

4.0 The Planning Context

4.1 Tourism Planning in the Study Area

There are a variety of reports and studies that have been prepared in recent years for areas within the Columbia Forest District. (Please refer to the Bibliography in [Appendix 6](#) for a listing of these reports). This section highlights some of the planning studies that are most relevant to the TOS process.

4.1.1 Golden & Dist. Strategic Tourism Marketing & Development Plan 1996-2001

This plan identified a five-year strategy to undertake a number of major tourism marketing and product development initiatives that Golden & District should undertake which would establish it as an outdoor tourism destination within the Rocky Mountain Region and benefit the tourism sector and community.

4.1.2 Golden Community Impact Analysis

The Golden area is undergoing substantial changes stimulated by approximately \$200 million in new investments in the Tourism/Recreation/Hospitality Sector. The construction of a four- season resort by Kicking Horse Mountain Resorts is the major initiative driving current levels of growth. This project, along with a fair number of related investments, is expected to generate a considerable increase in pressure on community infrastructure—including social and economic services. The implications of these new pressures are in the process of being measured and assessed in order to allow Golden’s local service delivery agencies and municipal government to plan and prepare for the impacts of these anticipated changes.

4.1.3 Gateways Initiative

The Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture has recently selected Golden for the Park and Backcountry Gateways Program¹. The program aims to build a strong competitive position in the ecotourism and adventure travel sectors by helping communities develop park and backcountry gateways around the

¹ The goal of the Park and Backcountry Gateways program is “to develop public and commercial recreation opportunities for local communities, while promoting a strong commitment to support the protection of natural values and work within the ecological and conservation mandates of parks.”

Crown land base. The primary role of gateway communities is to develop public and commercial recreation opportunities for local communities, while promoting a strong commitment to support the protection of natural values and work within the ecological and conservation mandates of parks. A tourism coordinator has been hired to work with the Golden Economic Development Commission and some preliminary project identification has occurred. A business plan is being prepared at time of writing with implementation to follow through to the end of 2001.

4.1.4 Revelstoke Tourism Development Strategy (1997)

Revelstoke's economic development strategy (1995) stated that tourism should be a growth sector in Revelstoke over the life of the new economic development strategy. It further recommended that the preparation of a tourism development strategy should be a high priority for Revelstoke. This was completed in 1997 and resulted in the identification of a wide range of possible tourism development, market, and marketing opportunities for Revelstoke.

4.2 Land Use and Resource Planning

4.2.1 Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan

The KBLUP sets out broad regional management objectives and strategies as well as geographically specific land and resource management objectives in each Resource Management Zone in each forest district. Some of the statements in this document were formally adopted by the provincial government and now are legally binding as a *higher level plan*. Other statements, such as those relating to recreation and tourism were not formally adopted and therefore provide only guidance. Within the KBLUP, recreation objectives are usually rather vague and most commonly call for "a range of recreation opportunities towards the semi-primitive end of the recreation opportunity spectrum" in most zones. Occasionally, a modifier such as "maintain a range of recreational opportunities from roaded resource land to semi-primitive non-motorized" is included.

Infrequently, mention is made of specific resources such as "maintain the integrity of the Howse Pass Heritage Trail".

One incidence of support for commercial tourism is made in the West bench Area. The objective is to "Maintain and enhance opportunities for resorts and commercial backcountry recreation". The associated strategy says "Provide Crown Land as necessary for expansion of the West bench Recreation Area...subject to consideration of conservation values, municipal and regional planning, and the provincial land use charter and goals".

4.2.2 Golden Recreation and Access Zoning Plan

In Golden, the Recreation and access zoning planning process is attempting to create a zoning and access plan that will determine where certain recreation activities can and cannot occur. The process is based upon the nature and scope of current and potential recreation use, environmental and habitat considerations, industrial activity, and people's vision of how certain parts of the land should be managed for these values. The goal is to develop a pro-active decision making process that will consider both zoning and access requirements that are needed to promote tourism, maintain local recreation opportunities, and preserve important wildlife habitat for the future. The outcomes of this work (though still in progress) will be considered in the evaluation and identification of tourism opportunities in this project.

4.2.3 Revelstoke Minister's Advisory Committee

The recommendations of the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan (1994) precipitated deep concerns by many citizens of Revelstoke and the community reacted by demanding the opportunity to develop its own recommendations for utilization of the land base. The Minister's Advisory Committee (RMAC) was struck and over the next several years developed a report that would "...provide the Ministry of Forests with advice on land-use issues." The Advisory Committee's task, working from the direction provided by the Negotiating Committee, was to develop recommendations regarding the implementation of the land use plan that, as much as possible, balance the economic, environmental and social needs of the community and the province. The committee's report was submitted to the Ministry of Forests in October 1999. The RMAC has yet to be formally approved by the provincial government or formally endorsed by the tourism sector.

The timber industry and tourism are corner posts of the local economy, and their future depends largely on the management of the natural resources in the area. In recent years outdoor adventure tourism and highway-related travel has increased substantially as Revelstoke has been identified internationally as one of the best locations for winter adventure sports and other activities. This has increased the importance of highway viewsapes, and created the potential for conflicts with environmental values.

The MAC report has many recommendations covering a wide array of issues including biodiversity, wildlife values (including Mountain Caribou and Grizzlies), forestry, tourism and mining. The following recommendations were developed concerning tourism):

Class 1 viewscape assignment to Trans Canada corridor and Revelstoke viewscapes. To reflect tourism values along Highway 23S, increased emphasis has been placed on visual landscape design and rehabilitation within Class 3 viewscape assignment. Regional strategy assigns Class 2 management for Highway 23S.	Viewscales should be improved through rehabilitation of existing industrial openings, and landscape design of future openings.
Aggregated harvesting openings will result in larger cut blocks in some areas.	Reduced green-up requirements and aggregated harvesting openings may make logging more evident in the backcountry. This should be partially mitigated by provisions for improved design to better integrate openings into the landscape.
Provisions for commercial tenure holders to formally articulate their needs when forest management and mining planning approvals are being considered.	Plan clarifies and formalizes management of tourism related resources.

(MAC Report, pg. Viii)

4.2.4 An Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Strategy for British Columbia

Ecotourism and adventure travel is one of the fastest growing sectors of BC's tourism industry. An expanding market of knowledgeable travellers is looking for spectacular settings and challenging activities. This strategy lays out a role for the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, and the provincial Government generally, in fostering growth in this sector while ensuring benefit to communities and resources that the industry depends on. Canada still accounts for only a fraction of the North American ecotourism and adventure travel market. Despite the recent growth in British Columbia, there is considerable room for growth of the industry.

Entrepreneurs and communities play a leading role in expanding the ecotourism and adventure travel industry. Government, however, has a unique and important role in fostering this growth. This role includes: strategic investments to create new opportunities; promotion of high standards of quality practice; and establishment of regulatory and tax regimes that maintain the vigour of the industry.

This strategy outlines a role for the Government of BC (or SBTC) in supporting growth in BC's ecotourism and adventure travel industry, while ensuring the protection of resources and host communities. The strategy follows three major themes:

Work with Communities to create new opportunities: Host communities should be the primary beneficiaries of growth in ecotourism and adventure travel.

Communities across British Columbia act as the gateway to parks and backcountry areas. They form the base of operations and supply for businesses; they are the home of people who work in the industry. The Province can create new ecotourism opportunities by working with communities to systematically identify their particular strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and by developing programs that meet the particular needs of communities. The Province can also work with communities to develop recreation infrastructure, such as trails, that supports ecotourism and adventure travel.

Work with Industry to promote product quality and best practices: Because it comprises many small operators spread across the province, the ecotourism industry is vulnerable to uneven business skills, lack of industry standards, and underdeveloped networks for marketing and product packaging. By working with sector or industry groups the Province can develop and promote high standards of quality. To ensure the continued viability of the ecotourism industry, particular attention should be paid to practices and technologies that minimize environmental damage.

Within Government, streamline regulation, improve access to land and resources: Most ecotourism operators face a range of regulations, fees and taxes. The tourism industry has called for more effort on streamlining and coordination to create a fair and supportive environment for ecotourism businesses. Ecotourism businesses depend on access to Crown land. The Commercial Recreation (CR) policy is the primary tool for managing and regulating this access. The policy was recently revised to improve business access to Crown land. Effective delivery of this policy will require a new sensitivity to industry needs. In some cases, local planning, and coordination with other resource uses will also be necessary.²

² Excerpted from: Draft Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Strategy for British Columbia, Stephen Connolly, Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, Victoria, 2000.