

## Big Creek Ranchers

October 20, 2011

# Big Creek Park:

### Values:

- Grazing potential and infrastructure (cabins, trails, fences).
- Wildlife.
- Water.
- Viewscapes.
- Wet meadow ecosystems.

### Concerns:

- Continuation of grazing.
- Predation on livestock and moose (predating on calves) by grizzly bear and wolves.
- Habituation of grizzly bear to hunting by being attracted to gut piles.
- Use of traditional cabins by the general public.
- Alteration of water flows due to logging outside the park.
- Maintenance of fencing.
- Gate on 5800 road is not closed or signed to prevent access to park. All roads were to have locked gates as described in the Land Use Plan.
- Salvage logging, especially upcoming effects of beetle salvage on east side of park – young forest is present as an understory and salvage will destroy next crop.
- Salvage logging will remove large areas of trees, increasing snow melt and run-off, creating flooding conditions downstream. Dead trees should remain until understory grows to maintain shade and stabilize hydrologic cycle.
- Blowdown due to beetle kill. This is a building concern, with green trees also blowing down due to the more open canopy.

### Wildlife:

- Grizzly bear population in Big Creek is healthy and growing, but averaging with the smaller population further south gives a false indication of a lower population in Big Creek Park.
- There appears to be fewer moose over the last 10 to 15 years, likely due to access, with hunters driving roads, and predation by grizzly bears and wolves. The moose population is considered to be becoming critically low.

### Recommendations:

- Consider predator control (grizzly bear and wolves) in some instances.
- Allow hunting of grizzly bear.

- Allow continued use and presence of cabins within the park for grazing purposes.
- Cabins, and the area around them for approximately 400 metres, should be signed for “range use only” to dissuade the public from using ranch assets and using the local feed that is needed for the rancher’s horses, although it is recognized that they are available for emergencies.
- Park should have included Hungry Valley.
- Allow replacement of fence within park that will require access for equipment and clearing of hazard trees within a tree length of the fence.
- Placement of signs to prevent motorized vehicles into park.
- Reinstate locked gates on roads, with more enforcement and meaningful fines and penalties.
- Increase AUMs as it is considered that there is enough grass for cattle and wildlife:
  - Conduct a range survey to assess grass availability.
  - Cattle concentrate on certain meadows, so a prescribed burn would increase range value for all.
- Introduce a prescribed burning program to reduce buckbrush encroachment that is changing the ecology of the area due to fire suppression.
- Recognize the 100 year history of cattle grazing in the park.
- Consider that grazing was taking place prior to moose moving into the area in the 1920s.
- Consider rehabilitating old air strip south of Scallon Meadows (another old, overgrown strip is at Sherwood Lake).
- Do not allow snowmobiles in the park.
- Need more enforcement and BC Parks presence.
- Do not improve trails. Maintain as an unmaintained wilderness park.
- Discourage people from using cattle trails that were created by ranchers for grazing purposes. Disruption of cattle movement can occur.
- Measures to protect cabins and cattle in the event of a forest fire.
- Input to Forest Service on ensuring salvage logging considers health of understory, hydrology and viewscales.