

History

Activities on Tabor Mountain existed since the development of Prince George and the surrounding area. Prior to 1950, initial activities included backcountry horse trails and general outings. By the late 1950's and early 1960's the focus was forest management activities. In August of 1961, two fires broke out, the Grove fire and the Tsus fire. The Grove fire covered most of Tabor Mountain while the Tsus fire affected the east side of Tabor Mountain. Provided below is a brief report by the Prince George Citizen in 1961 describing the local fires, demonstrating the fire impact on the community:

An article on August 11 portrayed the Grove fire as an “ugly calling card, a blackened waste”. The description of the aftermath of the Grove fire on Tabor Mountain described the earth as “scorched down to sub-soil, with its colour as grim and lifeless”. The trees were described as “gaunt, shrivelled remainders of what once were stately trees sticking forlornly into the air or leaning exhausted against each other”. The fire described as “death having ravaged the land like a plague”.

The fireguards represented “reminders of man’s futile efforts against the raging inferno.”

The total area affected (see appendix 1 for maps of the fire area) by the fires covered 35,389 hectares (ha), which included 23,393 ha by the Grove fire and 11,996 ha by the Tsus fire.

Since 1961, efforts to re-establish new forests undertook various forest management strategies. The resulting improved access to the area saw the growth of recreational groups with new cabin developments in several locations. Recreational activities increased with strategies to establish Tabor Mountain as an area focused on recreation, which government would not formally recognize.

During the 1960's and through to the 1970's ski enthusiasts developed trails and cabins throughout the mountain. As seen in the pictures taken from the Prince George Citizen 1967 (see below), ski activities took full advantage of the Mountain. In 1967, success for recreational groups of Tabor Mountain, specifically the Hickory Wing Ski Club, successfully hosted the only sanctioned international cross-country ski championship races occurring in North America.

In 1972, the Tabor Grove Burn Recreational Committee was established. The committee acted as a coordinating body for recreational users; unfortunately, activities undertaken by very few. The concepts



The view from Third Avenue of the column of smoke rising from Tabor Mountain. - Photo: Fraser-Fort George Regional Museum

of making the area a recreational park never came to fruition. However, the Sons of Norway throughout the 1970's undertook most of the work accomplished on Tabor Mountain. In 1975, the Sons of Norway and friends built the first of five cabins on Tabor Mountain. In 1975, trails existed for horseback riding with planned snowmobile trails. An excerpt from a 1975 PG Citizen noted, "...Recreation Minister Jack Redford has cited Tabor Mountain as an example to the rest of the province of what private or group efforts can achieve..."

It was not until 2007 when a number of recreational groups took the initiative to establish Tabor Mountain Recreation Society in an effort to formally coordinate and work with government to recognize and establish a trail system on Tabor Mountain, where recreational groups could work alongside other resource users including forest companies, First Nations, and local residences. Given the increased demand on resources in the area, a coordinated effort to include management of recreational activities on Tabor Mountain was essential.



In 2011 The Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Sites and Trails BC signed an establishment Order to formally recognize the historical and future use of a 407 km trail system with 27 staging areas located throughout Tabor Mountain (Appendix 2). The establishment of these trails provides security for recreationalists and the opportunity to expand and grow while working in harmony with other resource users. In September of 2011, the Province of British Columbia signed a partnership agreement (Appendix 4) with TMRS to address recreational opportunities on Tabor Mountain. On October 29, 2011, a celebration of the formal establishment of trails and staging areas took place at the PG civic centre with provincial and local dignitaries providing their support and recognition of TMRS accomplishments and leadership within the province. This Recreational Management Plan is the next step in the formal process of the trail establishment agreement and the desire to create short and long-term success for Tabor Mountain recreational activities.