

## Prince George Backcountry Recreation Society

### Policy title: Commercial use of Red Mountain Cabin

# Intent

The intent of this policy is to establish principles and guidelines and process for the PGBRS Board to review and make recommendations to the provincial government for proposed commercial activities involving Red Mountain Cabin.

# Background

Proposed commercial use of Red Mountain Cabin is approved by Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) branch of the provincial government. During review of proposed commercial activities, RSTBC may provide opportunity to the PGBRS to make a recommendation regarding the proposed activity, and/or identify any concerns with the proposed activity.

# Evaluation Process

The PGBRS Board of Directors will review proponent information as requested by RSTBC, using the following guiding principles:

Given that (i) the Red Mountain Cabin is an historic backcountry cabin that is managed to offer reserved backcountry overnight shelter for the public; (ii) Public demand for this cabin is high, especially during the winter and summer seasons; (iii) Commercial use of this cabin could potentially impact public use and enjoyment and (iv) The cabin is located in a sensitive subalpine environment, the PGBRS will carefully consider the commercial use of the cabin and make recommendations aimed at minimizing potential impacts to the public and local environment through a consistent evaluation of individual commercial activities.

The following questions can be used to guide the evaluation process:

## 1) **Are the proposed activities appropriate for Red Mountain Cabin and the surrounding area?**

PGBRS generally supports low-impact, self-propelled activities, with the exception of user groups who require use of a helicopter to access the cabin. The cabin is located in a snowmobile closure area under the Wildlife Act, and therefore snowmobile access to the cabin is prohibited. Likewise, commercial operations that plan to use ATVs to access the cabin, or that offer guided hunting, could negatively impact the surrounding area. Examples

of appropriate activities include avalanche safety training, guided hiking, and wildlife viewing.

**2) Does the proposed commercial activity infer a broad benefit to the public or backcountry community?**

Commercial activities that offer training to the public, such as avalanche safety or outdoor first aid, may align with the intent of Red Mountain Cabin. Commercial activities that utilize partnerships with local educational institutions and that result in public and youth awareness and understanding of wilderness opportunities would have priority over commercial opportunities focused on tourism.

**3) Is the proposed commercial activity proposed outside of times of high public demand for the cabin?**

Commercial activities proposed during low-demand times (e.g., weekdays and shoulder season) for the cabin will minimize impacts to public access. PGBRS generally does not support commercial activities that plan to occupy the cabin for extended periods. The PGBRS may recommend a limit on the overall number of commercial activities in a given year.

**4) Is the commercial operator aware of special considerations around Red Mountain, and do they have a risk management plan?**

For example, is the operator aware of sensitive wildlife in the area (e.g., mountain caribou, grizzly bear), and do they have a plan to avoid disturbing these animals? Is the operator aware of avalanche danger during the winter?

**5) Is the commercial operator based locally?**

PGBRS recognizes that supporting local commercial operators can provide broader benefit to the Prince George backcountry community. For the purposes of this policy, 'local' refers to Prince George.

**6) How much commercial activity has already taken place at Red Mountain Cabin in the year?**

PGBRS should consider how much the cabin has already been used for commercial activities in a given year. It may be worthwhile restricting commercial use of the cabin to a maximum number of weekends/days per year. The PGBRS will consider commercial activities for advanced booking under categories such as avalanche safety provided there is recognized demand in the local area and the benefits are provided to the backcountry community through education and training. If more than one provider is interested in providing that service(s) a review committee will be formed to ensure maximum benefits to the local community while balancing the availability of the cabin for public use.

PGBRS Board of Directors will discuss their evaluation of these questions and a vote will be taken by quorum on: (i) recommendation (approve/not approve/approve with conditions); and (ii) concerns with the proposed activities. Outcomes from this evaluation and vote will be provided to RSTBC.

## Other

1. This policy does not cover public groups who wish to privately hire a commercial guide to assist them with backcountry travel while using Red Mountain Cabin. This activity is considered completely independent of PGBRS.