



Request for Decision ALR Exclusion Application Private Landowner

File No: P 725 401
Reference: -----
Date: March 2, 2026

Subject: ALR Exclusion (Premier Lake / Skookumchuck Ranch Ltd.)
Applicant: Skookumchuck Ranch Ltd.
Agent: Jean Terpsma, Terpsma Land Development Consulting
Location: North end of Premier Lake, Skookumchuck area
Legal: District Lot 8846, Kootenay District; Remainder of District Lot 271, Kootenay District; and Remainder of Sublot 1, District Lot 335, Kootenay District, Plan X9 (PIDs: 016-345-027, 016-368-100, 016-451-074)

Proposal: To exclude a total of 9.54 ha of developed lakeshore land from the ALR.

- Options:**
1. THAT the Private Landowner ALR Exclusion application request by Skookumchuck Ranch Ltd. for their properties located at the north end of Premier Lake near Skookumchuck, as identified in the March 2, 2026 staff report, proceed to a public hearing to gather the views of the public on the proposed exclusion application.
 2. THAT the Private Landowner ALR Exclusion application request by Skookumchuck Ranch Ltd. for their properties located at north end of Premier Lake near Skookumchuck, not proceed.

Recommendation: Option 1

Even though portions of the proposed exclusion areas are south-facing arable land with a reliable water source and good agricultural capability ratings, the improvements made to the application in the resubmission and the fact that the majority of the development on the subject land predates the establishment of the ALR, warrants additional consideration of the request.

The improvements made to the application may provide a balance to the loss of agricultural potential from the proposed exclusion area. On-going management of the existing development on the lands proposed for exclusion present challenges for the applicant. To determine a productive path forward it would be helpful to seek the public's opinion on the proposed exclusion and to receive a decision from the ALC.

Property Information: **OCP Designation:** RR, Rural Resource which supports agricultural, rural residential and rural resource land uses with parcel sizes 8.0 hectares and larger. The RR designation also recognizes the use of these lands for public utility use, resource extraction, green space and recreation.

**Property
Information –
cont'd:**

OCP Policies:

- Land in the ALR is generally designated and supported for agricultural use.
- ALR applications for non-farm use, subdivision, or exclusion should identify opportunities to improve the agricultural capacity and provide a net benefit to agriculture for the lands that remain within the ALR.

Zone Designation: RR-60, Rural Resource Zone. Permitted uses include: one single family dwelling per titled property, a farm operation, a guest ranch accessory to farming, forest management, and an equestrian centre.

ALR Boundary Review: Electoral Area E Boundary Review conducted by the ALC, finalized in 2017. The subject parcels were not identified for exclusion.

Previous ALR Applications:

A non-farm use application was refused by the ALC in 1993. The application requested permission to construct an additional cabin near the other cabins on the westerly side of the proposed exclusion area (Sublot 1). In their decision letter, the ALC noted that the property is in a ranching area and, while ranching does not form part of the current active operation, it has the potential to do so. The ALC identified concerns about increasing the recreational component of the parcel which could compromise its future use for agriculture. The ALC also noted that there are several properties owned by the same owner on Premier Lake, which are not in the ALR, and that additional uses could be directed to these areas.

(Application: #21-L-93-28222 / ALC Decision #0016/94).

Farm Classification: No

Parcel Size:

Area proposed for exclusion: 9.54 ha (23.6 ac)

Total area of the 3 subject parcels: 243 ha (601.1 ac)

**Professional
Reports:**

An Agricultural Capability Assessment has been prepared by Tim J Ross, M Sc., P. Ag. of Ross Range and Reclamation Services in October of 2025. The purpose of the report was to provide landform, soil and plant information which is essential in characterizing the agricultural capability of the land.

The report states that Skookumchuck Ranch lies within the Rocky Mountain Trench physiographic region at elevations between 870 and 880 m and that the aspect of the properties ranges from easterly, and south to westerly with slopes between 0 and 30%.

The report states that the 'Developed Strip' consists of developed lots, and related infrastructure, along with small amounts of open forest, open grassland and pastureland. The report states that no agriculture takes place and there is no evidence of cultivation.

The report concludes that the 'Developed Strip' was established well before the inception of the Agriculture Land Reserve Act (1973), and that, since no agriculture activities are, or foreseeably will be, conducted here, it is unlikely

that exclusion of the 9.5 ha out of the greater 194 ha within the ALR, would not adversely affect agriculture capability at Skookumchuck Ranch, or agricultural capability, neither locally nor regionally.

**Agricultural
Capability
Ratings:**

Canada Land Inventory mapping designates the area proposed for exclusion as Class 5 with limiting subclasses of moisture deficiency and stoniness. These maps consider the land improvable to 70% Class 4 with the same limiting subclasses and 30% Class 3 with a limiting subclass of stoniness.

The same maps designate the area offered for ALR inclusion as 80% Class 6 with limiting subclasses of topography and bedrock near the surface, and 20% Class 7 with bedrock near the surface. This proposed inclusion area is not given an improvability rating.

Site specific ratings are provided in the Agrologist report excerpts attached.

**Additional
Information:**

- The application states that the applicant would like to bring the property into conformity with zoning regulations. A rezoning application is intended (after the ALR applications) which will request a bylaw amendment to permit the existing dwelling density and allow a few additional dwelling units to be added.
- The ALR Exclusion application was originally submitted in November 2024 but was withdrawn prior to review by the Board in March 2025 so the applicants could make improvements to the application.

The current revised application has added:

- the conditional commitment to bind the titles of the remaining ALR land;
 - leaving a strip of land to remain in the ALR to provide water/lake/irrigation access for the lands which are to remain within the ALR;
 - a proposed ALR inclusion area of approximately 9.54 ha (as a trade for the lands proposed to be excluded);
 - an Agricultural Capability Assessment Report (including photos of soils) stating that it is unlikely that exclusion of the proposed 9.5 ha will adversely affect the agricultural capability of the ranch property.
- The intention of the exclusion application is to remove a layer of regulations from the developed areas so the owners can more easily renovate existing structures as needed and construct additional ones if their future rezoning application is approved.
 - The owners have a shareholders' agreement which they use to regulate and restrict development with the goal of maintaining the majority of their land in its current state.
 - In addition to the land under application, the shareholders group also own parcels in the vicinity which are outside of the ALR. The non-ALR parcels (approx. 141 ha) have very challenging topography and are located south of the area under application for exclusion. A few additional cabins have been constructed on parcels outside the ALR by current shareholders to accommodate the needs of various families. Topographical constraints and the shareholder agreement limit the potential of these lands for further development.

**Additional
Information –
Cont'd:**

Current agricultural use and improvements:

- The application states that, under the current ownership, the land has never been used for agriculture and historical records indicate that the land has not been classified as 'farm' with BC Assessment since at least 1999.
- The properties were historically used as a guest ranch (horses and trail-riding) with guest cabins, a main lodge that was used for meals, a manager's house as well as outbuildings and associated structures for equipment storage etc. A cleared pasture and fencing are around the developed areas.

Current non-agricultural uses and improvements:

- The land was purchased in 1920 by the Skookumchuck Ranch Ltd company and was operated as a guest ranch until the 1960s. Most of the existing dwellings were constructed during that time as guest cabins. The current shareholders in the company (11 families) discontinued the guest ranch operation in the 1960s. Most of the structures are very rustic log buildings that have been maintained and renovated over the years.
- All cabins/dwellings used as part of the guest ranch are currently used as lakeshore cottages by the ownership group families. Aside from small storage sheds, a pump house building and a few other small structures, there are three large outbuildings (barns, shop) shown as Buildings 'L', 'O' and 'Q' on the attached maps, a main Lodge (no kitchen) which is Building 'K' on the attached maps, and a dwelling referred to as the Manager's house shown as Building 'P' on the attached maps.

Applicant's Rationale for Exclusion Request:

- The owners would like to bring the existing land uses and buildings into conformity with RDEK bylaws. They would like to be able to streamline the processes that are required to renovate or replace existing structures as well as potentially build new ones.

Consultation:

APC Area E: Support recommended

**Documents
Attached:**

- Location Map
- ALR Boundaries Map
- Agricultural Capability Map and Key
- Land Use Map
- Aerial Photo
- OCP Designation Map
- Zone Designation Map
- Detailed site surveys provided by applicant (including building locations)
- Sketch showing all parcels owned by Skookumchuck Ranch Ltd.
- Application Proposal Letter
- ALC Questions & Answers (provided by applicant)
- Excerpts from Agrologist Report (including photos)

**RDEK
Contact:**

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