

**MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND RANGE
BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST SERVICE
BRIEFING NOTE**

File: 280-20/[File/CLIFF#]

I PREPARED FOR:

Dana Hayden for **DECISION**
(as requested by Jim Gowriluk)

II ISSUE:

There is a need to address the lack of jurisdiction in protection of caves in B.C.

III BACKGROUND:

Protection of cave resources is an issue which is brought to our attention with increasing frequency in the Coast Forest Region. In the past districts have protected a number of caves through forest resources regulations. Currently there is some protection under GAR orders, but only from forestry related activities under GAR which would not apply to the public or other groups. And currently only karst caves are protected.

Recreation orders have also been used by districts to protect caves in the past. Authority for this legislation has been transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA). Districts can also use Section 118 to enter into agreements with MTCA or others to manage forests resources. A few caves of high recreational significance have been legally established as Recreation Sites. This designation gives these caves protection under the Forest Recreation Regulation, which includes control over non-forestry related activities.

Through the above methods caves may be afforded protection from forestry activities and/or protection for or from recreational activities. On the broader landscape, there is no protection for anything else such as oil and gas activities or mineral extraction activities.

Values associated with caves cover a broad spectrum. Such values include but are not limited to forest, hydrological, archaeological, cultural, recreational, geological and species at risk. Protection of these values falls under the jurisdiction of various agencies.

Recent archaeological works by staff of the Royal BC Museum in the P2 cave system have upset a number of cavers. Currently the North Island Central Coast Forest district office controls access to the P2 cave system without any actual authority to do so.

IV DISCUSSION:

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V OPTIONS:

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VI RECOMMENDATION:

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VII OTHER:

VIII COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ATTACHED:

☐ Yes

☒ No

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

Date

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