



BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia

AGRI CENTRE - #4 - 10145 DALLAS DRIVE, KAMLOOPS, B.C. V2C 6T4 PHONE (250) 573-3611 FAX (250) 573-5155

December 11, 2023

Hon. Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forest
PO BOX 9049, STN PROV GOVT.
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Hon. Nathan Cullen
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
PO BOX 9012, STN PROV GOVT.
Victoria, BC V8W 9L6
WLR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

BCCA File: 2023-048
SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Ministers Ralston and Cullen,

RE: Impacts on Rangelands from Recreational Activities

Over the past decade, BC Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) members across BC have noticed a marked increase in the number of recreational activities on the landscape, including non-motorized and motorized outdoor recreation vehicles (ORV), day-use activities and camping that are occurring away from designated sites, often occurring for extended periods and being conducted in a manner that cause significant impacts to ecosystems and range infrastructure.

While this trend is noted broadly, these impacts are particularly significant in landscapes like grasslands, where a new tenting site or new trail can cause permanent damage to plants and soils and encourage the continued use of these sites, making rehabilitation impossible. Compounding the negative habitat impacts is the elevated likelihood of the introduction of invasive plant species on disturbed sites, which also have significant on biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Not only do these impacts have negative ecological impacts, but they can also create significant issues for range licensees with the added costs of management created by damage to infrastructure like fences, gates and cattleguards, increased risk of wildfire and impacts to the economics of ranch businesses through the introduction of invasive plants which diminish the quality and abundance of forage.

While there are some prohibitions on activities like ORV use in sensitive areas like grasslands, the present suite of tools seems ineffective at stemming this issue, with many of the activities nearly impossible to observe and enforce. More needs to be done to protect public lands from these negative impacts.

While we work to protect the biodiversity and health of our ecosystems through new frameworks, planning bodies and policy measures, the BCCA suggests that consideration of this critical issue be taken and that effective measures be put in place to ensure that the public is able to enjoy recreation on public lands, but that these activities are conducted in a harm-managed manner that supports biodiversity and ecosystem health and does not create undue harm to ranch operations.

The BCCA feels that there are many opportunities for the integration of interest-considerate solutions and policy measures, including public education and signage, licensing, area and trail designations and regulatory and enforcement measures that could significantly improve this issue. The BCCA would welcome the opportunity to discuss these ideas further with you and your staff.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a yellow highlight behind the name.

Brian Thomas, President
BC Cattlemen's Association