



Wild Lands Advocate 13(5): 26, October 2005

Long-term RV Lease Proposal Compromises Waterton

By Nigel Douglas, AWA Conservation Specialist

Local residents are opposing a land-use bylaw change that would allow long-term leases for recreational vehicles just north of Waterton Lakes National Park. The MD of Pincher Creek recently debated an application by the new owner of Waterton Springs Campground that would allow long-term lease tenure for recreational vehicles on individual sites.

AWA agrees with the concerns expressed by groups such as the Southern Alberta Group for Environment (SAGE) that approving this change in land-use zoning would be the “thin edge of the wedge” that would ultimately lead to further country residential developments in the area. Experience at Westcastle ski hill shows that long-term lease tenure for RVs can quickly lead to poorly planned residential development, which continues to grow to the detriment of the area’s ecology.

For many years now there has been an intent to allow only those land uses along the front of Waterton Lakes National Park that are compatible with protecting the larger Waterton ecosystem, including its aesthetics.

AWA is opposed to a long-term lease tenure for recreational vehicle development. “It is neither compatible with the current Rural Recreation 1 Zone designation nor with the protection of this globally important ecosystem and beautiful landscape,” says AWA Past-President Cliff Wallis.

There is little indication that the full implications of these proposals, including water supply, waste water management, and implications for wildlife and riparian health have been adequately considered.

The current zoning mandates that the borders of Waterton National Park be developed “in a sensitive fashion to limit or avoid compromising the municipality’s natural attributes, natural aesthetics, and important scenic vistas,” and AWA believes that this requirement should not be changed.

“We believe it is time to live up to the spirit of the land use bylaws and to go even further, ensuring that the environmentally significant areas of the MD of Pincher Creek remain unimpaired for future generations,” says Wallis.

Please send your comments to Loretta Thompson, Chief Administrative Officer, MD of Pincher Creek, ltompson@mdpincercreek.ab.ca.

