



## Kicking Horse River Outfitters Association

### MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

April 22, 2016

#### **Interim solution in the works to ensure access to the iconic Lower Canyon of the Kicking Horse River**

**GOLDEN** – Today is a day of community celebration as an agreement has been reached with CP Rail to ensure access to the Lower Canyon of Kicking Horse River, world renowned for its whitewater rapids, says Golden Mayor Ron Oszust.

“We are very pleased that, starting this May Long Weekend, we will have rafters floating through the heart of our community, the Kicking Horse River, following a thrilling ride through this incredible stretch of whitewater, and that we are now looking towards a long-term solution to address the access to the Lower Canyon for river users,” said Oszust. “We all agree, at the heart of all of this is safety. CP Rail is committed to safety along its rail corridor.”

The community of Golden is already planning a celebration of the river on April 30<sup>th</sup>, an event, that prior to today was intended to be a massive protest against CP Rail’s denial of access to the Lower Canyon on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Following that original decision by CP Rail, a groundswell of support for the rafting and paddling community grew to include a petition of nearly 7000 names, a letter writing campaign to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Transportation Minister Marc Garneau, and clear determination that the residents of Golden and area would not accept the loss of this important community asset.

“All levels of government came together to work on this issue,” said Kootenay Columbia MP Wayne Stetski. “We all met to try to find a solution. We reached out to our contacts, and approached anyone we thought might be able to help. It was an easy story to tell, and people immediately agreed with the community of Golden that losing access to the Lower Canyon was simply not an option.”

Present at today’s meeting were representatives of two provincial ministries: The ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training and the ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

“I have to particularly thank Minister Shirley Bond and Minister Todd Stone for their assistance to the community,” said Columbia River Revelstoke MLA Norm Macdonald. “The level of support that we have received from these ministers and their staff has been exceptional.”

“The province will be an integral part of the long-term solution in the years ahead. Their commitment to ensuring the viability of this important tourism product, and the tremendous economic benefit it brings to our region, is very clear, and for that we are grateful.”



Rafting companies can now proceed with a full range of options for people from around the world who want to experience all the Kicking Horse River has to offer.

“This has been a long and tiring battle, but we are grateful to have a resolution,” said Ryan Johannesen, owner of Glacier Rafting, one of 6 rafting companies to operate on the river. “It’s time to get busy for our season opening on May 21<sup>st</sup>.”

“We are very grateful to our community and to people from around the world who showed their interest in this incredible stretch of the river. This was always about more than just protecting a portion of our business; it was about ensuring access for all river users to a wonderful recreational opportunity.”

The community celebration on April 30<sup>th</sup> will begin at 11 AM with a float down the Kicking Horse River. Rafts will be put in at the Golden Municipal Campground and the float will end at the Spirit Square after passing under Golden’s most famous landmark, the timberframe covered bridge. BBQ and music in the Spirit Square will begin at noon.

The community will also be celebrating the river during the Golden Mountain Festival on the May Long Weekend.

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Mayor Ron Oszust, MP Wayne Stetski, MLA Norm Macdonald and Ryan Johannesen can be reached for further comment by contacting Andy Brown at (250) 939-8076.