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Environment a Priority in County's Refusal of Abraham Glacier Wellness Resort

The Clearwater County Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) has denied the appeal for the Abraham Glacier Wellness Resort. The SDAB upheld the decision made by the Municipal Planning Commission to refuse the development application for the resort, located in the Whitegoat Lakes Development Node along the David Thompson highway (Hwy 11) near the Bighorn Wildland. AWA commends the County for their decision.

“ It was an appropriate decision made on the part of the SDAB to refuse the application,” says Lara Smandych, AWA conservation biologist. “Development of the resort would have placed unacceptable pressure on the Bighorn Wildland and surrounding Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves. AWA supports low impact tourism development that does not compromise the ecological integrity of wilderness. Large-scale tourism developments are not compatible with wilderness values and experience.”

Among the reasons for refusing the application, the SDAB concluded that the development was inappropriate for the site and that it “...could not be accommodated without adversely impacting adjacent uses and the environment of the area.”

A number of other groups and individuals who opposed the resort, including the Alberta League for Environmentally Responsible Tourism (ALERT) and the Big Horn Reserve, are also satisfied with the decision.

“ I am very pleased with the decision. We don't know if this is the end of it, but we'll have to wait and see what step the proponent will take next,” says Martha Kostuch, President of ALERT.

“We are pleased that the process has worked because it has allowed us to make our intentions known and that we need to be consulted now and in the future. Thank you to all who worked with us,” says Norman McCallum, Band Administrator for the Big Horn Reserve.

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