



# North Peace Rural Roads Initiative

## Stakeholder Newsletter

### Good Roads Cost Less

The North Peace Rural Roads Task initiative (NPRR) was established to advocate for improvements to the rural road network to benefit residents, First Nation and Unincorporated rural communities and industries that rely on them every day. This is our second newsletter to update road users on our activities and progress to date.

### Farrell Creek Hill - Priority 1

There are many road priorities in the North Peace but none are currently more important than the Farrell Creek hill. On July 20th the hill slid at multiple locations causing the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) to immediately restrict traffic on the hill to 50% legal axle loading. That restriction lasted for 26 days until August 15 when it was amended to 100% where it remains today.

During the 50% restriction, all traffic had to detour via Beryl Prairie adding up to 140 km per round trip and costing millions of dollars for industry and inconvenience and cost for residents. It also put tremendous pressure on the Beryl Prairie road which was being used as a detour

The Farrell Creek slides highlight the risk the province is taking by not proactively rehabilitating slides before they completely fail. This hill has been sliding for years and now the potential re-establishment of this critical corridors is counted in years, not months.

MoTI reports the following progress since the slide:

- working with BC Hydro to relocate power poles at the top of the hill to allow short-term realignment;
- re-establishing two lanes of traffic on the lower slide;
- setting legal axle loading at 100% (they will monitor and assess through the winter along with any traffic control requirements);
- collecting geotechnical data;
- enhancing maintenance on Beryl Prairie road to handle the short term increase in traffic; and
- assigning a project manager to look at options for permanent realignment.

### Pullouts

Most hard surfaced rural roads in the North Peace are high and narrow with no shoulders and steep ditches. In addition to the safety risk, the design severely impacts the agriculture industry's ability to move large farm equipment. Ideally the roads could be upgraded to a wider design, but short term, we are advocating for development of pullouts at regular intervals to allow large equipment to pull over and let vehicles past. To keep them cost effective, pullouts will have to be built within existing road allowances and would probably only accommodate one or two large vehicles at a time.



## What have we been up to?

*Following is a brief summary of the meetings and presentations undertaken in the last half of 2018. Unless otherwise noted, external meetings and presentations were done by Jackie Kjos the registered lobbyist consultant for the initiative. All presentations had a similar message on the need for safe reliable rural roads capable of supporting their current and projected use.*

### **RRTF Mtg # 1 - July 30**

At the inaugural meeting of the new RRTF we reviewed the charter and terms of reference and work completed to date including a copy of the report prepared for government in January. We developed a draft vision of what we wanted to achieve, did some action planning and reviewed the communications and contacts that would be required for success.

### **RRTF Mtg # 2 - Aug. 27,**

We finalized discussions on charter, terms of reference and vision at this meeting. We collectively developed the messaging for materials for presentation at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) meeting with Minister Trevena (MoTI). We made decision on which other presentations to pursue.

### **MoTI & MEMPR - Aug. 29**

At this meeting with the Pacific Gateway Branch (MoTI) we were able to get a better understanding of the scope of current corridor studies. To date the importance of the corridor between Alberta and Northeastern BC has not been considered in Pacific Gateway trade. MEMPR gave an overview of their current Infrastructure Royalty Credit Program (IRCP). Hali Davenport from MoTI Peace District joined via teleconference.

Jackie had a separate meeting with MEMPR Deputy Minister Dave Nikolejsin focusing on development of the North Montney gas field and the overall lack of public infrastructure. We also reviewed the impacts of the Farrell Creek hill slide on industry and the potential realignment

of Highway 29 directly below the hill. Dave followed up this meeting by facilitating meetings with BC Hydro and his Assistant Deputy Minister to further explore road issues and the IRCP.

### **BC Hydro - Sept. 5**

The meeting with Site C leadership in Vancouver verified Highway 29 alignment plans directly below the Farrell Creek hill. The profile of the slide area is such that any disturbance below the road could further destabilize the road. We were able to confirm that realignment of Highway 29 will go out into the river and will not disturb the existing hill or highway. The tie in will be east of the current Farrell Hill intersection.

### **MoTI - Sept. 11**

Director Goodings and Jackie presented to Renee Mounteney A/Assistant Deputy Minister Infrastructure. She has a very good understanding of the challenges in the North Peace from her experience here as District Manager and provided suggestions on who else we should engage in the ministry with our message.

UBCM was our first opportunity to present directly to MoTI Minister Honorable Clair Trevena and her senior staff. The format of UBCM is a very brief presentation that was attended by the PRRD Directors and staff. The impacts of the Farrell Creek hill, the resulting impacts on Beryl Prairie road and the general need for incremental investment were our key messages. We also expressed our commitment to work with MoTI to find solutions, not just bring forward problems.

### **MEMPR - Sept 11**

During this presentation to Assistant Deputy Minister Ines Piccinino we had good discussions about the structure of the current IRCP and opportunities for the program to extend to public roads. This was our first opportunity to specifically request a program similar to the Oil and Gas Initiative 2 (OGI2) in 2001 to upgrade key public corridors to support the industry.

### **Industry - Sept. 11-12**

While at UBCM Jackie met with senior representatives from Canfor, Canbriam Energy Inc. and Progress Energy Ltd. to discuss the issues with the Farrell Creek hill, detour on the Beryl Prairie road, the general lack of infrastructure in the North Montney area and the potential for partnership and mutual support. We reviewed the role the Kobes and Haystack roads may play in opening up the area.

### **Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services - Sept. 17**

Director Goodings and Jackie made a brief presentation to this all party committee of the legislative committee when they were doing consultations in Dawson Creek. In addition to a quick overview of the North Peace road challenges and opportunities, we supported continuation of the IRCP.

### **RRTF Mtg # 3 - Sept. 18**

Along with some updates and previous business, this meeting was about how we would ultimately decide priorities for road upgrades. We identified broad, shared visions and values that make consensus easier to achieve than starting with specific roads. The task force also looked more closely at the issue of maintenance, road classifications, upcoming contract renewals and how to find more information about all of them.

### **MoTI - Oct 17**

Jackie presented to Assistant Deputy Minister Kevin Richter and Scott Maxwell, Executive Director, Northern Region. Both had been at UBCM but this was a longer meeting with more opportunity to present a fuller picture of the North Peace road challenges and opportunities. They were engaged and understanding of the challenges and supportive of our approach and focus on solutions. They shared some of the challenges the Ministry is facing elsewhere in the province including the impacts from the drop in revenue from toll removals in the lower mainland.

**MEMPR - Oct. 18****October 18, 2018 - Victoria**

Director Goodings, Bob Fedderly and Canbriam VP Donna Phillips joined in this meeting with Assistant Deputy Minister Ines Piccinino and senior staff for a round table brainstorming session to see if there were opportunities within the IRCP that could help develop the public road network (public and industry) in the North Montney.

**RRTF Mtg. #4 - Nov. 6**

This meeting was to develop our road priority list. We also reviewed options to support new pullouts primarily in the agriculture areas and reviewed the upcoming helicopter tour.

**MEMPR, OGC and MoTI Tour and Dinner - Nov. 8**

We hosted a helicopter tour for MEMPR Deputy Minister Dave Nikolejsin, OGC Commissioner, Paul Jeakins and MoTI Regional Manager Planning and Partnerships Bryan Crosby. Following the tour we had an informal dinner with opportunity for the RRTF to talk to the guests.

The first part of the flight took in the Old Fort slide, Site C, Macro Industries construction sites and laydown yard for the North Montney Mainline, the Farrell Creek hill and Beryl Prairie community. From there we flew directly to the Haystack bridge where along the way Lloyd Hayden and our pilot were able to point out various energy and forestry activities and roads.

From there we travelled down the Upper Halfway discussing the importance of the road and consequences of a slide. We flew east over the agriculture areas to Peterson's Crossing where we were able to talk about the impact paving roads like Prespatou, Buick Creek, Montney, Beaton Airport, Doig and Milligan/PJ had on the lives of road users and residents in First Nation and Unincorporated rural communities. We discussed the challenges those same roads have caused the

agriculture industry and our request for pullouts to help them. This leg also gave us the opportunity to point out how heavily the roads outside of the North Montney are still being used to service existing conventional gas fields. We took a close look at the slides at Peterson's Crossing, the Montney Coulee and then flew back to Fort St. John.

We feel this was a very valuable trip for our guests and an effective way to advance our concerns. We look forward to a similar trip in the spring which will include a ground trip with MoTI Minister, Honorable Claire Trevena.

**Infrastructure Royalty Credit Program**

We have discussed the IRCP program at numerous meetings over the past few months. It is important for readers here to understand some key principles of IRCP.

- the existing program has expired and there is no guarantee it will be renewed
- past infrastructure projects have extended only to new/upgraded industry roads and pipelines (including associated installations and facilities)
- industry must apply to the program which is generally over subscribed.

The primary reason the NPRR initiative has engaged on this topic is to encourage any new IRCP to consider partnership between MoTI and Industry when producers need to upgrade or build roads near existing public roads. The North Montney has numerous public roads (e.g. the 3 Cache roads, Pink Mountain, Cypress) that are not currently strong enough to sustain new drilling and development programs.

In those circumstances, industry may be able to partner with MoTI, potentially using IRCP to offset costs. This will result in a lasting legacy of a high grade public road that benefit all residents and road users while reducing the overall disturbance footprint in the area.

Fundamental to this concept is that this is **ONLY** an option when Industry initiates it and if it is approved by the IRCP.

**NPRR Priorities**

Following are the roads we have identified for upgrade and hard surfacing:

- Aitken Creek
- Baldonnel
- Beaton Airport
- Beryl Prairie
- Bison
- Cypress
- Farrell Creek
- Golata Creek
- Graham
- Lower Cache
- North Cache
- Pink Mountain
- Rose Prairie (gravel portion)
- Siphon
- Stoddart
- Upper Cache
- Van Ingren

We have also identified these hill and slides that require urgent rehabilitation:

- Golata Creek Hill
- Montney Coulee
- Peace View
- Peterson's Crossing
- Upper Halfway (multiple)

**MoTI 2018 Program**

The following improvements were made in the North Peace over the 2018 construction season

- 62.5 km of asphalt resurfacing on portions of Farrell Creek, Prespatou, Rose Prairie, Montney and Beaton Park roads
- 92.8 lane km of gravelling in the Goodlow, Clayhurst and Upper Cache areas
- 123.5 km of dust control in various locations
- 20 km of gravelling and ditching and 5 culvert replacements on Triad
- Base repair, ditching and a drainage review (in progress) on Baldonnel.

## Meet the 2018/19 North Peace Rural Roads Task Force

*The initiative used the previous newsletter to call for volunteers to sit on the new task force. We were fortunate to have more volunteers than could practically participate so the PRRD Directors asked the following people to join them in forming the new RRTF to advise and drive the direction of this initiative.*

### Art Jarvis - Energy Service Sector

Art owns a local service company providing pressure trucks and other environmental services to the energy sector. Art has been active in the community for many years through local and provincial industry associations.

### Bob Fedderly - Heavy Hauling

Bob is a lifetime resident of the Peace and owner of multiple trucking companies. He has a long history of supporting initiatives like NPRR bringing exceptional knowledge of the trucking industry, heavy hauling, weights and dimensions and regional competitiveness.

### Brad Sperling - Rural Area 'C'

Brad was first elected Director for PRRD Area 'C' in 2014 and has served as the board chair since 2017. Brad has lived in the area for 35 years where he has worked as a self employed carpenter.

### Catie Underhill - Pipeline

Catie Underhill resides in Calgary where she handles Community Relations for TransCanada. She is frequently in the region meeting with community groups and local governments as the North Montney Mainline is being constructed.

### Curtis Rogers - Transportation

Curtis is the co-owner of a long time Fort St. John trucking company offering sand gravel and other commodity hauling.

### Dave Heiberg - Hudson's Hope

Dave is the new Mayor of Hudson's Hope and joined the task force in the fall. He moved his family to Hudson's Hope in 1980 to accept a role as a high school teacher and continues to substitute teach between his new Mayoral duties.

### Doug Summer - Livestock

Doug is a lifetime resident of the Hudson's Hope area and has wore many hats in the agriculture, forest and energy industries. Doug was an original member of RRTF and represents primarily the livestock industry, but has excellent insight to all of the major North Peace industries.

### Ernest Weibe - Crops and Livestock

Ernest has lived north of Fort St. John all his live where he raises crops, livestock and works in the logging industry. Ernest is a member of and represents the BC Grain Growers Association.

### Gwen Johansson—Hudson's Hope

Gwen is the newly retired Mayor of Hudson's Hope who is remaining on the task force for now to ensure continuity. Gwen has been a lifetime advocate for the Peace region at the local, regional and provincial level.

### Jim Little - Crops

Jim is long term north Peace resident and had a long career with the provincial government and more recently consulting. He is a member of and represents the North Pine Farmers Institute who were instrumental in urging the PRRD to revive the rural roads initiative.

### Jim Schilling - Forestry

Jim is a lifetime resident of the Peace and one of the original members of the RRTF. Jim is the Operations Supervisor for the Canfor Peace Region.

### Karen Goodings

Karen was first elected Director for PRRD Area 'B' in 1988 and served as chair for many years. Karen was the driving force behind establishment of the previous and current road initiatives. Karen's family have operated a farm in Cecil Lake for more than 40 years.

### Lloyd Hayden - Energy

Lloyd has worked in the energy industry all his life, the past 24 years in the Peace. As the Field Superintendent, Construction, Road Maintenance and Mine Manager for Petronas, he brings a wealth of experience and is proactively exploring new technology in road upgrades.

### Rob Fraser

Rob was elected Mayor of Taylor in 2014 after serving many years on council. He has lived most of his life in Northeast BC and has worked in forestry, energy and government compliance.

### Are We Winning?

The PRRD Directors that manage this process (Area B & C, Taylor and Hudson's Hope) set an early goal that by the end of August we needed to be heard in Victoria or reassess our objectives and processes.

We feel that we have established good relations in Victoria with senior levels of Government who understand we are seeking solutions and want to work with them to find solutions, not just bring more challenges.

The Directors meet with the consultant bi-weekly and adjust priorities as required to advance our goals.

Ultimately, we will not know the results of our efforts until the 2019/20 and subsequent budgets are announced.



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