



**PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
ZONING AMENDMENT REPORT
BY-LAW NO. 2023, 2012
1st and 2nd Reading**

Part 26 Participants. Includes
all except District of Tumbler
Ridge.

B-2a

OWNERS: James Bell, Jonathan Bell, Philip Bell **DATE:** August 24th, 2012
AREA: Electoral Area B
LEGAL: Block A, District Lot 133, PRD **LOT SIZE:** 12 ha (29 acres)
 District Lot 136, PRD 195 ha (482 acres)
 District Lot 137, PRD 255 ha (630 acres)
 Block A District Lot 139, PRD 9 ha (22 acres)
 District Lot 4226, PRD 8 ha (19 acres)
LOCATION: BLAIR CREEK VALLEY

PROPOSAL
 Consolidate several properties and use them for agriculture operations, as well as using the land for educational, religious, recreational, and residential purposes.

RECOMMENDATION: OPTION 1
 THAT the Regional Board approve Zoning Amendment By-law No. 2023, 2012 for First and Second Reading which rezones District Lots 137, District Lot 4226, Block A District Lot 133, and Block A District Lot 139, PRD, from A-2 (Large Agricultural Holdings) to CF (Communal Farm) in PRRD Zoning Bylaw No. 1000, 1996;
 THAT the holding of a public hearing be waived pursuant to s. 890(4) of the *Local Government Act*, and authorize performance of public notification pursuant to s. 893 of the *Local Government Act*.

OPTIONS

OPTION 1: THAT the Regional Board approve Zoning Amendment By-law No. 2023, 2012 for First and Second Reading which rezones District Lots 137, District Lot 4226, Block A District Lot 133, and Block A District Lot 139, PRD, from A-2 (Large Agricultural Holdings) to CF (Communal Farm) in PRRD Zoning Bylaw No. 1000, 1996;
 THAT the holding of a public hearing be waived pursuant to s. 890(4) of the *Local Government Act*, and authorize performance of public notification pursuant to s. 893 of the *Local Government Act*.

OPTION 2: THAT the Regional Board refuse the application as submitted.

SITE CONTEXT

The subject property is located west of Wowonon. It is ~125 km (80 miles) northwest of the City of Fort St. John, accessed via Highway 97, Petroleum Development Road 9C, and then Gundy Creek Road. This is a remote area, about 23 km off the highway, with no residences around. The subject properties are located in a valley surrounded by tall hills. Blair Creek runs by the subject properties, draining southward into Cameron River, which eventually drains into Halfway River.

Department Head

CAO

SITE FEATURES

- LAND:** Most of the subject properties are cleared and used for agricultural production.
- STRUCTURES:** According to the applicant, there is a group of 5 houses (4 single family dwellings and one large house capable of sleeping 12 couples) on DL 136 and one cabin on the northern end of the subject properties. Currently, only a caretaker resides on the subject properties.
- ACCESS:** Gundy Creek Road
- CLI SOIL RATING:** Class 4 $\frac{8}{W}$ -3 $\frac{4}{C}$ soils. Class 4 soils have severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices. Class soils have moderately severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices. Subclass W denotes excess water; subclass c denotes an adverse climate.
- Class 5CW soils. Class 5 soils have very severe limitations that restrict their capability in producing perennial forage crops, and improvement practices are feasible.
- FIRE:** Outside all rural fire protection areas.

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

- APPLICANT:** It is the intent of the landowners to use the land for agriculture, residence, education and religious facilities, as well as agriculture-, astronomy-, and ecological-themed tourism and associated tourist accommodations.
- ALR:** The subject property is mostly within the Agricultural Land Reserve. An ALR non-farm use application may be required for certain buildings (e.g. schools). Agri-tourism (limited to 10 sleeping units) and buildings/structure associated with passive recreation and wildlife/scenery viewing (limited to 100 m²) is permitted; an ALR application is required to exceed those limits.
- OCP:** Pursuant to the PRRD Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1940, 2011, the subject property is designated “Agricultural – Rural” which allows for communal farms. The proposal is consistent with the OCP designation.
- ZONING:** District Lot 136 is zoned CF (Communal Farm) pursuant to PRRD Zoning Bylaw No. 1000, 1996. The remainder of the subject properties are zoned A-2 (Large Agricultural Holdings). The proposal is to extend the CF zone to all subject properties.
- CF ZONE:** The proposed CF (Communal Farm) zone requires “agriculture” be the principle use of the property but includes numerous accessory uses, such as religious and educational buildings. A copy of this zone is attached to this report (Appendix I).
- CONSOLIDATION:** The landowners are in the process of consolidating all the subject properties into one large parcel. It is their intention to extend the CF zone which currently only encompasses DL 136 to cover the entire new parcel.
- PREVIOUS COMMUNAL FARM:** This is the location of previous communal farm to which the applicants previously resided with. According to the applicants, that communal farm operated between 1974 and 1987.
- DARK SKY PRESERVE:** According to the applicant, they have also applied to have the subject properties recognized as a Dark Sky Preserve through the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. This designation is given to areas where “no artificial lighting is visible and active measures are in place to educate and promote the reduction of light pollution”.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

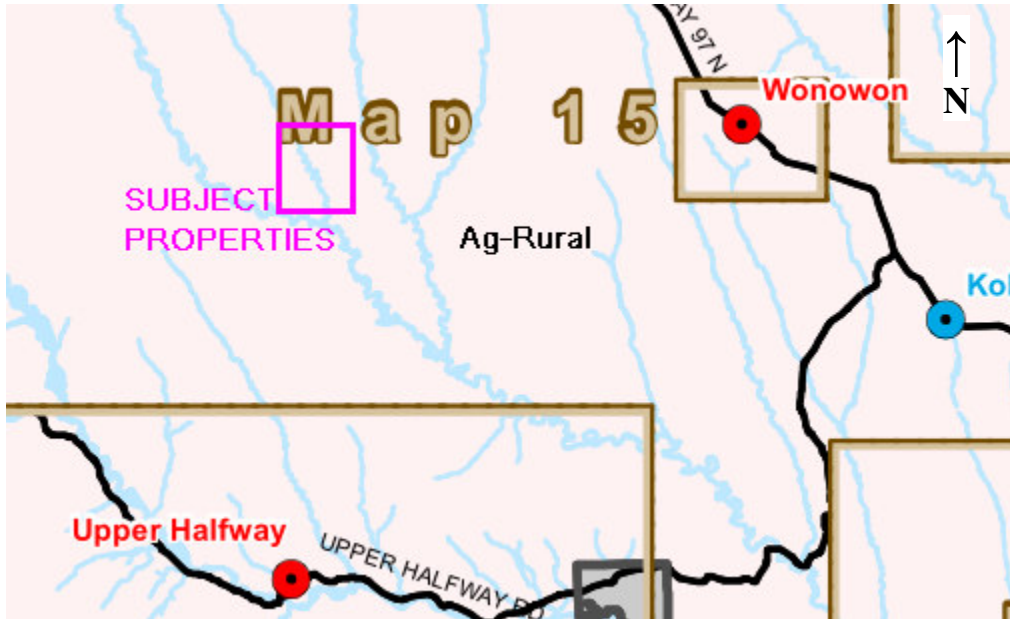
- AGRICULTURE:** According to the application, the landowners have restored the land for agricultural production. The proposal would help ensure a more permanent presence is kept in the area, which would help keep the land in production.
- CONTEXT:** This is a remote area where there would be little interference by non-agricultural uses and the farming activity would have little impact on the surrounding land uses.
- POPULATION:** The population of communal farms can vary, from several families to hundreds of people. The applicants estimated there were ~200 people in the previous communal farm.
- TRAFFIC:** The amount of traffic generated by a communal farm can vary, depending on the population of the farm and its operational practices. The astronomy/ecological-themed tourism could bring a bus or camper-trailers along Gundy Creek Road, off the Highway.



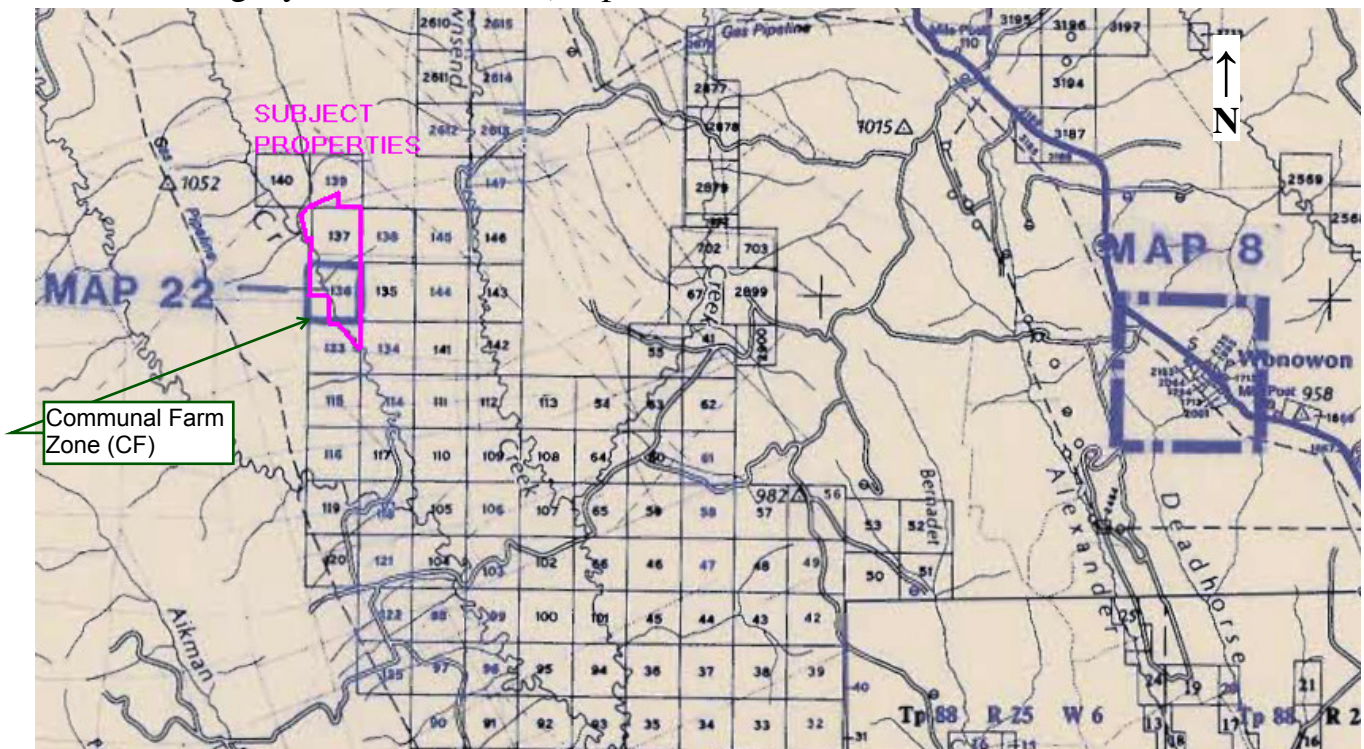
REZONING REPORT
MAPS
FILE NO. 108/2012

B-2a

PRRD Rural Official Community Plan 1940, 2011 (Map Index ii)



PRRD Zoning Bylaw 1000, 1996 (Map 1)

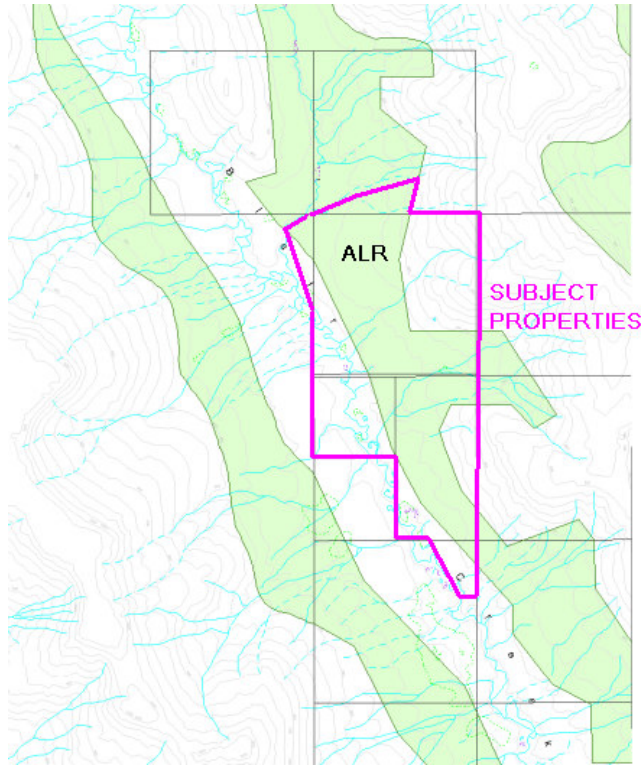




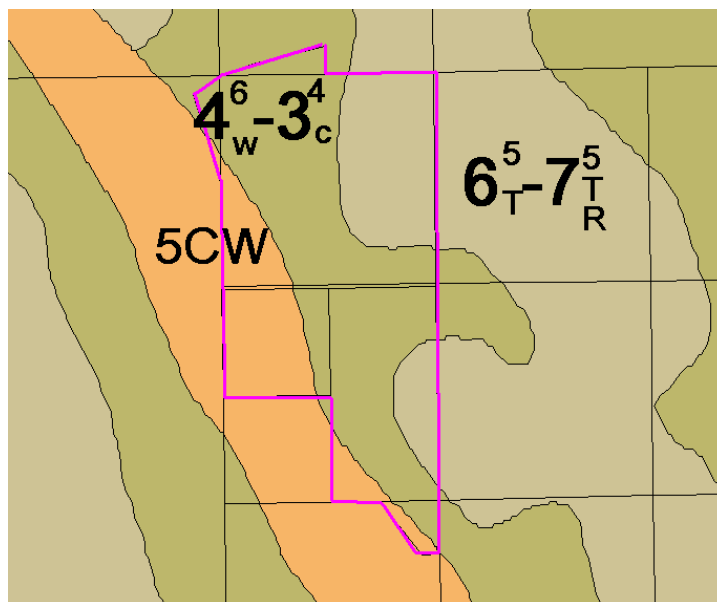
REZONING REPORT
MAPS
FILE NO. 108/2012

B-2a

Agricultural Land Reserve (Map #94B-079)



CLI-Soil Classification (Map #94B-16)





REZONING REPORT
MAPS
FILE No. 108/2012

Air Photo



September 6, 2012



REZONING REPORT
APPENDIX I
 ZONING BYLAW No. 1000, 1996

CF (Communal Farm)

Peace River Regional District
 Zoning By-law No. 1000, 1996 - CONSOLIDATION COPY

SECTION 37 C-F (Communal Farm Zone)

Permitted Uses

1. Subject to Section 26 of this by-law, the following uses and no others are permitted in an C-F zone:

(a) agriculture;

Permitted accessory uses and buildings on any parcel include the following:

(b) religious centres;

(c) bed and breakfast accommodations;

(d) home occupation and home industry;

(e) wood harvesting and forestry;

(f) limited agriculture;

(g) intensive agriculture;

(h) intensive livestock operations;

(i) educational facilities; and

(j) related accessory buildings for any of the above.

Regulations

2. On a parcel located in an C-F zone:

Minimum Parcel Size

(a) The minimum parcel size is 63 hectares (155 acres).

Setbacks

(b) Except as otherwise specifically permitted in this by-law, no building or structure shall be located within:

(i) 7 metres (23 ft) of a front parcel line;

(ii) 3 metres (10 ft) of an interior side parcel line;

(iii) 5 metres (17 ft) of an exterior side parcel line; or

(iv) 7 metres (23 ft) of a rear parcel line.

Additional requirements

See Sections 13 - 32 of this by-law.

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108/2012

B-2a



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

Box 810, 1981 Alaska Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4H8 Telephone: (250) 784.3200 Fax: (250) 784.3201	9505 – 100 th Street, Fort St. John, BC V1J 4N4 Telephone: (250) 785.8084 Fax: (250) 785.1125
Toll Free: 1.800.670.7773	

Receipt #: _____

Application for Development

1.		FEES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Official Community Plan Amendment	\$1,000.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Zoning Amendment	\$ 650.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Official Community Plan and Zoning Amendment combined	\$1,050.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary Use Permit	\$ 350.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Development Permit	\$ 165.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Development Variance Permit	\$ 165.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sign requirement [Amended by By-law No. 1898, 2010]	\$ 150.00

The applicant, on those parcel(s) subject to an amendment to:

- i) an official community plan and/or zoning by-law;
- ii) temporary commercial or industrial use permit;

shall post a development application sign on the subject property, as provided by the Regional District.

A \$150.00 fee will be charged for utilizing the sign and a \$100.00 refund will be issued upon return of the sign to the Regional District.

2. Please print

Property Owner-s Name <i>JAMES, JONATHAN, PHILLIP BELL</i>	Authorized Agent of Owner (if applicable):
Address of Owner <i>PO Box 6215 STN MAIN</i>	Address of Agent
City / Town / Village <i>FORT ST JOHN</i>	City / Town / Village
Postal Code <i>V1J 4H7</i>	Postal Code
Telephone Number: <i>250-787-8704</i> Fax Number: <i>250-787-8703</i>	Telephone Number: Fax Number:
e-mail address: <i>JIM @ NORTHBRIDGE VENTURES.COM</i>	e-mail address:

Jim 261-0291

3. Full legal description of each property under application	Area of each lot
Block A, District Lot 139 LBF: 8015094	20 ACRES ha./ acres
District Lot 137 LBF 0245325	640 ACRES ha. / acres
District Lot 4226 LBF 8015094	20 ACRES ha./ acres
Block A, District Lot 133 LBF 8015094	40 ACRES ha./ acres

4. Civic address or location of property: 22507 GUNDY CREEK ROAD

5. Particulars of proposed amendment

Please check the box(es) that apply(ies) to your proposal.

Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment:
 Existing OCP designation: _____
 Proposed OCP designation _____
 Text amendment: _____

For a Zoning amendment:
 Existing zone: A2
 Proposed zone CF
 Text amendment: _____

Development Variance Permit: - describe proposed variance request:

Temporary Use Permit (describe proposed use):

For a Development Permit: By-law No. _____ Section: _____

6. Describe the existing use and buildings on the subject property:

Existing buildings used for residence and for outdoor recreation studies. Also used for religious gatherings

7. Describe the existing land use and buildings on all lots adjacent to and surrounding the subject property:

- a) North CROWN
- b) East CROWN
- c) South COMMUNAL FARM
- d) West CROWN

8. Describe the proposed development of the subject property, attach a separate sheet if necessary:

Proposal to build a school for further education of outdoor wildlife, astronomy and for religious retreats

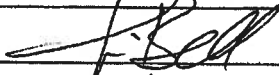
9. Reasons and comments in support of the application, attach a separate sheet if necessary:
All parcels are owned in common and attached to the existing communal farm. Request for common zoning.

The following information is required. Failure to provide any of the following may delay the application.

1. A copy of the **proof of ownership**. [For example: Certificate of Title or recent Tax Assessment] for the subject property or properties.
2. A **Sketch Plan** of the subject property, showing:
 - the legal boundaries and dimensions of the subject property;
 - boundaries, dimensions and area of any proposed lots (if subdivision is being proposed);
 - the location of permanent buildings and structures on the subject property, with distances to property lines;
 - the location of any proposed buildings, structures, or additions thereto, with distances to property lines;
 - the location of any existing sewage disposal systems;
 - the location of any existing or proposed water source; and
3. Additional or more detailed information may be requested by the Regional District following review of your application.

If the Regional District believes it to be necessary for the property boundaries and the location of buildings and structures to be more accurately defined, a plan prepared by a British Columbia Land Surveyor may be required.

I / We hereby declare that the information provided in this application is, to the best of my / our knowledge, true and correct in all respects, and I / we enclose the required fee with this application.

Signature of Owner/s:	
Signature of Owner/s:	Jonathan Bell
Date:	

Agent-s Authorization

Should the property owners elect to have someone act on their behalf in submission of this application, the following must be signed by **all property owners**.

I / We	and	hereby authorize
(name)		to act on my/our behalf in respect of this application.
Address of agent:		
Telephone:	Fax:	Email:

Signature of Owner/s: _____

Date _____

Signature of Owner/s: _____

Date _____

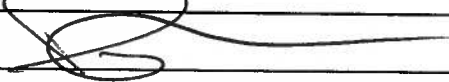
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 - the location of any existing sewage disposal systems;
 - the location of any existing or proposed water source; and
3. Additional or more detailed information may be requested by the Regional District following review of your application.

If the Regional District believes it to be necessary for the property boundaries and the location of buildings and structures to be more accurately defined, a plan prepared by a British Columbia Land Surveyor may be required.

I / We hereby declare that the information provided in this application is, to the best of my / our knowledge, true and correct in all respects, and I / we enclose the required fee with this application.

Signature of Owner/s:	 PHIL N. BELL
Signature of Owner/s:	
Date:	MAY 25/12

Agent-s Authorization

Should the property owners elect to have someone act on their behalf in submission of this application, the following must be signed by **all property owners**.

I / We	and	hereby authorize
(name)		to act on my/our behalf in respect of this application.
Address of agent:		
Telephone:	Fax:	Email:

Signature of Owner/s:

Date

Signature of Owner/s:

Date

June 21, 2012

Agricultural Land Commission

4940 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC
V5G 4K6

Attn: Gordon Bednard

**Subject: Bell Brothers Ranch-Request for Rezoning to Communal Farm
PRRD, DL136, DL137, DL4226, Block A of DL Lot 139, Block A of DL 133
Blair Creek Valley, aka Gundy, NW of Fort St John**

Hello Mr Bednard,

As previously discussed, we are seeking approval to rezone all of the parcels we own to match that of DL 136, that being Communal Farm. We are nearing completion of consolidating the titles on these parcels and would like to have the zoning be the same across all. The following gives explanation to this request:

In 1974, our father along with seven other brave souls travelled from the eastern United States to this area. They purchased this land with a dream, much the same as the dream of the early settlers, to create a new world for their children. With the idea that the end of time was near, they wanted their children to grow up in a safe haven, away from the evils of the civilized world, a place where they could learn from nature and be closer to their Maker.

As much as it sounds to be a dream, this is where we grew up. We were not alone; at one time the population reached over 200 people. We were schooled there too, and many of the children from there have become doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, airline pilots and so on. That is a very good result for a private farm school, yes?

We learned how to live off the land. Every one of us experienced the hazards and lessons of farm life. And with that we learned respect for the land and respect for the One who made it. We were taught to be stewards of the land and to manage the crops in rotation. We also learned how to till the land with horse drawn equipment.

To some extent, I believe our fathers' dreams did come true. We have all grown up to lead very successful lives. In 1987, due to declines in the economy, and due to lack of manpower, the farm was somewhat shut down. Only a small portion of the folks stayed on. Cattle and grain farming continued, but not to the extent as in the 70's and early 80's. We moved into Fort St John but often visited. To us, we still belonged there. The place changed hands twice, and twice we attempted to buy it back. In early 2005 we successfully purchased the property and immediately began to restore it to the glory it had once been. We spent a considerable amount of time removing dilapidated outbuildings, cleaning up debris, repairing and adding fence lines, restoring springs and reservoir ponds, etc.

In review of the old survey, we noted that our predecessors had trespassed into crown land with their enthusiastic clearing of land for agriculture back in the 70's. In 2009, we applied to the ALC for purchase of these parcels and with the existing cleared land in these parcels; we were able to acquire these parcels, Block A of DL 139, DL 4226 and Block A of DL 133.

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We began to reclaim fields that had been overrun with willows and restored the fields to their original extents. We then began planting grain crops and in 2010, we successfully harvested a crop of grain for the cattle and horses.

In the fall of 2009, we applied for and recently acquired Organic Status for our property. We have been rotating crops and with the re-breaking of old farmland, we are expanding the arable land already to a larger area than when we were kids there. We have purchased some larger equipment and can now till and seed a 40ft swath. That brings a rather large smile to our father's face. We will have a profitable harvest this fall of multiple grains and hay and even hope to have a malt rye crop which will potentially be purchased by a brewery.

Last year, in review of the two road allowances across our property, we noticed that they would never and could never be used by the Ministry of Transportation. Currently, we are in the process of finalizing the purchase of these strips of land, thus giving us more permanent land to farm. This has been a long process. There have been many hurdles to cross and many levels of government to deal with. One of the prerequisites to get approval was the Mandatory Consolidation of Titles. Now being that we are consolidating the titles, we would like to have Communal Farm Zoning across all the parcels as well.

This place is precious to us for reasons beyond just that of farming. As children we grew up where the air was clean, the skies were clear and it was quiet. As many have said, "You could hear a pin drop." The night was even more magnificent with black clear skies filled with millions of stars and northern lights like many people in this world never see. At any time of any day there were only the sounds of countless species of creatures whose specific voices and characteristics belonged to them and them alone. This was what quiet enjoyment was all about. It is still that way and now we get to forward that on to our children.

In planning for the future, our children have shown a heightened interest in astronomy. Being that this area is unobstructed and not polluted by a city skyline; the viewing of the stars and planets has become a popular pastime, not only for us but also for guests who come out to enjoy the serenity of the valley. With the ongoing astronomical activity that has been increasingly popular, we applied and received endorsement by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada as a Dark Sky Reserve. *For further information, please contact Jim Bell directly.* It has now been noticed by astronomers throughout Canada and the Orient. There is a significant demand for this exact opportunity and we are preparing to open up our property for tours. The great part about this is that it has no affect on our daytime farming operations. In discussing this opportunity with astronomical societies in BC, there is a demand for field training. The majority of the training is out under the skies, however a modest sized school, more for a place to warm up is required.

Concurrent with the above, there has been a great interest in the ecology of the area. There are numerous species of raptors in the area, most of which are endangered. There has been some amazing sightings in our valley and now there is an interest in promoting some ecological tours with school groups. These day trips would be primarily out in the forested areas, however they too may need a place to hold a written lesson and to warm up.

Finally, out of respect to our father, and out of the respect we have for some folks who passed away while living on this land, we would like to provide a building that could be used as a religious center. Many of the 200 people who used to live here come back from time to time, mainly to meditate and to feel close to loved ones they lost. My father has held some religious meetings out here as well and has asked if we could build a small church.

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We have given this a lot of thought and now would like to build a structure which could function and provide this service to any of the three demands above. The location of the structure must be along the north boundary of DL 137 in order to accommodate all three. Therefore, we have chosen a proposed location as shown on the attached map. There is no need for a large parking area; the majority of the guests to date have arrived in larger passenger vans, and due to the frequency of visits, they can park along the road or on the hay field. Minimal plumbing is required and will be handled with the use of a pump out system. Power will be supplied with solar panels and emergency generator. Heat will be acquired with a wood stove. If an overnight stay is planned, the building will function as a bunkhouse too, with any potential overflow being housed in the existing dwellings and/or in recreational trailers. We are not planning to install a campground at this time.

At this time, we request approval to rezone all the land to Communal Farm.

We also request approval to install this one structure measuring 3.6 meters wide by 5.5 meters long. There will also be a landing on the end measuring 2 meters by 3.6 meters wide. No other structures are planned at this time.

Please review the attached sketch and feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

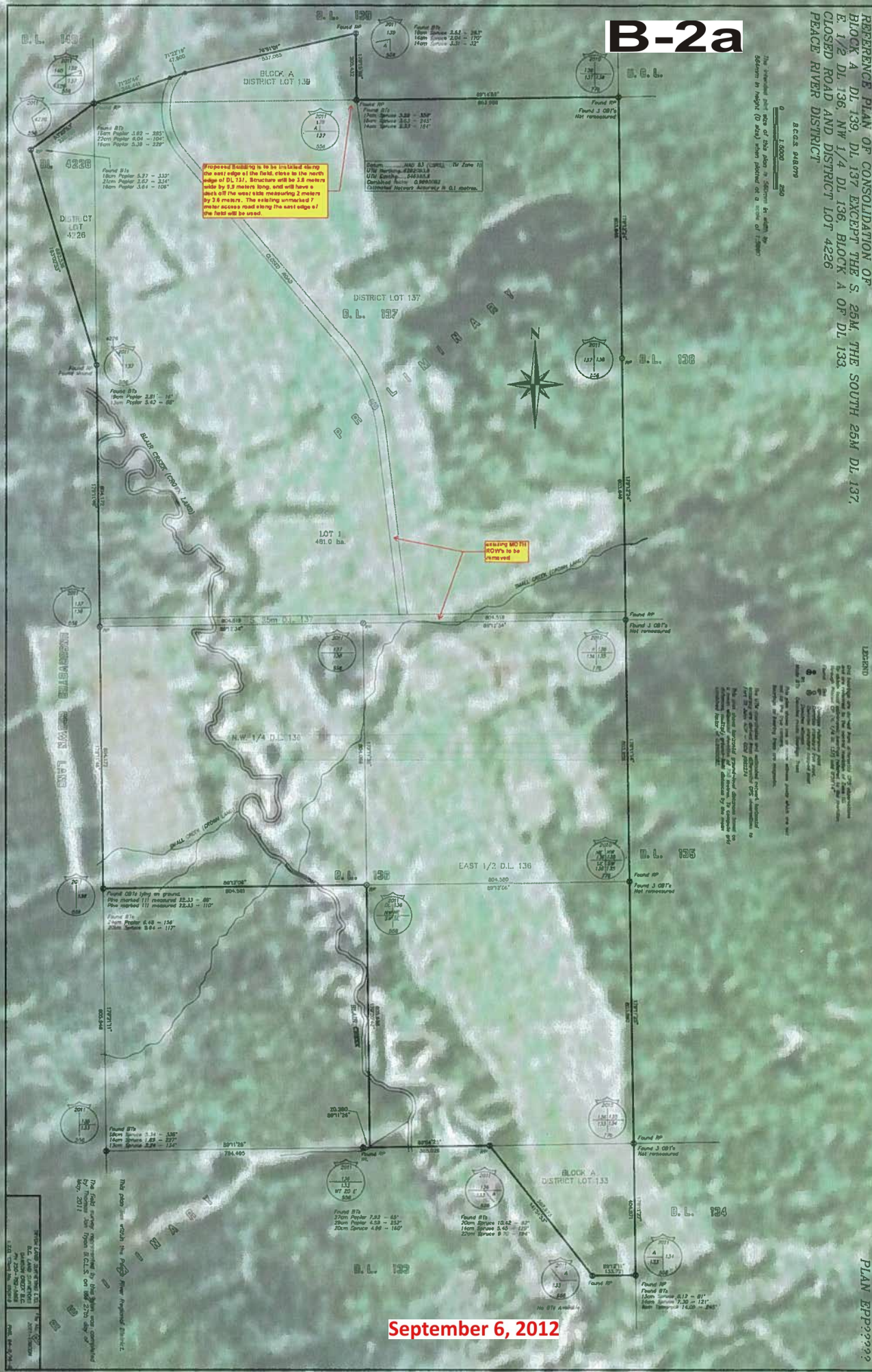
Jonathan M Bell

Cc: Jim Bell, Phil Bell, Jodi MacLean, Owen Bloor

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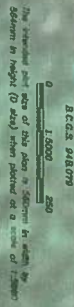
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REFERENCE PLAN OF CONSOLIDATION OF
BLOCK A, D.L. 139, D.L. 137 EXCEPT THE S. 25M, THE SOUTH 25M D.L. 137,
E. 1/2 D.L. 136, NW 1/4 D.L. 136, BLOCK A OF D.L. 133,
CLOSED ROAD AND DISTRICT LOT 4226
PEACE RIVER DISTRICT



Proposed Building is to be located along the east edge of the lot close to the north edge of D.L. 137. Structure will be 3.8 meters wide by 9.3 meters long, and will have a setback off the west side measuring 2 meters by 3.8 meters. The existing unmarked 7 meter access road along the east edge of the field will be used.

EXISTING UNMARKED ROWS to be removed



LEGEND

- Found RP
- Found 3 CBP's Not re-measured
- Found 2 CBP's Not re-measured
- Found 1 CBP's Not re-measured
- No 3P's Available

The horizontal and vertical dimensions of this plan are determined by using the datum in height (O asy) when obtained of a corner of station.

THESE LOTS ARE PART OF THE DISTRICT LOT 133, DISTRICT LOT 137, DISTRICT LOT 136, AND DISTRICT LOT 4226, PEACE RIVER DISTRICT, GEORGIA.

September 6, 2012

PLAN EPP000000

**PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
By-Law No. 2023, 2012**

A by-law to amend the "Peace River Regional District
Zoning By-Law No. 1000, 1996."

WHEREAS, the Regional Board of the Peace River Regional District did, pursuant to the Province of British Columbia *Local Government Act*, adopt the "Peace River Regional District Zoning By-Law No. 1000, 1996";

NOW THEREFORE the Regional Board of the Peace River Regional District, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. This by-law may be cited for all purposes as "Peace River Regional District Zoning Amendment By-Law No. 2023, 2012."
2. The "Peace River Regional District Zoning By-Law No. 1000, 1996" is hereby amended in the following manner:
 - i) Schedule 'A' – Maps 1 and 22 are hereby amended by rezoning Block A, District Lot 139, PRD; District Lot 137, PRD; District Lot 4226, PRD; and Block A, District Lot 133, PRD, from A-2 "Large Agricultural Holdings Zone" to CF "Communal Farm Zone", as shown shaded grey on Schedule "A" which is attached to and forms part of this by-law.

READ a FIRST TIME this ____ day of _____, 2012.

READ a SECOND TIME this ____ day of _____, 2012.

Public Notification held on the _____ day of _____, 2012.

READ FOR a THIRD TIME this _____ day of _____, 2012.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2012.

CERTIFIED a true and correct copy of "Peace River Regional District Zoning Amendment By-law No. 2023, 2012."

THE CORPORATE SEAL of the Peace River Regional District was hereto affixed in the presence of:

Faye Salisbury,
Corporate Officer

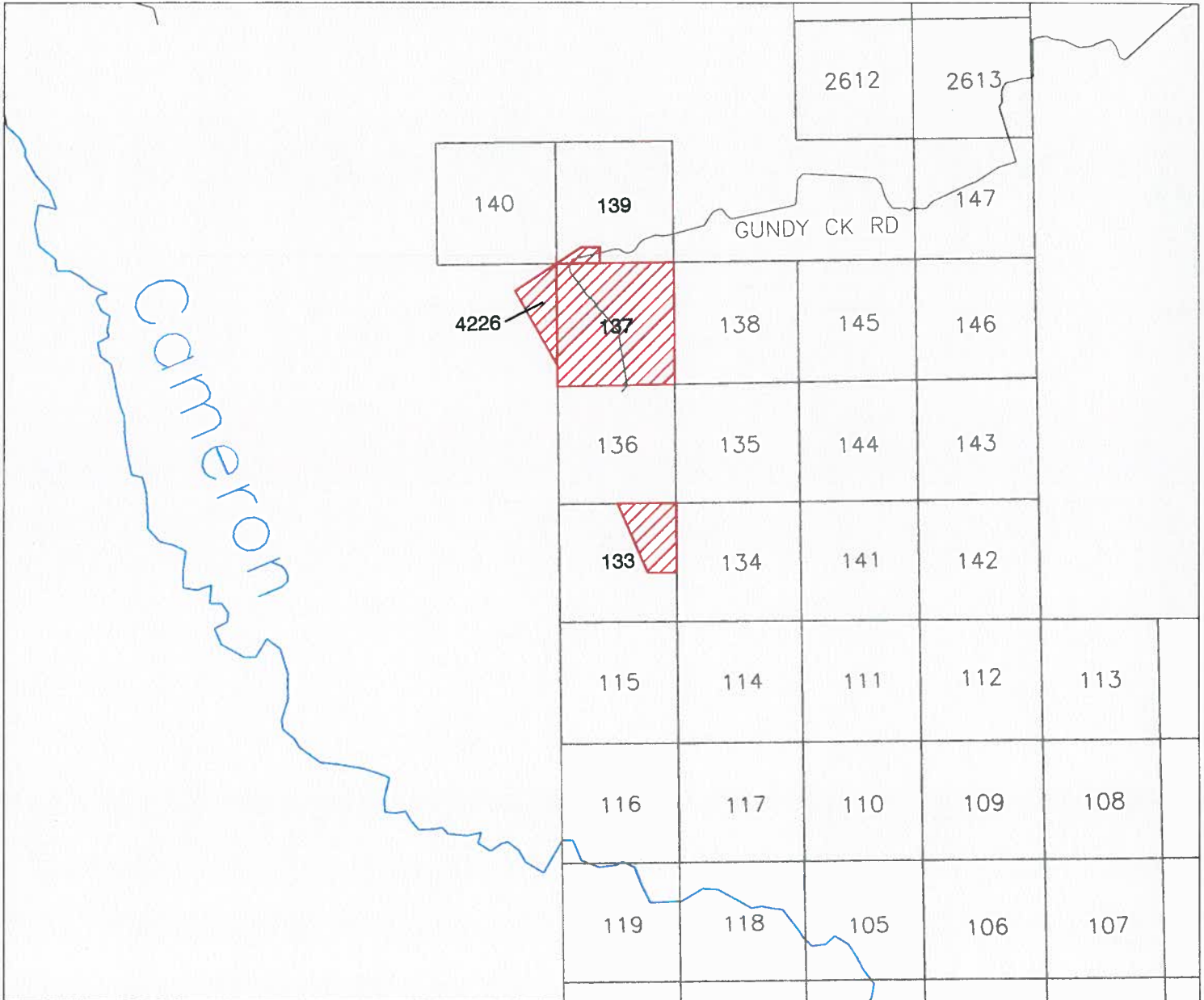
Karen Goodings, Chair

Faye Salisbury, Corporate Officer

Peace River Regional District
 By-law No. 2023, 2012
SCHEDULE "A"



Map. No. 1 & 22 - Schedule A of " Peace River Regional District Zoning Bylaw No. 1000, 1996 is hereby amended by rezoning Block A, District Lot 139, PRD; District Lot 137, PRD; District Lot 4226, PRD; and Block A, District Lot 133, PRD, **from** A-2 'Large Agricultural Holdings Zone" to CF "Communal Farm Zone" as shown shaded on the drawing below:



CERTIFIED a true and correct copy of
 Schedule "A" to "Peace River Regional
 District Zoning Amendment By-law
 No. 2023, 2012."

 Faye Salisbury, CO

September 6, 2012