



Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia: Workshop

***“Shaping the Future: Mitigating the Fragmentation and
Development of BC’s Grasslands***

***May 18th and 19th, 2004
Kamloops, BC***

MEETING SUMMARY*

**NOTE This document is a summary of the discussions as recorded at the workshop, it is not a verbatim transcript.*

VANCOUVER FOUNDATION



**The McLean
Foundation**

The Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia

The Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia (GCC) is a strategic alliance of organizations and individuals, including government, range management specialists, ranchers, agronomists, grasslands ecologists, First Nations, environmental groups, recreationalists and grassland enthusiasts. This diverse group shares a common commitment to education, conservation and stewardship of BC's grasslands.

The GCC was established as a society in August 1999 and charity in December 2001 due to growing concerns from a wide variety of organizations and individuals about the future of British Columbia's grasslands. Grasslands across BC are facing increasing pressure from urban expansion, fragmentation and development, agricultural conversion, invasive plants, abusive recreation, inappropriate land management practices and forest encroachment.

The GCC's mission is to:

- **Foster** greater understanding and appreciation for the ecological, social, economic and cultural importance of grasslands throughout BC
- **Promote** stewardship and sustainable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of BC's grasslands
- **Promote** the conservation of representative grassland ecosystems, species at risk and their habitats

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	WORKSHOP BACKGROUND AND PROCESS	1
2	INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS TUESDAY EVENING SESSION	2
2.1	Objectives of the Workshop	2
2.2	Participant Introduction	2
2.3	Opening Remarks	4
3	OVERVIEW OF FRAGMENTATION/DEVELOPMENT ISSUE	4
4	PANEL PRESENTATIONS.....	6
4.1	Non-Traditional Land Use Concepts on Ranchlands in the TNRD - Two Case Studies	6
4.2	Holding the Line on Sprawl: Our ALR as Habitat's Best Friend	7
4.3	Factors that Lead to Fragmentation: A Ranching Perspective	10
5	CLOSING REMARKS FOR TUESDAY EVENING SESSION.....	11
6	OPENING REMARKS FOR WEDNESDAY SESSION.....	12
6.1	Summary of Key Points from Evening Panellists.....	12
6.2	Clarification of ALR Intent	12
7	RESULTS FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS	13
7.1	Topic: Viability and Sustainability of Ranching	14
Theme 1	<i>Increased demand on land and water</i>	<i>14</i>
Theme 2	<i>Rancher's or land owner's desire to subdivide and/or sell.....</i>	<i>15</i>
7.2	Topic: Sustainable Grassland Use (Non Ranching).....	18
Theme 1	<i>Tourism and Recreational Use Issues.....</i>	<i>18</i>
Theme 2	<i>Recreational Housing and Associated Recreation Infrastructure Development.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Theme 3	<i>Traditional and Cultural Use and Rights.....</i>	<i>20</i>
Theme 4	<i>Intensive Agriculture</i>	<i>21</i>
7.3	Local and Regional Land Use Planning.....	22
Theme 1	<i>OCPs, RGSs and LRMPs</i>	<i>22</i>
Theme 2	<i>Incentives for Ranchers/Partners to Increase Revenue</i>	<i>24</i>
Theme 3	<i>Marketing.....</i>	<i>24</i>
Theme 4	<i>Concerns of Developers.....</i>	<i>25</i>
Theme 5	<i>Agricultural Land Reserve</i>	<i>26</i>
Theme 6	<i>Synergy</i>	<i>27</i>
Theme 7	<i>Ranching Issues.....</i>	<i>27</i>
7.4	Governance.....	29
Theme 1	<i>Legislative Elements</i>	<i>29</i>
Theme 2	<i>Political Context.....</i>	<i>31</i>
8	SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT GROUP REPORTING.....	32
9	WHERE TO FROM HERE? BRUNO DELESALLE	34

1 Workshop Background and Process

Background

Grasslands are a small but significant component of B.C.'s natural landscape. Although they represent less than 1 percent of the provincial land base, they provide critical habitat to over 30 percent of BC's threatened and endangered species and as such are one of Canada's most endangered habitats. Grasslands are also a vital component to the viability of BC's ranching community – one of the social and economic mainstays of our diverse province.

The loss of large, natural grassland areas is due largely to two main issues:

- Development of ranches into rural, small/medium acreage subdivisions, and
- Urban encroachment.

The fragmentation and development of grasslands is denigrating the social, cultural and ecological aspects associated with grasslands. This is a complex issue that stems from many interrelated factors. In order to gain an understanding of the problem, we must examine how the legislative framework, conservation issues, socio-economic aspects, and land use planning and decision-making processes interrelate. The myriad of issues associated with this problem need to be scrutinized, clarified, and applied to future land use and decision-making processes if we are to make sizable gains towards the conservation and stewardship of BC's grasslands.

Confusion and lack of information is hindering the stakeholders from being able to address the threats to BC's grasslands in a strategic and collaborative manner. The GCC has therefore decided to initiate a provincial analysis to clarify information and take action on this emerging and growing problem.

The workshop summary document and a full project description is available at:

<http://www.bcgrasslands.org/conservation/fragdev/workshop.htm>

Grasslands Conservation Council's Strategy-building Process

This process is being guided by the Fragmentation and Development Project Advisory Committee, consisting of: Graham Strachan (Ministry of Agriculture and Food), Judy Guichon (Gerard Guichon Ranch and GCC Director), Jim White (Consulting Agrologist and GCC Director), Nichola Walkden (The Land Conservancy and GCC Director), Bruno Delesalle (GCC Executive Director) and Taylor Zeeg (GCC Stewardship Program Coordinator). As this initiative proceeds, there will likely be a need to expand the advisory committee to include a broader range of interests.

The Advisory Committee established a three-step process to develop and implement a strategy for mitigating the fragmentation and development of grasslands:

- Workshop – a think-tank session with a wide range of interests to identify the key issues and explore potential solutions. As proceeds to the meeting, a workshop

summary and strategic planning tool document will be developed. The planning tool will identify priority focus areas for more in-depth analysis in Stage Two, the problem analysis.

- Problem analysis – critically examine the priority issues identified at the stakeholder workshop and develop strategic recommendations for government and non-government organizations to resolve the loss of grasslands to fragmentation and development.
- Strategy development and implementation of an action plan, including a provincial conference for planners, land managers and decision makers. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2005.

A workshop was convened on May 18th and 19th, 2004, in Kamloops to complete the first phase. A consulting team consisting of Stuart Gale (Stuart Gale and Associates), Gary Runka (Land Sense Ltd), Sandra Bicego (Dovetail Consultants) and Janet Fontaine (Logistics Consulting) were retained to work with the Advisory Committee to organize and facilitate a workshop, prepare a meeting summary, and a strategic planning tool document to assist in the development of a strategy.

2 Introductory Comments Tuesday Evening Session - Stuart Gale, Facilitator

2.1 *Objectives of the Workshop*

- Overview of status of BC's Grasslands
- Define issues and problems contributing to fragmentation and development of grasslands.
- Explore solutions to assist in addressing fragmentation and development issues.
- Build a foundation and establish priorities for a provincial grasslands strategy.

2.2 *Participant Introduction*

- Al Pattison, PIBC, Consulting Community Planner
- Andrew Swetlishoff, Planner, City of Kamloops
- Anne Moody, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
- Barb Pryce, Okanagan Program Manager, Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Brian Nyberg, Manager, Range and Integrated Resources Section, Ministry of Forests
- Bruno Delesalle, Executive Director, Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- Carmen Wong, Stewardship Director, Allan Brooks Nature Centre & Forsite Consultants Ltd.
- Carole Stark, Executive Director, Chinook Institute
- Dan Wallace, Planner, Thompson Nicola Regional District

- Dave Rae, Owner, Columbia River Estates
- Dave Whiting, Principal, Dave Whiting Consulting
- Debbie Clarke, Allen Brooks Interpretive Centre
- Dennis Lloyd, Research Ecologist, Ministry of Forests
- Gary Runka, Consultant, Land Sense Ltd.
- Graham Strachan, Resource Stewardship Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Grant Huffman, Rancher/Agricultural Land Commission Regional Panel
- Holly Campbell, Rancher/Agricultural Land Commission Regional Panel
- Howard Joynt, Business Management Specialist, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Janet Fontaine, Logistics Consulting
- Jessica Roberts, Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- Jim White, Consulting Agrologist, Rangeland Agrologists/GCC Director
- Judy Guichon, Gerard Guichon Ranch Ltd./GCC Director
- Julian Malinsky, District Business Manager, Ministry of Transportation
- Ken Favrholt, University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops
- Kevin McNaney, Community Assistance Program Coordinator, SmartGrowth BC
- Mark Quaedvlieg, President, Keremeos Stock Breeders' Association
- Martin Collins, Planning Officer, Agricultural Land Commission
- Maurice Hansen, Chair, Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- Ordell Steen, Consulting Ecologist, O.A. Steen Consulting/GCC Director
- Rick Howie, Consulting Biologist, Aspen Park Consulting
- Robin Levesque, Regional Manager, Development and Marketing Division, Land & Water BC
- Ryan Holmes, Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- Sandra Bicego, Consultant, Dovetail Consulting
- Sarah McNeil, Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- Sue Austen, South Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Program
- Susan Latimer, Ecosystems Officer, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
- Stuart Gale, Consultant, Stuart Gale and Associates
- Ted Lea, Vegetation Ecologist, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
- Terry Macdonald, Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Coordinator, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
- Tim Pringle, Executive Director, Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia

2.3 Opening Remarks – Maurice Hansen, Chair, GCC

The word “mitigate” in the workshop title means to slow down; Maurice noted that he wants to stop fragmentation and development of grasslands, slowing it isn't good enough. “The outcome is simple, stop building stuff on grasslands.”

The vitality and wellbeing of communities are based on ‘growth’, which creates a challenge. “This is a war between two different views – those that see grasslands as a commodity to be bought, sold and developed and those that want to see it protected and managed.” Maurice noted that the word “development” has a positive connotation, but to friends of grasslands ‘development’ writes off biological capital. Biological capital can provide a flow of goods and services into perpetuity.

“If we are courageous, diligent and successful at this – grasslands will thank us.”

Maurice Hansen, Chair, GCC

Maurice cited the example in eastern Colorado where “commuter communities” are being built on grasslands, supported by government policies. On the positive side, 83% of Americans claim support for the environmental movement and by extrapolating this number to Canada and to grasslands conservation, there is a reason to believe that a difference can be made.

3 Overview of Fragmentation/Development Issue Bruno Delesalle, Executive Director, GCC

The objective of the presentation is to provide an overview of the status of grasslands.

Background – for over 2 years, various groups have been calling the GCC asking what is being done to stop development of BC's grasslands. The issue is not going away and the problem is not being solved by advocacy and raising awareness alone. The GCC felt that it was time to bring all stakeholders to the table and begin to forge a strategy to address and solve the problem.

Grasslands comprise 0.8 percent of the provincial land base and provide critical habitat to 33% of BC's species at risk.

Grasslands:

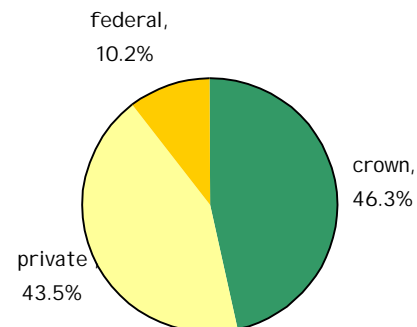
- occur throughout the province – from northern Peace region to Gulf Islands, Kootenays, Caribou/Chilcotin, and Southern Interior Regions;
- are diverse, comprise many different habitats, support species and endangered species; and
- are important forage for cattle and wildlife.

Grasslands in Peril

Pressures include the following:

- Urban Sprawl – satellite communities result in immediate and incremental losses (creating new access, spreading weeds, etc., more recreational use and demand).

Land Status of BC's Grasslands



- Intensive Agriculture – for example, ginseng, orchards and vineyards are very prevalent in the Okanagan.
- Subdivision development – ranches sold off to hobby farms, ranchettes, residential and recreational properties. Associated with this are increasing land values in BC. For example, Stump Lake Ranch created 40 acre lots being developed for recreational property – roads and subtle incremental changes to the landscape are the result of one house.

Statistics were provided for loss of grasslands (through intensive agriculture or urbanization) for the following regions:

- North and South Okanagan Basins
- South Thompson Grasslands
- Thompson/Pavilion Grasslands
- East Kootenay Grasslands

An additional 70,000 people will move into the central Okanagan over the next 20 years. Steady growth is also predicted for the north Okanagan, Thompson and Nicola regions and Kootenays.

The GCC's Process to Build a Strategy

1. Think Tank - this workshop is the first stage in a process, the purpose is to identify the issues and suggest some solutions.
2. From the workshop a list of priorities will be developed.
3. Undertake a problem analysis of the priority issues to begin developing solutions.
4. Develop a strategy and implementation plan. Focus will be on an action plan – the GCC may need another conference to bring in various stakeholders to implement the strategies. The issues are complex involving jurisdictional, cultural and socio-economic issues.

Questions/Comments

- **Historical Clarification.** “Much of the loss took place 100 years ago and the greatest loss took place 140 years ago.” Bruno – agreed, the GCC's numbers are from about 50-60 years ago due to difficulty in obtaining historical data.
- **Causes of Fragmentation and Development.** “Are highway systems and public infrastructure captured in urban sprawl issues?” Bruno – yes, the two areas of focus are urban sprawl and larger tracks held by private land owners.
- **Loss from Agricultural Development.** “As shown on pie charts, loss due to intensive agriculture seems more significant than that from urban sprawl.” Bruno - intensive agriculture is an issue that we have to discuss. Ranchers have been stewards of the land and have maintained ecosystem value, but if the lands are converted to ginseng or vineyards for example, we lose that value.
- **Greatest Impact.** “The major impact from intensive agriculture may have already occurred. Urban development is at the beginning stages of impacting grasslands. Urbanization is going to accelerate (infrastructure into the interior) and in another 30 years the pie charts will change drastically.”

4 Panel Presentations

4.1 *Non-Traditional Land Use Concepts on Ranchlands in the Thompson Nicola Regional District - Two Case Studies* *Dan Wallace, TNRD Planner*

In the last 10 years there have been a number of changes in the way we recreate, and live in our landscape. Retiring baby boomers are moving into the region to live and recreate on a full time basis. This has forced planners and ranchers alike to accommodate their needs and we see the fragmentation of cattle ranches and diversification of others.

The Gold Rush of 1858-62 inundated this area with homesteaders. Ranchers and newcomers came and saw value in land. Ranches slowly built cattle empires, sometimes by buying smaller ranches at fire sale prices.

Cattle ranching became a mainstay in 1860 – agriculture and forestry were prime economic forces. Ranchers care for the grasslands that feed their cattle. But some changes have occurred – increased regulation and range management – fencing, weeds, water, liability issues, uncertainty of haying and grazing tenures, recent court cases in aboriginal tenures and fluctuation of pricing. Combining these issues with an unrelenting global economy and increasing operating costs, drought, and disease. Some ranchers have difficulty making ends meet.

“We have two choices – pretend it will go away OR help the public plan for change.”

Dan Wallace, TNRD Planner

Quilchena Ranch Case Study

Quilchena Ranch is 125 years old, it has had diversified into non-ranching operations for 100 years (e.g., hotel, gas station, air strip golf course, quarry).

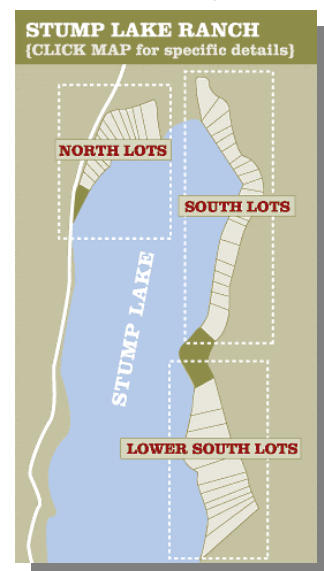
The latest diversification of the ranch involved the creation of 42 full service, residential lake shore lots on the shores of Nicola Lake.

Density averaging was used to concentrate development in one area and protect land for ranching on other areas. Density averaging involves taking the subdivision potential of the total area and concentrating it all in one parcel. In this case, the large parcel was divided into three parcels: a) 40 lots along the lake; b) “common property” behind the lots; and c) a no-development zone leased back to the ranch for ranching purposes – in perpetuity. Covenants were used as a tool to freeze the third parcel from development. The environmental goals achieved on the covenant land would not have been attainable without density averaging.

Stump Lake Case Study

Stump Lake Ranch is a large ranch comprised of many separate deeded properties, some bordered on Stump Lake. Diversification occurred here using density averaging as a tool. Lakeshore lots were exchanged with upland consolidated properties.

Traditional properties are also now in the hands of private land owners – meaning an increase in domestic animals, roads, and the human footprint. Owners of the lots leased the non residential areas back to Stump Lake Ranch. As more lots are removed from the safety blanket – the



likelihood is that non ranching uses apply. Can an individual property owner be educated to be as good or better stewards of the land than previous land owner?

Increasing Value of Recreational Property

The average price of recreational land in BC increased from \$35,000 per hectare in 1988 to \$275,000 per hectare in 2003. Nicola Valley and Kelowna are the most popular areas for recreational properties. These numbers put pressure on ranchers to diversify their ranching income through subdivision.

Preservation of grasslands is important to most people. But many people don't know the damage they create. In the Nicola Valley – ATV and motorized damage on upland portions of the lakeshore lots is occurring and this is very concerning to the residents.

Some thoughts to finish with:

- Non traditional land uses of ranches as a result of changing economics and demographics has forced us to create new approaches to new ideas – strike a more accommodating balance
- Ask what is right and build on the foundation and educate people about diversification of economy as well as the conservation of grasslands.
- It takes the right tools to ensure critical elements are protected for future generations.

Questions/Comments

- **Density Averaging as Planning Tool.** “Can the covenant land be used for other agricultural uses?.” Dan – this particular covenant directed the property to be preserved as a whole unit for agriculture.
- **Governance and Planning Tools.** “Think carefully about how strong those tools really are – some are weak. There are issues related to enforcement and penalties for breaking covenants that make them less attractive. Local government has to look into how much control it wants to have over such things for the long term. We need a more creative set of tools.”
- **Lack of Water.** “Lack of water is the reason the c. 1860 homesteads were sold at fire sale prices. Water continues to be a problem and it is an issue that needs more emphasis. For example, we are permitting the construction of very large houses on the lake with shake roofs; this is a desert area and we need begin to consider water in planning.”
- **Interaction between TNRD Planners and MOT.** “How successful were TNRD planners with MoT staff for these subdivisions?” Dan – there was a high level of communication between us, the MoT Approving Officer, the Proponent and a consultant. We worked collaboratively to decide on a course of action. We did not need to invoke the public interest caveat in this case.

4.2 *Holding the Line on Sprawl: Our ALR as Habitat's Best Friend* *Kevin McNaney, Smart Growth BC*

Smart Growth is a non-profit organization with five staff, directed by a Board. Smart Growth works with communities of all sizes to help plan for growth and achieve social, economic and environmental balance.

Urban Sprawl

Urban sprawl is seen all over the province. It is not a magical thing; we have done this on purpose. The 'sprawl dynamic' is a result of a number of factors:

- Building designs and standards are readily available
- Insurance-friendly
- Supported by investment infrastructure

“Don't accept the status quo – ask if we are meeting our livability objectives.”

Rural Sprawl

People expect the same level of services in rural areas (storm water, curbs, et cetera). We are waiting for next house because all the services now exist. Rural sprawl changes native flora and fauna, creates impacts from domestic animals and increases human-wildlife conflicts. Literature cites a general disturbance area of 100 - 800 metres around a single house.

*Kevin McNaney,
Smart Growth BC*

Rural Sustainability

A good example of rural sustainability can be seen in Salobrena, Spain (built in the 4th Century). Houses are constructed on the least capable land for agriculture - keeping the money-generating land in the agriculturally productive areas.

Keremeos, BC is another example of sustainable growth. Keremeos keeps the “town in the town” and the “country in the country”. This maximizes the use of infrastructure, provides a mixed-use, walkable community, and allows agriculture and farming to thrive.

Preferred Approach

- Maximize use of existing infrastructure before making additional investments
- Meet planning goals such as nodal development and creating vibrant neighbourhoods around commercial centres
- Preserve agricultural, rural and habitat lands
- Support transportation, air pollution, and other quality of life goals
- Limit the social and environmental costs of sprawl

The Agricultural Land Reserve

- Established between 1972-1974 through the Agricultural Land Reserve Act
- BC was losing 13,000 acres of prime farmland per year to urban expansion
- Only 5% of BC is arable land
- Regulates the use and subdivision of agricultural land
- Generates \$2.2 billion per year in economic activity and creates 200,000 jobs.
- Has served as an effective tool for achieving urban containment

Two Approaches: Vancouver and Seattle

Growth studies in Seattle, WA and Vancouver, BC from 1990/1991 through to 2000/2001 showed that the ALR was effective in urban containment. The

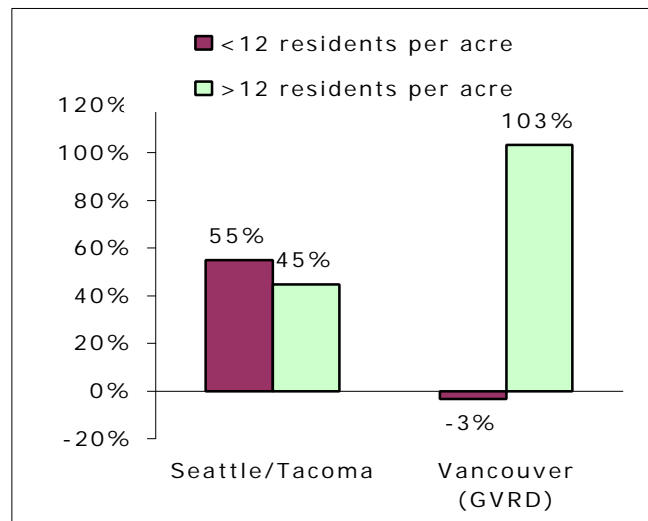


chart shows growth by density category, as a share of total metropolitan population increase. At 12 people per acre you can begin to achieve viable transit and mixed use. The City of Richmond has grown significantly in population but not at the expense of agricultural land.

Provincially, the ALR has been successful in maintaining quantity – 6000 hectares have been added to the ALR over the last 30 years; ALR is still 5 percent of BC's land base.

Concerns About the ALR

- Moving from province-wide to regional panels – more inconsistency between panels, ALR has been thus far removed from local pressures, and there are fewer Commissioners looking at decisions.
- Delegation agreements download Commission decisions to local governments who don't have the capacity to deal with agriculture. Seen as good for those who want land out of the ALR.
- More responsive to 'community interests' – how do you define this? The provincial power of the ALR helped to avoid this.
- Lack of transparency around exclusion provisions. How does one find out if an application for exclusion is in place?
- Change in the way applications are coming forward. We are seeing municipal policies for exclusion (i.e. Abbotsford) for future urban development; a very upsetting trend.

Smart Growth's Four-Part Approach:

Awareness among all governmental, industry, and community interests of the important role of the ALR as BC's most important smart growth tool;

Policy Reform at the local, regional and provincial level to preserve and protect the ALR in perpetuity;

Implementation of ALR protection in all land use planning processes through increased capacity and tools at the local government level; and

Celebration of the uniqueness of the ALR in BC's history as a force for creating compact, complete communities and a means of ensuring our provincial food security.

Additional Information can be found at: www.smartgrowth.com and

ALRwatch Listserve: alrwatch-subscribe@smartgrowth.bc.ca

Questions/Comments

- **Additions to ALR.** Are there any applications to add land to ALR?" Kevin – yes there have been additions, but more recently exclusion applications have gone up by 35% since the start of the regional panels. Agritourism is a growing trend as land within ALR can have up to 10 bed units.
- **Grasslands Issues.** "Some grasslands are not within the ALR and some within the ALR aren't highly productive." Kevin – there are some non-productive lands in the ALR – however from an urban containment aspect, these lower quality lands have an important role as a buffer between urban and rural lands.
- **Interior Thompson Grasslands.** "Some lands are not in the ALR and they should be – ALR provides a hard line to stop infrastructure into the rural areas.

- **Reliance on ALR for Grasslands.** “The ALR preserves agricultural land – if we are using it to contain for urban growth it won't work. More and more ALR is under challenge and if we rely on it we're sunk. Urban containment has to be tied to property values and infrastructure.” Kevin – ALR has been effective in urban containment.
- **ALR Challenged.** “As ALR is challenged more and more, it's not going to work as a 'back door' tool. Twenty-five acres just came out of ALR near Vernon. Regarding grasslands – the ALR is trying to preserve rangelands, but eventually the ALR will move away from this to concentrate only on productive agricultural lands.

4.3 *Factors that Lead to Fragmentation: A Ranching Perspective* *Grant Huffman, Rancher and ALR Commissioner*

Economic Viability

“Is economic viability a big issue? YES. ‘Follow the money’ is the reality – if it isn't there you will see ranchers leave.”

Most ranchers know how things ought to be done, but sometimes it isn't practical.

Ranchers have forgotten about profit in the place of production – sometimes an individual can make more money with a small amount of cattle as opposed to the operation that brings in the largest herd (taking more energy). “Pride is an issue, we need to operate with the resources we have available.”

“The ranching industry is based on grasslands – it is our competitive advantage.”

Grant Huffman, Rancher

Recreational Impacts

“It is a rancher's responsibility to provide the pastoral playground for the city folks.”

Recreationalists are having a significant impact on a rancher's ability to operate. There is recreational chaos and no one is taking up the challenge to manage these activities. Recreationalists want all the benefits yet have no responsibility and pay none of the costs.

The recreation tenure policy, which is based on overlaying tenures, is worrisome. It may be attractive until you are one of the users. In the Chilcotin Wildlife Management Area (near Grant's ranch) people with ATVs and four-wheel drives from the interior and lower mainland are impacting the land and are disrespectful / ignorant about damage to grasslands and wildlife management issues.

Wildlife Impacts

On any day from mid October until May, there are 250-800 deer on Grant's hayfields – they are attracted to the forage. Deer and sheep like the alfalfa fields more so than the bunch grass. Loss of crops is becoming an issue and it must be addressed as it speaks to viability.

“Ecosystem” Management

Humans tend to control the easy things like fire but if you do this, you create spin-off problems like forest encroachment. “If you are in for a dime you’re in for a dollar. In our self centered arrogance we control it, but we only go part way. The partial control has caused problems in the ungulate population because we are limiting habitat. We are already down this road – do we mimic nature? We need to do the follow up on this issue.”

Larger Ranches buying Smaller Ranches

There is dwindling equity in some ranches as 2nd, 3rd and 4th mortgages are taken to keep the operation from bankruptcy. This leaves the equity at zero or in deficit and unless there is viability ranchers will end up with no other alternative than development. “None of us want to see this happen but how do you avoid it? Controlled markets? Not for cattlemen.”

Is it that ranchers can't be competitive in an extensive ranching situation? Grant thinks ranchers can be competitive, but ranchers have a marketing and market access problem.

Agricultural Land Reserve

The ALR is not necessarily for grasslands. It is a planning tool that can be used to contain sprawl? As an ALC Commissioner, Grant is not sure that containing sprawl is in his mandate. We are looking at exclusion applications from an agricultural perspective. Planners should not expect the ALC to make the tough decisions about urban sprawl.

Questions/Comments

- **Recreational Responsibility.** “Society hasn’t addressed the issue of large land owners being responsible for protecting wildlife values. We don’t put the same onus on a city landowner. There is an inherent notion that large landowners have the responsibility to provide for wildlife habitat.”
- **Intensive Agriculture and Urban Development.** “Both of these require water. Lots of discussion is going on about water policy and how nature plays out is anyone’s guess – but it is a limiting factor for development in the Okanagan. The other factor is energy cost – price of gas is tripling. Grasslands issues may diminish as these other issues come into play. Maybe someone invents something to help or hinder – be prepared for surprises.”

5 Closing Remarks for Tuesday Evening Session - Stuart Gale, Facilitator

As we have heard from the presenters, the factors leading to the fragmentation and development of grasslands are complex. There are a myriad of issues including the economic viability of ranching, urban expansion, recreation demand, overlapping government jurisdiction and changes in policy – all of which can contribute to an increasing loss of grassland.

At the same time there is a growing awareness about the importance of grasslands and a desire to do something about this progressive pattern of erosion. There are also a variety of existing and potential tools available to address grassland fragmentation and development. Our job in preparation for tomorrow’s breakout sessions is to reflect on

the issues that are most critical and in need of urgent attention and to think of potential solutions that may be available to address these issues.

A summary of the issues contributing to the loss and fragmentation of grasslands and questions relating to each of the breakout topics is provided in the background document handed out with the registration package. Participants are encouraged to review this document in preparation for tomorrow's discussion.

6 Opening Remarks for Wednesday Session

6.1 *Summary of Key Points from Evening Panellists, Stuart Gale*

- **Dan Wallace (TNRD)** provided two examples of ranches developed for recreational purposes. Several tools such as density averaging were described as a means for ranchers to diversify their business operations. Density averaging involves concentrating density in one area of a parcel (i.e. around a feature) and the use of a covenant to protect the remaining lands in the parcel from development. These types of tool can help secure large areas of land for agricultural use and assist in managing other values such as riparian areas, habitat and ecological features.
- **Kevin McNaney (Smart Growth BC)** spoke about using ALR to contain urban expansion into agricultural lands. Expansion should not be seen as a prerequisite for economic growth. Richmond's agricultural hectarage has remained in tact and the economy has grown significantly. Keremeos was used to show how urban and residential density is contained in one area to allow for the highest and best use on the agricultural lands surrounding the community. The point is that ALR can be used as a tool to maintain lands in agricultural use and contain urban growth. At the same time it was acknowledged that the ALR was not specifically designed as a tool to contain urban expansion into rural areas and that other tools will need to be considered to protect grasslands from urban expansion.
- **Grant Huffman (Rancher and ALR Commissioner)** gave his perspective on the reality of what ranchers face in terms of economic pressures on their operations. Many ranchers are reaching a threshold whereby ranching is not viable on its own and they either must sell or find another way to generate income. The pressures on grasslands for other uses are increasing (e.g. recreation/tourism in grasslands; wildlife interactions, forest encroachment, urban expansion, public expectations, water issues, etc).

6.2 *Clarification of ALR Intent*

Stuart asked Gary Runka and Martin Collins to provide a clarification of the intent of the ALR. This can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

6.3 Attendees Meet in Breakout Groups to Discuss Four Main Topic Areas.

Stuart asked that the participants meet with their pre-assigned breakout groups. The Breakout groups will report their key issues and potential solutions to the main session.

Breakout Group Topic	Facilitated By:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viability and sustainability of ranching ▪ Sustainable grassland use (non-ranching) ▪ Local and regional land use planning ▪ Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gary Runka (Consultant) Sandra Bicego (Consultant) Taylor Zeeg (GCC, Coordinator) Stuart Gale (Facilitator)

7 Results from Breakout Groups

Participants agreed on a number of theme areas for their Topic Area and identified a number of issues for each theme area. In some cases potential actions or solutions were offered for the issues.

The following is an example of how Breakout Results are organized:

TOPIC 1 Viability and Sustainability of Ranching

Theme 1: Increased demand on land and water due to urbanization and growth.

ISSUES (Theme 1)

- Influence of the ALR – restricted development on ALR increases pressure on nearby non ALR grassland landbase

Potential Actions or Solutions

- Education is necessary for the general public to understand what is happening on agricultural land. The ranching industry should use education as a marketing tool.

7.1 Topic: Viability and Sustainability of Ranching

Theme 1 Increased demand on land and water due to urbanization and rural residential growth.

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence of the ALR – required uses inside ALR may increase pressure on grasslands outside the ALR. There is a conflict between keeping grasslands as they are in ALR and using portions of them intensely to allow other priority areas to be conserved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education is necessary for the general public to understand what is happening on agricultural land. The ranching industry should use education as a marketing tool. Putting all grasslands in the ALR would solve some problems, but would create others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current system of taxation encourages the creation of ranchettes, which are at risk of being improperly managed (financial and ecological viability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve farm tax status, minimum on-farm income must be raised high enough to encourage viable ranching operations to be kept intact -- or increase property taxes of ranchettes that do not meet status requirements to lessen attractiveness to develop. Provide regulations and education for small parcel owners that will help reduce the impacts of fragmentation. This may be a good way to mitigate the impacts of already-fragmented regions, but should not be used as criteria for allowing fragmentation. Ranchettes and small holdings may be a way to provide an urban agricultural interface that is less abrupt; this may have benefits for conservation and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water being supplied to development is taking away from the already limited water source needed to maintain viable ranching and healthy grasslands. Water and land cannot be kept separate they are both finite, natural resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of water should be considered as a barrier to creating subdivisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impacts to grasslands if they are part of treaty settlement lands and concern about transparency of process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage cash settlements instead of land settlements. Maintain ALR status of grasslands following treaty settlement

Theme 2 Rancher's or land owner's desire to subdivide and/or sell

ISSUES (Theme 2)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a lack of provincial government support for agriculture and especially ranching, making it more difficult to earn a living from ranching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a need for policy (provincial) and framework to support ranching and grassland conservation. The framework must allow easier management and improvement of land base by ranchers and have provincial political support for the industry. ▪ Create policies with early input from ranching and conservation interests, not "top-down". ▪ Create a policy that is coordinated amongst the many agencies that manage or tenure grasslands related activities. ▪ Education and awareness about ranching and grasslands issues should be targeted to the public and to all levels of government so that ranching becomes seen as an important and valuable industry in BC. ▪ Ranchers may need to form a coalition (perhaps banding with the environmental movement) to sell agriculture as a way to responsibly use water, maintain clean air and biodiversity, cycle carbon, et cetera. ▪ Work with environmentalists and recreationalists who are educated and engaged to lobby government.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The purchasers of ranchettes /hobby farms are often unaware of stewardship issues related to healthy grasslands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate local government planners about grasslands to better coordinate grasslands conservation and subdivision development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stewardship incentives do not exist for small-holdings to ensure they provide a positive urban/agriculture interface. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a provision for compensation (e.g. results-based rewards) if ranchers are managing their landscape for the public good.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversification needs to be more supportive of ranching and therefore of grassland conservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify critical grasslands habitats so that impacts can be considered when diversifying.

ISSUES (Theme 2)

Potential Actions or Solutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Diversification to intensive agriculture has a negative impact on grasslands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Consider converting a small piece of mediocre grassland to intensive agricultural use to keep the ranch (as a whole) viable and intact.▪ Conversion to intensive agriculture may be better for grassland health than residential development, as agriculture can more easily be restored to native grassland (lesser of two evils). Water needs, recreational use, and other disturbances may not be as substantial from intensive agriculture as from residential development. Vineyards are quite permanent and therefore less desirable for diversification. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Diversification to recreation is dangerous to grasslands stewardship. General grassland ecology is more sensitive to motorized recreation. Some ranchers obtain recreation tenures with no intention of using them, simply to keep others from obtaining recreation tenures on grazing land. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Look into a way to balance the financial benefits of diversification and the challenges associated with recreation on ranches.▪ Agro-Tourism can be a way to diversify farm income and educate the public (e.g. bed and breakfasts). This can ease financial pressures and may allow ranches to remain viable and intact. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There are no real tax incentives or compensation for ranchers who manage their lands using ecologically sound practices. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide tax incentives or compensation including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in land taxes. There is recognition and reduced tax on ALR land, but there is room for additional tax breaks. Increased breaks on land tax would take some pressure off ranchers, but may not be popular with the public.• Direct compensation may be more attractive than tax breaks. Tax breaks may be too general as ranches have varied challenges and costs with respect to conservation.• Provide results-based rewards, such as benefits from wildlife limited-entry hunting tags.• Federal tax deductions could be developed for maintaining habitats for Species at Risk. For example, create a system whereby ranchers/land owners report on their stewardship activities and then receive a tax break that is commensurate to the costs incurred. This is similar to the principle of set-asides, which is being used successfully by the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust in the Fraser River Delta. The result is that ranchers are not paid to be unproductive, but to be productive in terms other than pounds of beef. At present there is a lack of trust that may impede ranchers from buying in – imposing this system will not work, there must be gradual buy-in. |
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ISSUES (Theme 2)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting data for wildlife inventory is challenging, as ranchers do not know how information will be applied. There is a lack of trust between ranchers and government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look into the Eco-gift policy as a possible solution. At present this applies to forestry, not agriculture. Idea is to give corporations some tax credit advantages if they dedicate land (but retain ownership). • Provide easier access to intergenerational tax roll-over so ranches can be passed laterally within a family, or through generations that are not direct descendants. • Look into agricultural status tax breaks. • Look into tax breaks for those who buy a fragmented piece of land and then lease it back to the rancher. This may accelerate fragmentation, but land remains in use for ranching.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ranchers mistrust conservation agreements and trusts, even though they may be beneficial. Conservation agreements are administered by NGO's, but there is as much distrust for NGO's as for government. Trusts must be kept as working ranches, or surrounding ranches will lose important infrastructure. Ranchers need to be assured that changes will not jeopardize their business. Income from ranching alone will not support conservation efforts on the land, the money for conservation presently comes from HCTF, therefore it is not practical to be able to support very many ranches in this way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No solutions identified ▪ Trusts do not seem practical at this time. It must remain voluntary to work. If a system is to be developed, then it must appeal to ranchers. ▪ Purchase of development rights and amalgamation of titles is a possibility. The purchaser of development rights must trust that ranchers will honour the agreement. Ranchers can be specific about what development rights exist. ▪ Interaction with ALC is also possible, but the ALC cannot support trusts that limit agricultural development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grassland areas may be included in First Nation settlement lands, where conservation may not be the priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage First Nations to accept forested lands versus grasslands because of their increased economic potential. ▪ Settle land claims with cash instead of land. ▪ Make the native land claim process more transparent. ▪ Rare/ecologically valuable areas must be identified and made a priority for conservation.

Other Issues/Additional Information:

The Provincial Weed Strategy is a good example of a coalition throughout the province working on policy change. Is this possible for grasslands? The weed strategy, the Off Road Vehicle regulating and provincial Best Management Practices (BMPs) are very different issues than fragmentation/development in terms of establishing policy. Fragmentation and development affects people's lifestyle; where and how they live, taxes, et cetera. The weed strategy worked in large part because Dave Chutter campaigned and was elected to work on a weed strategy. GCC needs to work on policy change from the top down and from the ground up.

7.2 Topic: Sustainable Grassland Use (Non Ranching)

The group felt that this group should be called "non-grazing" because of the negative connotation in the term "non-ranching". The group agreed that there are "other" uses of grasslands needed to help sustain ranching uses.

Theme 1 Tourism and Recreational Use Issues

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreational Chaos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses are not monitored or licensed • users are not accountable for damage/destruction (have all the benefits and responsible for none of the costs) • users are not aware of grasslands values/impacts ▪ Unmanaged Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trespass on private land • unrestricted access to crown land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support private landowners to manage use and educate public users on their land. ▪ Support recreation organizations to self-police and manage their use (guidelines, best practices). ▪ Provide education materials about areas sensitive to fires. ▪ Establish and enforce regulations for sensitive grasslands areas (e.g., quotas, closures, etc). ▪ Include recreation "areas" or zones in local and regional planning. ▪ Pre-plan recreational access in new developments to minimize dispersal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial Recreational Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overlapping and mismanaged commercial tenures on crown land. • certain uses impact other tenure holders • brings more people in because opens land up for more public access and use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulate misuse of license according to set standards and include penalties (according to impact level). ▪ Educate through tenure holders. ▪ Improve management of overlapping tenures. ▪ Improve ability for LWBC to identify issues and address them through management planning.

Theme 2 Recreational Housing and Associated Recreation Infrastructure Development

ISSUES (Theme 2)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conversion of grasslands landscapes to resorts, condo's, golf courses, lodges/retreat centres, staging areas, trails/access routes.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• challenge is to maintain the quality of the recreation experience <u>and</u> integrity of the ecosystems.• moving to the interior is based on "amenity migration" for employment, retirement, and vacation (periodic, permanent settlements). The natural beauty of area is the main attraction for amenity migration, but increasing development leads to destruction of this amenity.• problems with inconsistent/ad-hoc planning and in the long term, saturation of the market.• condos and vacation homes lead to urban sprawl development where satellite communities are created which require services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Solutions will differ between private land and crown land developments.▪ Big picture planning – proactively identify where development is appropriate so that it occurs in a sustainable manner.▪ Map sensitive grassland areas with intent to preserve them and include it in all relevant plans. Local and regional planners need this information.▪ Require developer-driven assessments. There are pros and cons to this (e.g., quality of consultant reports and how information is used by the developer). Require proper assessments to be conducted before development is planned, and monitor during and after development.▪ Strengthen provincial legislation directing tourism development assessments regarding protecting sensitive grasslands habitats/ecosystems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lack of incentive/motivation for developers to go beyond basic regulations to "environmentally sensitive development."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strengthen and enforce minimum standards, best practices▪ Increase voluntary incentives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Large recreation developments have not typically involved the public, planners and decision-makers. Human use, economic and social values are not factored into the planning process early enough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Involve local values (citizens, recreation users, tourism industry) in planning issues alongside ecological and economic values.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lack of information on ecological values in development planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use tools, such as sensitive ecosystem mapping, to identify priority areas to inform development planning. This information is usable by local governments, First Nations, communities, developers and recreation/parks development.

ISSUES (Theme 2)

Potential Actions or Solutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hobby farms <p>The group did not have time to discuss this issue other than to say hobby farms are another means of fragmenting grasslands.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mapping helps identify where hobby farms can occur appropriately. ▪ Use zoning and planning that is based on ecological sustainability. |
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Theme 3 Traditional and Cultural Use and Rights

ISSUES (Theme 3)

Potential Actions or Solutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In areas outside of Indian Reserves, First Nations are concerned about access to traditional use areas (sacred sites, food use plants). ▪ Current land use practices and planning does not encompass First Nations concerns for traditional uses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of important areas (mapping). ▪ Some mapping may have already been undertaken by First Nations groups. Need to build relationship with First Nations in order to share information. ▪ Build trust and partnership by inclusion in all processes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Nations Uses on Indian Reserve Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 percent of grasslands are on Indian Reserves • First Nations are in process of developing their lands (driven by market forces) • Do we have the right to expect these lands to remain undeveloped? • There are discrepancies within bands on what development activities are appropriate. • First Nations lands are subject to Federal review. Is it fair that SARA applies to a greater extent on First Nations lands? • First Nations practices may impact grasslands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Nations need to be included in the process; they can be conservation allies due to their concerns for maintaining their customs and traditional uses of the land. Use this as a strength for conservation of grasslands. |

Theme 4 Intensive Agriculture

ISSUES (Theme 4)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive agriculture leads to loss of unique/rare ecosystems and loss of contiguous grassland, contributing to fragmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to identify what these systems are and plan for smart intensive agriculture development Continuity of grasslands could be achieved by allowing corridor connectivity through areas of intensive agriculture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive agriculture demands more water than ranching, which has broader impacts beyond grasslands (e.g., fish needs). Water use can cause impacts to riparian habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider appropriate uses of water sources and factor in real/total costs. Identify real costs of access to water. Research is needed on water use (impacts and long-term solutions).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crops are limited to where they can grow – by soil type, terrain, water needs, temperature, and other conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose appropriate location for crop production. Identify what is suitable land for such crops that least impact grasslands. Identify where agriculturalists put their efforts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hay production and other growing of non-native seeding/grasses impacts grassland integrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider that hay production is necessary for viable ranching. Hay and other non-native crops promote viable ranching and help keep large areas of grassland intact and healthy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factors leading to intensive agriculture are based on economics – the ability to make money by diversification of an operation and making it commercially viable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at incentives (programs) for landowners not to enter into intensive agricultural practices (e.g. tax incentives, old field concepts, grass banking, paying farmers not to use land).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High fertilizer/pesticide use from intensive agriculture production is an impact. Federal government monitoring occurs, but we do not know the outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factor in long term real costs and long term sustainability of the activity. Make monitoring reports available so that action can be taken.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change as an issue in relating to grasslands that needs to be addressed at all levels of planning and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Solutions Identified

Other Issues/Additional Information:

The group also raised the following themes, but did not have time to address them:

Conservation

- Need to ensure balance with ranching/grazing uses of grasslands

Education

- Lack of understanding about importance of grasslands and the issues of fragmentation and development on grasslands.

Crown Land Sales

- For private uses and other agricultural uses
- Limits ability to maintain grasslands once transferred to private land.
- Potential Solution: need to map key areas

Utility Corridor Development

- Linear development, rights of way, pipelines
- Management practices involve maintenance, repair, operations – all of which lead to impacts
- Assists in increasing access to remote areas and leads to the arrival of more people to grassland areas

Resource Extraction

- Examples such as gravel and mining.
- Exploration can also lead to impacts to grasslands (e.g., driving/using/setting up machines on grasslands; maintenance; removal).

Water

- An important issue
- Is important across all our themes
- A limiting factor for grassland use

Municipal Effluent Spray for Irrigation

- Spread of effluents in liquid and solid form

7.3 Local and Regional Land Use Planning

Theme 1 Official Community Plans (OCPs), Regional Growth Strategies (RGSs) and Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs)

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is difficult to implement LRMPs, and to monitor the implementation.▪ LRMP focus is on crown land, while OCP/RGS focus mostly on private land▪ Funding restrictions and government cutbacks further impede the ability to monitor LRMPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ List the types of land included in an LRMP process – and require the process to deal with values.▪ Provide resources for practitioners such as best management practices (BMTs) and case studies.

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a disconnect between local/regional plans, and broader provincial government ideas/visions/plans. ▪ Need consistency in planning departments when dealing with developers – consistent message and approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statements recognizing the multiple uses of land in the area must be addressed at the start of any plan; this will allow the incorporation of these uses into objectives and make them a priority. ▪ Regional initiatives such as South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) are positive as it looks at the region as a whole from all levels. ▪ Create regional committees to address grasslands issues (possibly in collaboration or as an extension of initiatives such as SOSCP and East Kootenay Conservation Program). ▪ Encourage local governments to a set minimum parcel size to mitigate breakup of ranches. ▪ Real Estate Foundation can be used as an information source. It is dedicated to compiling a resource database, conducting research where needed, and bringing people together to share ideas and information (Planning for Communities in Non-Metropolitan Areas). ▪ Increase taxes for sprawl (market infilling, tax incentives for infilling). ▪ Re-establish a provincial land-use secretariat (or similar position) to coordinate efforts. ▪ Key is to get many partners and members together to share both the burden and the solution. ▪ There must be on the ground buy-in, and if enough groups agree, the government will provide the necessary support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCPs/RGSs currently lack up-front recognition of wider values and diverse land uses. (Example of Kamloops South/Nicola Valley OCP currently being developed and lack grassland conservation wording) ▪ Most grasslands are out of the OCP focus area. ▪ OCPs lack preservation statements (or the recognition of the need to preserve open spaces). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCP and RGSs need stewardship statements and value statements and strategies to ensure values are met. ▪ A separate strategy may be needed for grasslands within an RGS. ▪ Provide local planners with BMPs and example bylaws that address grassland conservation issues. ▪ Look into opportunities to expand OCP boundaries to include more grasslands, and to make changes that address the needs of grasslands.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem with enforcing “no development” covenants granted through the density averaging process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>No solutions identified</i>

ISSUES (Theme 1)

Potential Actions or Solutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is difficult to negotiate property rights with developers without tools. ▪ Planning Tools tend to focus on settled areas, need to focus more on natural areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>No solutions identified</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of grasslands conservation plans on Indian Reserve Lands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>No solutions identified</i> |

Theme 2 Incentives for Ranchers/Partners to Increase Revenue

ISSUES (Theme 2)

Potential Actions or Solutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do we encourage developers to make better choices with respect to grasslands conservation and stewardship? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Density-bonusing: allowing additional lots within a given area provided that the developer will comply with certain conditions. ▪ Carbon credits – look into the issue of sequestering carbon (and the selling of carbon credits to either government or industry) through the preservation of open spaces. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developers do not want land that is protected under covenant, but covenants are one of the best ways to protect land. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>No solutions identified</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The land owner has the right to do whatever he/she wants with the land, provided it falls within his/her legal rights, therefore there must be some sort of incentive to encourage “responsible” development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look into instances (in the US, for example) whereby landowners, who purchased land that had been subdivided from a ranch, pay a supplement to the rancher to keep ranching; in turn this protects the grasslands around them from further development. |

Theme 3 Marketing

ISSUES (Theme 3)

Potential Actions or Solutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can we market grasslands-conscious development as “positive” and development that threatens grasslands as “negative”? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TLC public conservation labels, or other labeling for a development to depict as environmentally sensitive/responsible. |
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ISSUES (Theme 3)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open spaces have intrinsic value, but most people are only interested in economic value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No solutions identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we encourage mixed-use urban in filling? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of running services to remote areas such as Bachelor Heights, Raleigh, etc. is high and affects an increase in taxes. Pursue the idea of marketing urban infilling as a means to lower taxes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlikely that development in high value areas can be halted completely, so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to find ways to assist with development to ensure values are preserved

Theme 4 Concerns of Developers

ISSUES (Theme 4)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lack of best management practices/ guidelines for developers and property owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of WLAP is developing BMP guidelines for developers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers usually lack background in conservation and/or planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to “have conservationists become developers” and vice versa. Something is needed to help ease path and lessen the strain on relationship between developers and conservationists.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives are lacking for developers to proceed on sustainable path – no model in place, no direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look into creating a publication that lists different organizations/agencies that could provide guidance. Could be hosted on various websites such as: Land Centre, Stewardship Centre, Real Estate Foundation et cetera.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is often difficult to convince developers to consider issues other than those related to economics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need someone whose job is to assist developers by making the process as easy and integrated as possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approving process for change of use needs to be more transparent and coherent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No solutions identified

Theme 5 Agricultural Land Reserve

ISSUES (Theme 5)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The ALR is not a good tool for grassland conservation, it is an agricultural reserve, not a grasslands reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The ALC must have the political will to reconsider ranching and grassland areas, and their place in ALR.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The ALR supercedes all other regulations and therefore may not give adequate consideration to local/regional needs, or to various land values/uses that may be undertaken in an area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ALC could better respect community values as developed through OCPs.▪ ALC needs to dovetail better with other planning (OCP, RGS).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There is a disparity between values within the ALR values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Initiate agricultural plans for areas within the ALR to incorporate range (and other) values.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Is the ALC still a Commission to preserve agriculture or to promote development to protect other agricultural lands?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No solutions identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The ALC supports (and even encourages) intensive agriculture, and therefore may push development (both urban and agricultural) onto grasslands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Encourage ALR to work more closely with conservation efforts of grasslands, through the GCC and local government, especially in critical habitat areas.

Theme 6 Synergy

ISSUES (Theme 6)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lack of synergy between landowners, developers, governments and conservationists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create regional technical planning committees to review development proposals and provide opportunities for various agencies to liaise with the developer. Involvement of conservation interests would be favourable to developers – better than the current situation.Consider establishment of regional planners/ conservation advisory committees at the regional district level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lack of education and information sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Groups such as GCC should provide input into OCPs/RGS by meeting with regional districts across the province; starting with a pilot project in TNRD and RDSOS and expand based on funding and success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lack of models or funding for collaborative initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a demonstration model/pilot project whereby GCC works with RD to incorporate grassland values in planning strategies (example is Cariboo Regional District).Seek partnerships with various stakeholder organizations.

Theme 7 Ranching Issues

ISSUES (Theme 7)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ranches contain most of BC's grasslands and ranchers are therefore expected to absorb the costs of stewarding grasslands into their ranching enterprise; this is seen as unfair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage governments to consider the ranch as a 'public trust' and help pay to keep it in tact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The break up a ranch from one landowner to many landowners on same land base causes grasslands fragmentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No solutions identified

ISSUES (Theme 7)

Potential Actions or Solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ranchette owners can qualify for tax incentives by leasing land back to the ranch – this is a marketing tool for developers to sell ranchettes to non-agricultural interests (see Stump Lake for example)▪ Is a broken up ranch a viable agricultural unit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Parcel size when zoning a ranch (or rezoning) – larger parcel sizes could provide more flexibility for conservation values.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How can the community support a viable ranching industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create and use trust mechanisms to ensure ranchers can ranch.▪ Look into Community Forest concept and see if it could be a useable tool for community grasslands/community ranches.

Other Issues/Additional Information:

- Universal solution: conservation groups need to collaborate and have one voice to discuss/address these issues (rather than having separate groups represent grasslands, riparian areas, rivers, forests, etc.). One single voice would be effective, there would be less direct competition for funding, and the pressure could force politicians to look for long-term solutions.
- The relatively short-term nature of the planning is seen as problematic. Most of the developments are being built for an influx of retired people. Thirty years from now, the demand for the homes in these developments will have decreased dramatically, and some of the homes may even sit empty. Are we destroying grasslands now for developments that have a 20-year life span, when the grasslands will take 100+ years to recover?
- There is a need for a strong, coherent and well-developed recreational plan to address the “recreational chaos” that reigns in many areas of BC, particularly those within a three-hour drive from the Greater Vancouver Regional District. One of the most serious threats to grasslands in BC is the weekend recreationalist, who visits and uses the grasslands, but does not see the consequences of his/her abuse.
- Work with UBCM and the Planning Institute BC on education, policy, recreation, and development issues relating to grasslands.

Discussion After Group Report:

- “**Leasing back** concept is not really a solution as it just prolongs the process until the grassland is broken up (depends on the length of the term). Perpetual is 99 years or more.”
- “**Parcel size** – what is the appropriate size of parcel to ensure viability? 2000 acres may not be a viable entity as you must include land for hay, grasslands and grazing lands in the parcel.”

- "Parcel size has generally not been conducive to keeping grasslands together."

7.4 Governance

Theme 1 Legislative Elements

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ALR Act is for agriculture, not grasslands; no will by ALC to pursue more ALR inclusions, unless agreed to by owner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broaden the policy to include ranching ▪ Encourage the ALC to continue to embrace preservation when possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Charter/Local Government Act - lack of knowledge and political will to plan for grasslands conservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research other jurisdictions for example-bylaws, deferred planning areas and other tools to effectively plan for grasslands conservation at the local level. ▪ Develop sample bylaws for use by local government. ▪ Proponents of grasslands need to work with local and regional governments and planning committees to raise awareness and educate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forest and Range Practices Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS) does not apply to private land, or areas outside of the provincial forest. It is a site specific, dealing with critical habitat. • Until resource inventory and ecological classification is put in place for non-forested ecosystems, IWMS will not be an effective tool. Fundamental inventory is missing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grasslands that fall within the provincial forest (and therefore under FRPA) may have more management options than on private or federal lands. Investigate if FRPA tools provide justification for taking of grasslands and providing protection management tools. ▪ Look into IWMS Strategy for protection of site-specific habitats only. ▪ Complete inventories and ecological classification to identify critical grassland habitats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land and Water BC has the ability to direct development but are not in the business to protect grasslands. ▪ LWBC mandate is to open up Crown lands aggressively for economic development opportunities. ▪ Agencies are downsizing, referrals aren't being dealt with properly, and knowledge has been lost, as has capacity. The public interest is not being met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look into whether LWBC can implement grasslands preservation measures. ▪ Map and identify critical grasslands areas and make these known to LWBC (through local bylaws or IWMS), use technical or scientific reasoning. ▪ Build in flexibility to address capacity issues (e.g. loss of grazing land from wildfires) by holding some untenured grassland parcels in reserve

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crown grassland forage is totally allocated, meaning there is no flexibility to react to fire et cetera. Instead of allowing for ecosystem recovery, ranchers are forced to graze the land early. ▪ Planning is a reactive tool through referrals – there isn't an agency responsible for grasslands (unless its on ALR) so there is a big potential for grasslands issues to fall through the cracks. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Transportation Development Approval Process can only address development issues that are guided by case law, bylaws and policy and regulation. Cannot consider philosophical issues. ▪ The DAP relies on agency referrals which has been affected by government downsizing. ▪ New roads into ALR areas are often overbuilt, opens up expectation, encourages speculation, encourages use. ▪ Grasslands under the greatest threat are low valley bottom; the highest ecological values are found here and most are private. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage grasslands objectives in local government bylaws so that they can direct MoT approval processes away from grasslands areas. ▪ Encourage MoT to build smaller road rights of ways in ALR lands. ▪ Urgency to incorporate low elevation grassland objectives in local bylaws – these are most popular for infrastructure development (easier and therefore cheaper).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxation – a concern that BC Assessment is considering taxing non-productive farm land at residential rates and that this will encourage conversion of range land to other uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BC Ministry of Agriculture is in discussions with BC Assessment regarding this issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Province may be compromising grasslands in Treaty Negotiations by making deals on crown range. ▪ Grasslands are not all created equal. Elevation differences – certain places have higher values. We need to identify the critical areas before we negotiate land away. ▪ First Nations Settlement Lands – government will negotiate to have ALR land stay “as is” but there is no guarantee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic inventory and analysis tools need to continue to be developed for grassland objectives.

ISSUES (Theme 1)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic Development on grassland-rich Indian Reserve Land is also a big unknown. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Forest Initiative (WFI) – clarification is needed on WFIs intent and the extent to which it applies to grasslands. Are there management tools built in to protect grasslands? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish working forest targets for protection of grassland ecosystems

Theme 2 Political Context

ISSUES (Theme 2)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current provincial government philosophy is based on economic expansion, which is at odds with grassland conservation objectives. ▪ Streamlining and deregulating have resulted in understaffed and underfunded agencies resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decrease in technical expertise • lack of information and analysis tools • higher reliance on professionals without the necessary checks and balances • less public consultation • decrease in interagency coordination and referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change the political priorities of local government and possibly other politicians through education/awareness of the link between economic growth and urban expansion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grasslands aren't sexy. There is a lack of awareness among governments, public and politicians about grassland issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to generate the same level of awareness and compassion about grassland issues as has been done for old growth forests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic valuations do not factor in non-monetary values. Grasslands are seen as something waiting for a higher and better use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize other valuation tools such as environmental risk analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing grassland issues involves the coordination and cooperation of many-jurisdictions (Local, Crown, Federal, Treaty and private lands) and this is becoming more difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a provincial government mandate for managing grasslands and encourage coordination with other levels of government

ISSUES (Theme 2)	Potential Actions or Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grassland inventory and prioritization of areas for protection is essential. ▪ Lower elevation valley bottoms are critical in terms habitat – and also the most pressured for development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete inventories and ranking of grassland areas ▪ Accept fact that growth pressure is a given and direct it to locations where development is appropriate ▪ Educate local politicians that residential sprawl isn't a moneymaker. ▪ Meet with local developers, tell them why grasslands are important, make them responsible for those decisions, and make them understand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every parcel of land that is accessible has a value, this supercedes the productive value for agriculture. There is spare capital looking for investment and prices head upwards compared to the productive value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to keep parcels as large as possible – and in one parcel, as this removes the ease of parceling off. It may be a solution more relevant in the Peace River area.

Other Issues/Additional Information

Some members of the group identified the following priority issues and potential actions:

- Encourage education and awareness, especial to local government. Provide example bylaws to planners and identify key areas. Priority can be determined based on the intersection of “threat and value”.
- Inventory requirements - identify the priority pieces of land.
- Development of a conservation plan with linkages, corridors, size aspects in concert with existing protected areas (high priority areas in a viable state).
- Devote resources to support effective protection of grasslands through the development and maintenance of expertise in government to deal with referrals and inventory.

8 Summary of Breakout Group Reporting

Common Issues and Potential Actions or Solutions Identified by Breakout Groups

- Educate and inform public and government
- Develop tools that can be used as incentives to protect grasslands
- Capability exists within the existing planning and policy framework; encourage people to use the tools.
- Encourage education and awareness, especial to local government. Provide example bylaws to planners and identify key areas. Priority can be determined based on the intersection of “threat and value”.
- Inventory requirements – inventory and identify priority grassland areas.

- Development of a conservation plan with linkages, corridors, size aspects in concert with existing protected areas (high priority areas in a viable state).
- Devote resources to support effective protection of grasslands through the development and maintenance of expertise in government to deal with referrals and
- Access to water is critical.
- Ranching sustainability – need to built trust between government and grasslands interests. Need a coordinated mechanism for grasslands so that issues don't fall through the cracks.
- Need a policy from provincial leadership that endorses an environment for ranching to flourish. Do we really want ranching in this province or not?
- Get government assistance to market the ranching industry (such as was done for BC's tree fruit industry) – consider this to help sustain the ranching sector.
- Desire to see ALR acting as a partner in grassland conservation.
- Use value added marketing – market the open spaces and large contiguous tracts of lands and the value of grasslands for ecosystems -- and emphasize that by developing grasslands for other uses, we are compromising these values.
- Taxation incentives to conserve or to protect viability of ranching enterprise.

8.1 Final Summary/Comments from Participants – Stuart Gale

A number of pieces have been identified such as...

- Collaboration between developers, NGOs, governments.
- A coordinated mechanism for integrated planning – deal with planning aspect, have a conservation plan
- Education/Awareness, value added marketing – ties to theme of knowledge, inventory, awareness and education.

Comments:

- There is a big demand for water from federal fisheries. Fisheries interest would take priority over ranching – fixed supply allocated, we can see the supply diminishing. Need to keep this in mind.
- Regarding the importance of education and a knowledge base – if we appreciate the value, people will find solutions, it is fundamental.
- Try to achieve secure outcomes through trade off land use decisions to protect ranchlands. Keep in mind that the section being developed may impact the remaining ranch.
- Small landholders and ranchettes have been lambasted but if they were managed properly and conservation areas were set aside they could become important in maintaining continuity or preserving values in the urban/rural interface. The interface can be more gradual using the ranchette. If you locate them in the right place, part of the amenity value would be the larger tracts of grasslands in the viewscape.
- There should be tax incentives to conserve grasslands – lay land aside for conservation purposes rather than intensive agriculture or other agriculture.

9 Where to From Here? Bruno Delesalle

- Lots of information collected over the last two days - we have a lot of great diversity in the room. We will look at few key points and identify how to move forward.
- The objective was to define issues, then identify some solutions – we have achieved this for the most part, but more work is needed on solutions.
- We can now build a foundation to initiate a problem analysis. Problem analysis will lead to a strategy to implement.

Process

Summary document showing priority issues will be sent to everyone. If you feel we have missed anything or something needs to be added for definition – please tell us.

The document will be reviewed by the advisory committee to look at priority items and see how we move to broader consultation process. We have gaps in perspectives that weren't fully explored (such as taxation and First Nations issues).

A problem analysis will be conducted including research, more targeted consultation with stakeholders and further discussion with interests. This will lead to the creation of a strategic planning document.

We will be expanding the advisory committee to get a broader balance. We will try to be transparent – communicate with stakeholders here and beyond. We feel we are being open and want to bring resolution to these problems. We want to find out how to best achieve concrete results that work on the ground.

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Thanks to Taylor Zeeg and Jessica Robertson and Sarah McNeil from the GCC and to the Consulting Group: Gary Runka, Janet Fontaine, Sandra Bicego and Stuart Gale

Thanks to the Advisory Committee – Graham Strachan Judy Taylor, Jim White, Nichola Walken

APPENDIX 1
Clarification of ALR Intent

Gary Runka, Consultant

The ALR is an agricultural reserve not a grasslands reserve and this is an important point. ALR inclusion criteria date back 30 years, and they were established “on the run” and generally focused on food production. Grasslands didn't make the cut. Criteria for ALR were Class 1-4 land capability for agriculture. The Commission argued successfully to have a different set of criteria in the ranching areas and therefore. Any lands classed 5-6, associated with 1-4 were included.

Approximately 60% of grasslands are included in the ALR and there is no reason why more areas can't be included.

Martin Collins, Agricultural Land Commission

In the last decade there have been some changes to the ALR – including the strengthening of the ALC Act and some delegation of decision-making. In terms of delegation, the ALR was given the right (1997) to make application to itself for exclusions, providing it with more flexibility to deal with the shortcomings of 1973-74 decisions. Some lands were added to the ALR at this time.

Inclusion/exclusion are difficult to administer from both sides. Not popular with the Commission, especially in view of staffing cutbacks.

In terms of delegation agreements and criticism by some at the workshop, government has said it is interested in exploring this issue with local government. The ability to do this has been in place since 1994 and only the Fraser Fort George Regional District has entered into an agreement.