



Reserve *Opinion*

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An Information Bulletin from British Columbia's Land Reserve Commission

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Message from the Chair



One of the first decisions of the Land Reserve Commission was to create a new system of regional panels to make decisions on applications and other land use matters. Each panel meets with landowners, local governments, First Nations and others, and makes decisions about the Agricultural Land Reserve and Forest Land Reserve in its region. Three panels are in operation: Panel A is responsible for the Kootenays, Vancouver Island and Islands Trust, Panel B covers the Lower Mainland and the North and Panel C is responsible for the Okanagan and Central Interior.

This panel system is a very significant change from the way the former ALC and FLC operated. More specifically, this new way of doing business will:

- enable more applicants to appear before the Commission to discuss individual applications and policy issues;
- improve responsiveness and flexibility by increasing the number of meetings which can be held;
- enable Commissioners and staff to become more knowledgeable about the areas for which they make decisions; and
- raise the profile of agriculture and forestry locally by having LRC meetings in each region more often than before.

As you can see from the next article, the panels have placed a particular emphasis on meeting with local governments. We are also looking forward to meeting many local

government officials at the upcoming Union of BC Municipalities' convention in Victoria. Municipalities and regional districts have always been crucial partners in the work of the Commission, from the formation of the two reserves to the processing of applications to the development of new policies, programs and legislation. Many LRC Commissioners—and their predecessors on the ALC and FLC—are themselves former local government officials, which gives them a unique insight and ability to deal with local concerns.

The LRC values its partnership with local government, and we look forward to working closely with them to meet the needs of working farms and working forests in their communities.

Dr. Alan Chambers, Chair
Land Reserve Commission

Meetings with Regional Panels

One of the reasons the Land Reserve Commission adopted the regional panel structure was because it allowed for more meetings between Commissioners and our local government partners. In the first few months of doing business in this new way, Commissioners met with scores of municipal and regional district officials and related organizations from all over BC, as shown by the following list of meetings held to date:

Panel A Creston Area Agricultural Society, Regional District of Central Kootenay, Regional District of Kootenay–Boundary, Area E Agricultural Advisory Commission, Village of Radium Hot Springs and Windermere District Farmers’ Institute and Livestock Association, District of Campbell River, Campbell River Agricultural Advisory Commission and Farmers’ Institute, Comox–Strathcona Regional District, Comox Valley Economic Development Society, Village of Cumberland, City of Parksville, Coombs and Cedar Farmers’ Institutes, Cowichan Valley Regional District and Nanaimo Regional District.

Panel B District of Vanderhoof, District of New Hazelton, Bulkley Valley Cattlemen’s Association, Advisory Planning Commission for the Kispiox Valley, City of Chilliwack, City of Abbotsford, Peace River Regional District, the Mediation and Arbitration Board, Oil and Gas Commission, North Pine Farmer’s Institute, Northern Rockies Regional District, City of Prince George, McBride Farmers’ Institute, Village of McBride and Fraser–Fort George Regional District.

Panel C District of Coldstream, District of Sicamous, District of Salmon Arm, Village of Chase, Thompson–Nicola Regional District, City of Penticton, Regional District of Okanagan–Similkameen, District of Spallumcheen, Regional District of North Okanagan, City of Armstrong, City of Kelowna, City of Quesnel, City of Williams Lake, District of 100 Mile House and Cariboo Regional District.

The full Commission (i.e. members of all three panels) also met with the District of Delta, District of Maple Ridge and the Fraser Valley Regional District.



The Responses to Date

From the Mayor of Williams Lake, Ivan Bonnell:

“I congratulate the Commission for putting a face in the regions with the authority to make decisions on L.R.C. applications. This mechanism will provide a greater opportunity for applicants to appear before the L.R.C. panel as well as allow the panel members to get field experience with the land use questions at hand.”

From the Mayor of Squamish, Corinne Lonsdale:

“Thank you for your letter dated May 5, 2000 providing information on the new Land Reserve Commission panel structure. The new process will greatly assist for a smoother, more streamlined process in reviewing applications and plans, while leaving the larger issues to the Commission as a Whole.”

From the Chair of the Cariboo Regional District, Ted Armstrong:

As noted, we fully support such an initiative and welcome the opportunity to work closer with the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission in the establishment of panels.”

From landowner Esther DeGraw of Sicamous to Chair Alan Chambers:

“It was a pleasure meeting with you and I must say I feel much better about who is making these important decisions and the process involved. I understand the time and effort it takes to travel to remote areas of the province, but I do feel very strongly its the most fair way to make such major decisions.”

Panel Responsibilities by Regional District

Panel	Regional Districts	Members
A: Vancouver Island, the Kootenays and Islands Trust	Alberni–Clayoquot Capital Comox–Strathcona Cowichan Valley Nanaimo Mount Waddington Powell River East Kootenay Central Kootenay Kootenay–Boundary	Janna Bakker (Langley) Allen Hopwood (Courtenay) Wayne Nowlin (Cranbrook)
B: Lower Mainland and North	Fraser Valley Greater Vancouver Sunshine Coast Northern Rockies Peace River Fraser–Fort George Bulkley–Nechako Kitimat–Stikine Skeena–Queen Charlotte Central Coast	Gus Horn (100 Mile House) Christine Hunt (Port Hardy) Ruth Veiner (Dawson Creek)
C: Okanagan and Central Interior	Columbia Shuswap North Okanagan Central Okanagan Okanagan–Similkameen Cariboo Thompson–Nicola Squamish–Lillooet	Jaswant Dukhia (Vernon) Jamie Ingram (Slocan) Maureen Thompson (Prince George)

The LRC’s Chair, Alan Chambers, is a member of each panel, alternates amongst panels and chairs the full Commission meetings when the LRC meets as a whole. For more information about regional panels, please visit our website at: lrc.gov.bc.ca.

“Mr. Land Reserve” Retires from LRC



In March Jim Plotnikoff, Director of Strategic Planning and Corporate Policy, announced his intention to retire after nearly 27 years of service with BC’s Land Commission, the Agricultural Land Commission, the Forest Land Commission and the Land Reserve Commission.

A graduate of the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor’s degree in Geography and a Master’s degree in Community Planning, Jim began his career with the then-District of Surrey’s Planning Department. After rising to the position of Director of Long Range Planning for Surrey, Jim joined the newly-created Land Commission on September 17, 1973.

A dedicated and hard-working professional, Jim has been instrumental in shaping the land reserve system and promoting agriculture and forestry in British Columbia. Jim’s extensive knowledge and commitment to his work will be greatly missed by the members and staff of the LRC and many others who have been fortunate enough to work with him over the years. We thank Jim for his dedication and wish him all the best in his retirement.

FOREST PRACTICES update

As described in the first edition of Reserve *Opinion*, forest practices issues and the vast majority of the FLR land base are the responsibility of the LRC’s Panel A. Since May, this panel has completed trips to the Kootenays and Vancouver Island. During these tours the Commission met with the representatives of five regional districts and two municipalities to discuss land use issues within their areas. The Commission also viewed a number of private properties on which applications were active and discussed emerging issues on Crown FLR in the Cowichan Valley.

The members of Panel A (Janna Bakker, Allen Hopwood and Wayne Nowlin) also attended the Private Forest Landowners’ Association annual general meeting in Courtenay in June. This was an excellent opportunity for the Commission to meet with local landowners, view private land forest practices in the field and learn first-

hand the challenges facing private forest landowners.

As part of the Commission’s new way of doing business our Forest Practices Officers have been meeting with landowners in their respective areas. They have also been investigating public concerns relating to private lands, setting up regional offices and refining administrative procedures. To date, Commission staff have reviewed public concerns on forest practices on Saltspring and Denman Islands, as well as in the Revelstoke and Horn Lake areas. In the spirit of the new partnerships created to deliver this program, most of the site visits were made with the PFLA’s Forestry Manager, Rod Bealing, and BC Environment staff. LRC staff also delivered the second and final informational seminar for environmental organizations in Nelson and are looking forward to orienting Ministry of Forests regional and district staff at a later date.

The LRC has received a number of enquiries concerning Management Commitments. The main concerns appear to centre on when they are due and what information is required. To clarify the timing issue, Section 42(2) of the Act requires that owners of MF class land who wish to retain their MF class must submit a Management Commitment that meets the legislative requirements one year from the coming into force of the legislation. As the legislation came into effect on April 1 of this year, the latest these commitments can be submitted is April 1, 2001. However, some landowners have land that is not currently enjoying MF tax classification. If these owners wish to obtain MF class for the following assessment roll they must have their Management Commitment submitted by October 1, 2000. In response to concerns over the latter the LRC is endeavoring to develop, in conjunction with the PFLA, an information package for landowners on Management Commitments.

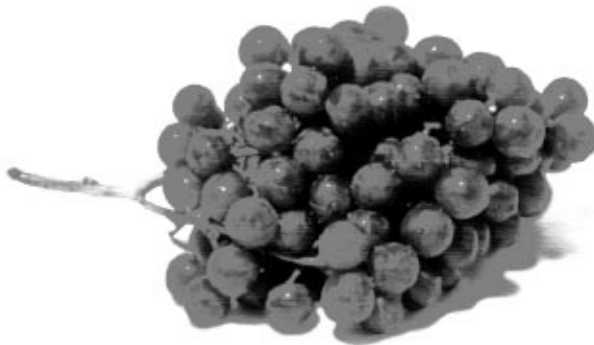
As part of its new way of doing business, the Land Reserve Commission has made it easier for wineries and cideries to operate on land in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

“Our new policy, which amends an existing General Order, will streamline and clarify regulatory processes and encourage the development of wineries and cideries within the ALR,” explained Commission Chair Alan Chambers. “It exempts wineries and cideries from making an application to the LRC for certain retail activities and permits a range of other activities necessary to the success of those businesses.”

“We believe these changes will continue to assist an important industry and encourage investment in BC vineyards and orchards,” said Chambers. “By helping wineries and cideries react even faster to market realities it will create new jobs and other benefits in communities in the Okanagan Valley, the Fraser Valley, on Vancouver Island and elsewhere. At the same time, the new policy will ensure that wineries and cideries remain supportive of BC agriculture.”

“Perhaps the most significant aspect of this initiative is the degree of cooperation and consultation that went into the changes,” added Chambers. “There was an extensive consultation process with stakeholders. By sharing our concerns, discussing options and working together, our new way of doing business will benefit everyone concerned.”

“We believe the changes will also provide greater certainty and clarity to potential investors and operators,” said Chambers. “They also balance the LRC’s goal of encouraging agriculture with its mandate of protecting agricultural land.”



New FLR Staff

The LRC has now staffed its new private land forest practices program. Craig Sobering, who worked on the development of the private land forest practices regulation and formerly worked as a research officer with both the Agricultural and Forest Land Commissions, is now the LRC’s Forest Practices Coordinator. Craig can be reached at (604) 775-1493. The LRC has also hired three Forest Practices Officers to deliver the program in the field. They are:

Garry Beaudry, RPF

Phone: (250) 354-6909

Fax: (250) 354-6332

Ian DeLisle, RPF

Phone: (250) 751-7035

Fax: (250) 751-3103

Niels Holbek, PAg.

Phone: (250) 751-7032

Fax: (250) 751-3103

Ian and Niels are covering Vancouver Island from Nanaimo and Garry is responsible for the Kootenays from Nelson. Garry, Ian and Niels will cover the North and Central Interior on a rotating basis. We will be profiling our new Forest Practices Officers in upcoming editions of *Reserve Opinion*.



The Trans Canada Trail and the ALR

The Trans Canada Trail will eventually be the longest trail in the world, linking thousands of communities across Canada. It will be used by hikers, horseback riders, cross country skiers, walkers, cyclists and snowmobilers. In BC the Trans Canada Trail will cross significant areas of ALR, and some farm communities have expressed concerns about the potential impact on agricultural operations. These impacts may occur where the trail provides access to agricultural lands or impedes existing or future farm operations by cutting across agricultural lands. Concerns related to access include theft, vandalism, trespass, fire hazards, introduction of weeds,

litter, waste, motorized vehicles, harassment of livestock by dogs and snowmobiles and complaints about spraying or other agricultural activities. Concerns about interference with farm activities include obstruction of farm machinery and fragmentation of farm operations.

The LRC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, has provided general recommendations and comments on trail design, operation, use, maintenance and enforcement as well as route alignments and mitigation measures to avoid negative impacts on the ALR.

Recommended mitigation efforts include fences, buffers, gates, stiles, cattleguards, weed control, fire control, signage, insurance coverage and even financial compensation. Adequate parking, drinking water, camping and sanitation facilities have also been suggested to discourage trespass onto ALR.

The Commission will continue to work toward adequate trail buffering and other mitigative measures for adjacent agricultural operations in consultation with other agencies, local governments and affected farm communities.



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