



February 23, 2011

File#: 2402463; 2407292

Brian Wood
President
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC
PO Box 19673
Vancouver, BC V5T 4E7

Dear Mr. Wood,

Re: Restrictions to Accessing Callaghan Lake Provincial Park

Thank you for your letter to Vicki Haberl dated January 24. As access is an issue that concerns both BC Parks and the Ministry of Natural Resource Operations (MNRO), I am happy to respond on behalf of both agencies.

Provincial officials reviewed the information provided by you and have met with representatives from Callaghan Country Wilderness Adventures and the Whistler Sport Legacies Society to review their operations and discuss the concerns you have brought to our attention. After consideration, we have concluded that while management of lands designated for cross country skiing may result in an inconvenience to backcountry skiing pursuits, the overall opportunity for winter backcountry recreation in the Callaghan Valley has improved since the creation of Whistler Olympic Park. However, some opportunities exist to help improve winter access for backcountry skiers.

The following information was considered by the Province:

- The decision to construct Whistler Olympic Park in the Callaghan Valley established a land use direction to maximize the use and enjoyment of the valley for cross country skiing. *Ski Callaghan!* has recorded over 25,000 cross country skier days this season.
- Establishing the area as a non-motorized zone has significantly changed the use of the area, improving the opportunities for all non-motorized users.
- The Whistler Sport Legacies Society is now the not-for-profit manager of the Commercial Recreation Area of Whistler Olympic Park, and is free to manage its operation in its own interest and that of its customers. It has prudent liability and insurance considerations that affect business decisions.
- The ploughed, paved roadway into the valley has enhanced access to other unrestricted backcountry opportunities such as Metal Dome and Brandywine Mountain.
- While under snow cover, the Callaghan Forest Service Road is managed as an established recreation trail under the *Forest Recreation Regulation* and within Callaghan Lake Provincial Park, under a Park Use Permit. A user fee is applied to all users.

- A motorized shuttle to Callaghan Lake, including lunch is available, providing expedited access to the park and backcountry skiing terrain beyond.
- The Province does not wish to eliminate access to Callaghan Lake Park in winter, however public access is not guaranteed to be free or without reasonable restriction.

Reasonable concessions have been made by both operators in the area, and the Ministry of Natural Resource Operations will not impose any additional operational changes to improve backcountry access within the Callaghan Valley. However, further co-operative opportunities exist for FMCBC. The Whistler Sport Legacies Society is open to working with FMCBC to research an alternate backcountry access route to Callaghan Lake Park, and the Province would support this initiative. The Province would also be amenable to a proposal by the FMCBC to manage its own parking facility at Alexander Falls in a similar arrangement to the Brandywine and Rutherford trailheads. Any arrangement would be of a self funded nature, as no provincial monies are available.

To discuss future parking facility opportunities, please contact Norbert Greinacher at (604) 898-2125 or Norbert.Greinacher@gov.bc.ca. To pursue the potential of an alternate access route, Lindsay Durno of the Whistler Sport Legacies Society is a first point of contact at (604) 964-0059 or ldurno@whistlersportlegacies.com.

Sincerely,



Scott Shaw-MacLaren
Resource Manager
Metro Vancouver/Squamish Resource District

Cc:

Vicki Haberl – BC Parks
Chris Platz – BC Parks
Norbert Greinacher – MNRO - RST
Lindsay Durno – Whistler Sport Legacies
Brad Sills – Callaghan Country Wilderness Adventures

