that logging plans and intensity will abate. The community itself will respond to this but doing so without placing people in conflict will require a special effort. It would be kinder to the residents if this decision had been reached before things reached a crisis. We require effective timelines.

Healthy watersheds are alive. Living things suffer through temperature spikes and troughs, not statistical averages. Landslides destroy stream habitats well beyond what is visible on Google Earth. Micro-habitats, sustainability and biodiversity matter and to this end, someone must travel around, talk to people, look closely and communicate what they find. People that make watershed-scale decisions must not broad-brush information simply to ease conversations with those who have no connection with the community or appreciation of watershed values.

We at the Horsefly River Roundtable are hoping that whatever replaces the “professional reliance model” for integrated watershed management places more emphasis on better communication and engagement of communities like Horsefly.

Respectfully yours,



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Cc:

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