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"The overriding principle in Kananaskis Country is protection of the environment."

Gary Mar, Minister of Environment

Spray Lake development proposals meet deadline

Calgary - Three development proposals for the Spray Lake area of Kananaskis Country have met a December 31, 1999 deadline and will be allowed to proceed to the government's environmental review process.

The provincial "sunset clause" required project backers to submit detailed development plans and schedules by December 31 or have their proposals dropped. The moratorium on future major Kananaskis Country developments announced last May exempted six proposals because they had already received approval to proceed to the review process.

Three of the active proposals are in the Spray Lake valley south of Canmore. The status of the remaining three proposals, which also were subject to the "sunset clause," won't be known for several weeks until Alberta Environment officials have a chance to examine project information submitted before the year-end deadline.

Calgary-based Genesis Land Development Corporation is proposing three Spray Lake developments: a Heli-cat skiing operation at Mount Sparrowhawk, a four-season resort and ski area at Tent Ridge, and a tour boat operation on Spray Lake.

"The Spray Lake development proposals will only be approved subject to extensive environmental assessment, government review and ample opportunity for public input," said Environment Minister Gary Mar. "The overriding principle in Kananaskis Country is protection of the environment."

Genesis is expected to soon formally seek public input on two of those proposals - the Heli-cat skiing operation and four-season resort. The public will have 45 days to respond to detailed project descriptions and draft terms of reference for the projects as part of Alberta's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report process. In December 1999, Mar called on Genesis to combine EIAs for the Heli-cat skiing and four-season resort proposals, saying a more cumulative approach to assessing the Spray Lake proposals made sense from an environmental point of view.

"Everyone who wants a say will get that chance," Mar said. "This government is committed to open and frank discussion, and people's views on the Spray Lake proposals will be taken very seriously."

Genesis has notified the government it could take over 18 months to prepare the EIA study. Alberta Environment will ultimately determine whether the EIA report is acceptable. Because of the magnitude of the Heli-cat skiing and four-season resort proposals, they also will be reviewed by the Natural Resources Conservation Board. That process involves extensive public consultation and hearings to determine if the proposals are in the public interest.

Attached: Fact sheet

Outside of Calgary, dial 310-0000 for toll-free information.

Spray Lake Development Proposals Fact Sheet

- Calgary-based Genesis Land Development Corporation has three Kananaskis Country development proposals being reviewed by Alberta Environment. They are:
 1. A tour boat operation on Spray Lake.
 2. A Heli-cat skiing operation at Mt. Sparrowhawk. A combination of helicopters and snow-cats would transport skiers up the mountain.
 3. A four-season resort and downhill ski area at Tent Ridge.
 - The tour boat operation has approval in principle, but no development has occurred and approvals are still required for road access and water use.
 - The Heli-cat skiing and four-season resort proposals require a combined Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, which Genesis has advised could take over 18 months to prepare. The public will have 45 days to respond to the company's detailed project description and terms of reference for the EIA report. Genesis is expected to commence that process by giving public notice within the next several weeks. Alberta Environment will establish the final terms of reference based on the information received.
 - In December 1999, Mar called on Genesis to combine EIAs for the Heli-cat skiing and four-season resort proposals for a more cumulative approach to assessing the Spray Lake proposals.
 - The Heli-cat skiing operation and four-season resort also will be reviewed by Alberta's Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), which determines if a development proposal is in the best public interest from an environmental, social and economic point of view. NRCB review involves extensive public consultation and hearings.
 - Albertans are reminded that public consultation is a large part of the government's environmental assessment process. There will be plenty of opportunity for interested individuals to comment on the proposals.
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