

## **COUNCIL REPORT**

**To:** Mayor and Council

**From:** Administration

**Date:** March 28, 2024

**Subject:** Land Referral - Application for a Section 56/57 Mackenzie Rocky Mountain Riders

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council directs Administration on how to respond to the referral request.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The applicant has applied for a Section 57 Recreation Site & Trail under the Forests & Range Practices Act to use the Morfee Emergency Shelter Facility for recreational snowmobile use (see attached maps). Rec Sites and Trails BC may recommend the site for a Section 56 establishment pending consultation outcomes.

**Section 56** enables the Minister or an authorized delegate to establish interpretive forest sites, recreation sites and recreation trails. Recreation trails established under this section must receive consideration in resource planning and so have some protection from resource extraction activities. Trails are usually only designated under section 56 when a partnership agreement is in place with the organization that is maintaining the trail.

**Section 57** allows the Minister or a delegate to authorize the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of trails and other recreational facilities. This section is used to grant 3rd parties permission to build trails but does not grant any protection for the trails.

### **DETAILS:**

Proponent: Mackenzie Rocky Mountain Riders

Tenure Type: Section 56/57 Recreation Sites & Trails

Intended Land Use/background context: Recreation Sites/Trails

Location: Mt. Morfee

Legal Description: UNSURVEYED CROWN LAND IN THE VICINITY SOUTH OF MOUNT MORFEE, CARIBOO DISTRICT (see attached maps).

Area (ha): 0.37 ha

**EXCERPT FROM MANAGEMENT PLAN:**

This year, a small, but passionate board of directors has taken over the Mackenzie Rocky Mountain Rider's Snowmobile Club (RMR) and is intent on bringing the club in good standing with the provincial government by filing proper paperwork and agreements.

They have already spent several months of volunteer time discussing and organizing with the new administrative coordinator for the South Peace Region on how best to serve the snowmobile community in Mackenzie. The Mackenzie RMR are diligently working with the District of Mackenzie, Mackenzie Outdoor Route & Trail Association (MORATA), and the Provincial Government in the form of relationship building. The club is applying for grants to secure funds for the continued management and maintenance of the emergency shelter and a long-term plan of being in a partnership agreement with the Province to maintain the facilities. The RMR are backed by the BC Snowmobile Federation (BCSF). The BCSF holds funds for the RMR to use in any way the club determines is necessary.

The RMR have a positive bank balance of \$12,000 earmarked for maintaining their shelter, the Morfee Cabin. They plan to seek grants from various organizations, including the South Peace Mackenzie Trust, the District of Mackenzie, and the Trail Grant Fund, to support ongoing maintenance. Additionally, they will conduct an annual fundraiser through their Amilia Store, focusing on Morfee maintenance.

The RMR intends to apply for maintenance of the Morfee Cabin, committing to spring and fall clean-ups and organizing work bees. They will restock firewood for the shed in the fall. The cabin's roof is properly pitched, eliminating the need for snow load maintenance, but signage will be installed to caution against parking near the shelter due to sliding snow.

There's a clearing west of the cabin for sled parking during winter, which will require light groomer work to make it accessible and family-friendly. The groomer will be owned by the District of Mackenzie, and club trainees will be permitted to operate it. Club executives are willing to groom the area as needed, including sweeping the cleared spot west of the shelter.

Regular checks of the cabin will occur at the end of April and the end of September each season to ensure it remains in good condition. Please see attached management plan for complete details.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

As the application does not occur within the District of Mackenzie border, there are no zoning or official community plan concerns.

This emergency shelter facility currently provides residents and tourists with a basecamp, and area of refuge within local snowmobiling territory. Snowmobiling is a popular local pastime and

is supported in our Tourism Plan as well as Recreational Trails Master Plan. Permitting this cabin would help a local club as well as other local and non-local recreators.

Staff spoke with local Search and Rescue personnel and their comments were that the cabin is a necessary safety feature for recreators in the area of Morfee Mountain.

The RMR have submitted a Community Grant request for use of the District's groomer. This will be discussed by the Grant Adjudication Committee and a recommendation will be brought back to Council for consideration with regard to this request.

### **COUNCILS RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the information presented, Council is being asked by the Province to provide comment. Staff have provided the following options:

1. The District of Mackenzie's interests are unaffected by the application.
2. The District of Mackenzie has no objection to approval of the application.
3. The District of Mackenzie has no objection to approval of application subject to specified conditions.
4. The District of Mackenzie recommends refusal of this application due to specified reasons.

### **COUNCIL PRIORITIES:**

#### **Strong Governance and Finances**

- As the municipality's elected governing body, we serve all residents and businesses in the community. We engage residents and stakeholders on important issues and make our decisions through open and transparent processes. We are careful in our use of resources, mindful of the need to maintain programs and services, while also meeting the community's infrastructure needs.

### **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Luke Thorne, Land and Environmental Coordinator

**Reviewed By:** Corporate and Financial Services

**Approved By:** Chief Administrative Officer