

3.8 Public Access Plan

CRA's have been created to allow resort operators the ability to manage Crown land within their operating area boundary in a manner that ensures integrity of the ski terrain while at the same time ensuring public safety and minimizing environmental damage. HBMA will not unreasonably restrict public access to Crown land within the CRA for purposes of private, non-motorized recreation, but it will ensure these activities are compatible with the primary uses of the ski resort. HBMA will provide designated routes and signage to encourage public use of Crown land within the CRA, as well as continue to work with and maintain an open dialogue with the public users of the mountain.

HBMA understands and appreciates that public access to Crown land beyond and outside of the existing and proposed CRA is important for recreation users in the Bulkley Valley, and it is not the intention of the resort to restrict access for activities which the public have historical interest or are currently participating in. The resort will provide reasonable and appropriate access routes through the CRA, so that ongoing recreation use to areas outside of the CRA (and specific areas within the CRA), can continue.

Based on discussions with public recreation users, HBMA is proposing the following recommendations to facilitate public recreation access within and through the existing and proposed CRA (see Figure 3 – 36)

- HBMA is prepared to allow public recreation access (non – mechanized use) within the CRA, outside of the resort's standard operating hours (when the lifts are open, etc), however users will need to be mindful of snowmobile and snowcat operations, by resort staff, on ski runs that may occur at any time during a 24 hour period, including during non – resort operating hours. As well, public users will need to be aware that avalanche control measures do occur within the CRA, and take place outside of the resort's operating hours.
- HBMA will implement improved signage regarding public recreation use. Hudson Bay Mountain is a non – motorized area for public recreation use, and in addition to appropriate signage within the ski area, HBMA will also place newspaper ads, in the local community, to outline the restrictions on motorized use in this area.
- Public recreation users will have the right to use the existing and proposed day skier parking lots for vehicle parking, even though those individuals are not using the resort's lift facilities.
- The Prairie area and Crater Lake have historically experienced significant public use during all seasons. To facilitate access to this area of Hudson Bay Mountain, the existing CRA will be adjusted along the west boundary of the Prairie Village subdivision to allow unrestricted and unimpeded public access to this area, and beyond (see Figure 3 – 36).

- A public access route, from the Prairie Village to the Simpson's area (east side of Hudson Bay Mountain) and return, is noted on Figure 3 – 36. This route is not considered permanent, given that Lifts D and E, and accompanying ski terrain, have not yet been developed. Prior to development of these terrain pods, further discussion will need to occur with public recreation users to identify and confirm an alternate public access route during the winter operating period.
- The Reality Check Climbing area is a historic public recreation site on the east slope of Hudson Bay Mountain (see Figure 3 – 36). Accordingly, this site will be excluded from the CRA and designated as a Recreation Site pursuant to the *Forest and Range Act*. Access to this site, for public recreation users, will be permitted via two designated access routes, including one from the Prairie Village (along the top of the mountain) and a second one, originating from the base of the Skyline Chair.

Although public recreation users have requested that an access route, from the bottom of Reality Check Climbing area, adjacent to one of the ski runs originating at the top of the Skyline Chair, be permitted for users wishing to return to the Prairie Village from the bottom of Reality Check Climbing area, HBMA can not permit non skiers uphill access along existing downhill ski runs. Public recreation users, wishing to depart the climbing area can leave via the access route from the top, and return along the designated route back to the Prairie Village, or along the lower access route, back to the base of the Skyline Chair.

HBMA is proposing an access and egress route for Reality Check Climbing area along a designated route originating at the base of the Skyline Chair. This route will require public recreation users to cross several existing and proposed ski runs related to access off the Skyline Chair and the proposed Lift I. Accordingly, any public recreation users wishing to access the Reality Check Climbing area, through the resort's CRA along the lower access route, originating at the base of the Skyline Chair will require a Backcountry Pass, including signing of a release of liability waiver, which will be issued, free of charge, to all public recreation users. Regular users of Reality Check Climbing area will be able to obtain a seasons pass to avoid having to secure a day pass for each time the user wishes to access this site. The Backcountry Seasons Pass will also be free of charge.

Although HBMA is prepared to designate a two way public access route to Reality Check Climbing area from the bottom of Skyline Chair, the company continues to have significant concerns regarding ongoing liability and safety issues where downhill and non ski related activities are occurring in the same location. To that end, further discussions will be ongoing with the company's insurance providers, in terms safety and liability concerns, to determine if public access can be provided in this specific location. If the access route, as proposed, cannot be permitted, HBMA is committed to working with public recreation users to identify and designate an appropriate and alternate access route that addresses the company's liability and safety concerns as well as public recreation users

desire to access the Reality Check Climbing area from the bottom of the Skyline Chair.

- Public recreation use has historically occurred on the Uppersidewinder ski run. This ski run is winding, with many blind corners. HBMA is proposing that public recreation users go up the road, if not plowed, or travel on the other side of the road to the bottom of the Prairie T – bar. This area is straighter, and groomed wide for snowmobile traffic and cabin owners. HBMA also recognizes that ongoing public use occurs on and across ski runs that exist within the Prairie Village (ski runs separate the subdivision). The ski area is not proposing to implement unreasonable access in those areas, but all non ski users will need to be mindful of ongoing, downhill ski traffic occurring on these runs during the resort’s operating hours.
- HBMA is proposing to develop a “Trail to Town”, from the bottom of Lift I to the western edge of the Town of Smithers, along the east slope of the mountain. There is an existing trail, along a historic logging road, that is currently outside of the resort’s CRA and has been used for many years by skiers to return to the Town. HBMA is proposing to formalize the trail and include it in the CRA. The bottom portion of the existing trail passes through private land and therefore must be modified to skirt around the private holdings. Although the existing logging road has been used by skiers and boarders exiting the ski area, primarily at the end of the ski day, it has also been used for other public recreation use such as ski touring and snowshoeing, along with hiking and relating activities in the summer. On the new trail, during normal resort operating hours, uphill access by public recreation users (non – mechanized), will be restricted, due to liability and safety concerns. HBMA is proposing that public recreation use be permitted on this trail at any time during non-resort operating hours as well as at any time, up to approximately 10:30 am, on days when the resort is operating. Appropriate signage regarding public access on the trail will be posted at the bottom by the west end of Zobnick Road.

