



Release Date: March 25, 2004

Application Refused for Resort Near Bighorn Wildland

The County of Clearwater Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) has refused the application for a development permit for the Abraham Glacier Wellness Resort. The resort was proposed for the Whitegoat Lakes Development Node along the David Thompson highway (Hwy 11) west of Nordegg and near the Bighorn Wildland.

AWA is pleased with the decision, which supports maintaining the wilderness character of the Bighorn Wildland, an area for which AWA is seeking legislated protection. Development of the resort would have placed unacceptable pressure on the Wildland through increased access and inappropriate use.

"Large scale tourism developments are not compatible with wilderness values and experience," says Lara Smandych, AWA conservation biologist. "These developments only serve to impede the wilderness character that people come to see and experience. AWA supports low impact tourism development that does not compromise the ecological integrity of wilderness."

In 2002, 1006335 Alberta Inc. submitted a proposal to develop the Abraham Glacier Mineral Spa and Resort. The proposed resort would have included restaurants, a cosmetic surgery clinic, spas, and conference facilities. It would have accommodated approximately 800 people and attracted more than 200,000 visitors a year.

On March 24, 2004, the MPC declined the proponents' application for the resort development permit. Among the reasons for refusing the application were the unsuitability of the site chosen for the resort and the fact that the applicant had not undertaken the necessary studies on the proposed sites.

"The County made the right decision because it did not allow a development to go ahead that has great potential to damage the area. We support their decision," says Alan Ernst, owner of Aurum Lodge.

The area for the resort is considered ecologically significant as it contains zones of prime protection, critical wildlife habitat (major wildlife movement corridor), and supports provincially identified Environmentally Significant Areas.

For more information, please contact Lara Smandych, AWA, at 403-283-2025 or visit www.AlbertaWilderness.ca

