

# KALESNIKOFF

TIMBER INSPIRES

## Merry Creek Wildfire Risk Reduction Project A091 Harvest Plan Information and Feedback Form

January 12, 2024



### **Introduction – Kalesnikoff's Merry Creek Operating Area:**

Kalesnikoff Lumber Company's Forest Licence (FL) A20194 provides timber rights throughout a number of operating areas within the Arrow Timber Supply Area. Our Merry Creek operating area covers public forest lands between the Columbia River and Highway 3, west of Castlegar and extending westward approximately to the Hugh Keenleyside Dam. The Merry Creek Forest Service Road, or FSR (also known as Robson Ridge FSR) road system traverses the area and sees significant public use for outdoor recreation.

### **Background – Wildfire Risk Reduction Efforts Underway in Merry Creek Area:**

Due to its proximity to the City of Castlegar and surrounding rural private properties, critical infrastructure in the form of power lines, and local economic assets like Mercer's Celgar pulp mill and Interfor's Castlegar sawmill, the Merry Creek area has been identified by the BC Wildfire Service as a priority for wildfire risk reduction efforts. Kalesnikoff has engaged with the Ministry of Forests' Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) program to improve community wildfire resiliency around Castlegar, and is actively planning several timber harvest projects that will facilitate enhanced fuel reduction activities near the city. The treated areas will act as low-flammability forest types that will not support vigorous wildfire behaviour. These projects will also result in new and upgraded existing forest road infrastructure that will act as fire guards and access points to enhance potential future suppression efforts. Project A091 is one of several of its kind planned near Castlegar, and is intended to strengthen the perimeter of the Merry Creek area against future wildfires.

## Who We Are:

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### **About Kalesnikoff:**

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Kalesnikoff Lumber Company is a local, fourth-generation family-owned company based in Thrums, B.C. We have lived and worked in the west Kootenays for well over 80 years and care about our local communities and our employees, contractors and suppliers who we consider extended family.

We create our plans and make decisions based on local knowledge of our forests, environment, communities, and on evolving best practices in sustainable forestry. We live here, and our forestry and business practices reflect our ongoing pride in our legacy of taking care of the land and people in our area. We are committed to making the most of every tree we plant, harvest and process — striving to create the most benefit for our employees, the community and our customers.

We're trying to improve on how we work with local communities in advance of harvest operations to better understand their priorities, concerns and interests, and we develop our final harvest plans based on community input as well as technical, regulatory and environmental considerations.

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### **Our Commitment:**

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#### **Kalesnikoff will:**

- a) adhere to government regulations and guidelines when planning and conducting harvesting activities.
- b) adhere to the results and strategies described within our approved Forest Stewardship Plan, available on our website, at <https://kalesnikoff.com/sustainable-forest-stewardship/>
- c) carefully consider the various risks of our harvesting activities and seek the advice of third-party qualified registered professionals as necessary throughout our planning process.
- d) utilize the most up-to-date imagery and technology available to help draft operational plans.
- e) prepare detailed drainage plans where necessary.
- f) use modern road building practices with attention to maintaining natural drainage patterns.
- g) use environmentally sound timber harvesting practices.
- h) carry out monitoring and maintenance of roads and structures on a regular basis to avoid issues that may be caused by weather events or improperly functioning drainage structures.
- i) ensure reforestation of harvested areas in a timely fashion, with an appropriate species mix which considers site-specific conditions and climate change variables.
- j) operate in a manner that limits environmental impact, prevents pollution, and protects the health and safety of our employees, contractors and the public.
- k) incorporate scientific discovery, government direction, public feedback, and local knowledge to reduce our environmental footprint and help further the public interest by continuously improving the sustainability of our operations over time.
- l) engage with Indigenous peoples, local communities and the public in an open and transparent manner.

## How this Public Referral Document Works:

Kalesnikoff Lumber Company has developed a proposed harvest plan within our Merry Creek operating area. This plan will result in an application for a Cutting Permit (CP), that will be applied for under our Arrow Forest License (FL A20194), which provides timber harvesting rights on provincial public forestlands. We are sharing this plan with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and the local community to provide information about key factors we've identified and considered, the proposed harvest areas and other identified forest values, as well as to seek your feedback and input on other information you believe should be considered.

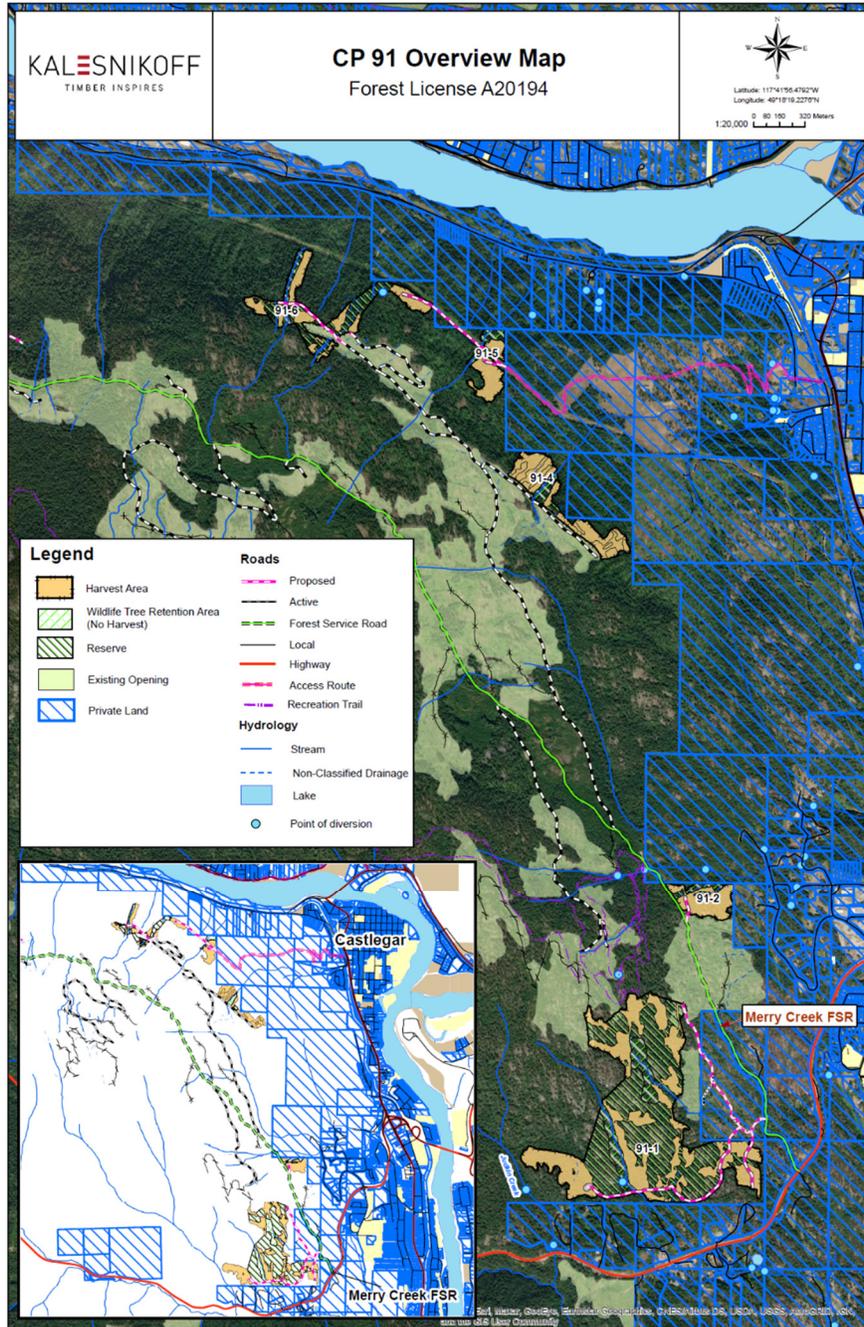
Please review the proposed harvest plan and related information in this document, then feel free to provide your input in the section marked "**FEEDBACK FORM**" by **March 15, 2024**. This document and the Feedback Form will also be posted on the Forest Stewardship page of our website at the following address: <https://www.kalesnikoff.com/sustainable-forest-stewardship>. It can be completed and emailed to [referrals@kalesnikoff.com](mailto:referrals@kalesnikoff.com), mailed to PO Box 3000 Hwy 3A, Thrums BC, V1N 4N1 or a hard copy dropped off at our main office at 2090 Hwy 3A in Thrums. You can also share your input by simply emailing comments or questions to the same address or by calling our office at 1-250-399-4211, extension 231 for Gerald Cordeiro, our Forest Development Manager.

If you'd like to receive email updates regarding this proposal and plan, or any of our other activities in your specific area of interest, please provide your email address and contact information in the Feedback Form, or email it to [referrals@kalesnikoff.com](mailto:referrals@kalesnikoff.com). Please tell us briefly who you are, and advise if you hold a water license or other tenure rights on Crown land, plus any other information you think could be important. Thank you.

# About the Proposed Harvest Plan:

## Access and Infrastructure Requirements

Project A091 is accessed primarily via Merry Creek FSR (also known as Robson Ridge FSR), as well as operational roads under Kalesnikoff's management. Some areas require access through private land. Several new operational roads are required in addition to upgrades on some existing older roads. The referral map below gives an overview of the proposed blocks and roads in relation to the community and existing actively managed infrastructure.



## **Harvest Methods**

Project A091 consists of 5 proposed cutblocks with terrain that varies between relatively flat benches to moderately steep slopes, with a few steep rocky outcrops. By Kootenay standards most of the terrain is relatively simple. More gentle slopes will see conventional ground-based harvest methods employed, while an overhead cable system will be used for steeper terrain. Some areas of cable harvest contain moderate terrain that will allow for the use of mobile equipment to assist in both the harvest phase as well as for post-harvest fuel reduction. Live standing trees will be retained on site in patches that protect surface drainage features as well as in smaller groups and as single trees throughout the harvest area. Live trees of all species will be retained in this fashion.

## **Specific Planning Requirements and Considerations:**

Careful consideration must be given to a variety of forest values during any timber harvest planning exercise. The Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) identifies 11 primary forest values to be considered, in no specific order, as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Cultural Heritage
- Fish/Riparian
- Forage and Associated Plant Communities
- Recreation
- Resource Features
- Soils
- Timber
- Visual Quality
- Water
- Wildlife

Each of the FRPA values must be considered and balanced in accordance with legislated regulations set by government that identify specific objectives and stipulate practice requirements to meet the objectives.

In addition to the identified FRPA values, we apply several other lenses to our proposed developments. Wildfire resilience to help protect local communities and the forest ecosystems surrounding them features prominently in our planning processes now. Additionally, incorporating general climate change expectations in order to help our local forests adapt accordingly over the long term has become standard practice. We have also recently proposed that agroforestry practices be investigated as a potential tool for use in interface zones around our communities to help simultaneously promote wildfire resilience, biodiversity, and food security. While general forest health may be inferred from the maintenance of the above identified values, we are currently in an era of epidemic bark beetle infestation, and this factor also plays a leading role in our planning process. And, importantly, the provincial government has recently identified 2.6 million hectares of forest throughout B.C. as a high priority to defer from harvest in order to ensure old forests at high risk for biodiversity loss are considered and protected where appropriate. This project has no overlap with any priority deferral areas, and does not contain old growth forest. If any individual old veteran trees are encountered during harvest they are to be retained in order to help maintain stand-level biodiversity.

The following are a few of the primary planning considerations with respect to this particular project. While all forest values are considered for each proposal, generally speaking there will be several for each site or landform that are more complex to reconcile and balance against timber harvesting. Site-specific

analysis for this area yields a few of the most pertinent values or considerations for this project (in no specific order) as:

**Ungulate Winter Range** – Low elevations throughout the west Kootenays see ungulates such as Mule deer moving down from their higher elevation summer habitats to overwinter in these relatively low snowpack zones where they can find browse and thermal cover. Accordingly, government regulations require specified areas of suitable winter habitat to be maintained in a condition that retains sufficient mature forest cover to accommodate the needs of this species. Most of the lower slopes in our local areas have some level of timber harvest restriction to ensure these needs are met. Utilizing the most up-to-date forest cover data available, we have determined the winter range requirements for Mule deer will continue to be met after the completion of this project.

**Visual Quality** – The established visual quality objective (VQO) for the landform on which project A091 is situated is '*partial retention*'. The partial retention (PR) VQO permits visible alterations from forestry activities which are easy to see and may be small to medium in scale, with characteristics that appear natural, and not rectilinear or geometric in shape. Visible alterations within the partial retention VQO should generally not exceed 7% of the perspective view of the landform from a significant public viewpoint.

Some examples of techniques used to ensure the proposed harvest plan does not unduly reduce visual quality are as follows:

- 1) Pre-harvest visual design, including:
  - Avoidance of rectilinear boundaries and overly geometric block shapes.
  - Strategic location of retained timber in patches, small groups, or at the individual level to break up lines of sight and reduce the appearance of harvested areas.
  - Creating smaller openings that will be screened from view by reserve areas in between them.
  - Patchy harvesting block design.
- 2) Utilization of LiDAR data and 3D modelling software to accurately predict the visual impacts from harvesting and road construction. Geospatially accurate digital 3D simulations are created for the selected viewpoints and are used to improve on potential problem areas before harvest occurs and to ensure the post-harvest condition is consistent with expectations.
- 3) Prompt re-planting of harvested areas to promote the fastest possible green-up of visible alterations.

A visual impact assessment was undertaken for this project and the simulations which form a part of that exercise can be seen on the next page. In each case it was determined that the VQO would be well met and that visual effect of this opening will be small in scale on the landform.

**A091 Visual Simulations**

**Viewpoint #1: Waterloo Road Mailboxes**



**Viewpoint #2: West Kootenay Regional Airport**



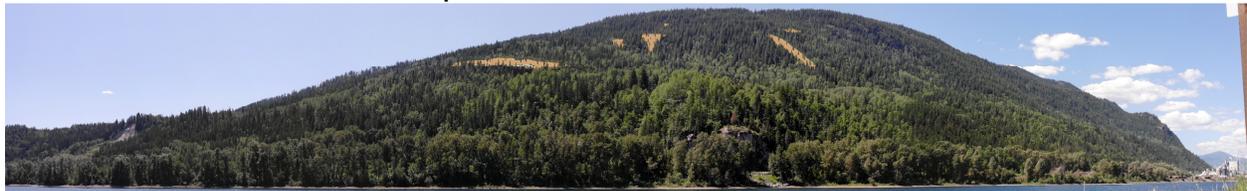
**Viewpoint #3: Brilliant Cultural Centre**



**Viewpoint # 4: First Robson Boat Launch**



**Viewpoint #5: Second Robson Boat Launch**



**Viewpoint #6: Hemstock Road**



**Terrain Stability** – While the majority of terrain in the vicinity of project A091 is relatively simple by west Kootenay standards, a terrain stability assessment was commissioned to ensure risks to downslope values are not increased by harvesting and road construction activities. The assessment was undertaken by a third-party professional geotechnical engineer, and initial findings indicate this project is low risk. The final report, once complete, will make recommendations for good practice in relation to road construction and harvest methods. The final report can be made available to interested parties on request, and all recommendations of the specialist will be adhered to by Kalesnikoff.

## **Harvest Plan Summaries:**

The following is a brief description of site conditions and the specific harvest plan for each block:

**Block 1** – This block is configured as a patch cut in the vicinity of private properties along Highway 3. The total harvest area is 31.7ha, with patch sizes ranging from 0.4ha to 5.6ha. The relatively flat terrain in this block enables conventional ground-based harvest methods and mechanical post-harvest fuel cleanup in preparation to burn off excess fuels post-harvest. The ground is fairly rocky, and timber types are generally dominated by Douglas-fir, with more cedar and other species in the stand where deeper soil and more moisture are present. Watercourses have been reserved from harvesting with buffers that exceed provincial requirements. Any large veteran trees of any species, deciduous trees, Ponderosa Pine, and White pine are to be retained wherever found within safety and operational constraints. There will be additional dispersed and grouped retention of other species within the harvest areas.

**Block 2** – This proposed opening of 5.6ha is adjacent to the Merry Creek FSR and private property. Although the terrain is reasonably flat below the road this block proposed to be harvested using an overhead cable system, reducing the amount of new road construction required. Ground-based equipment may be utilized to assist in falling, and mechanical post-harvest fuel cleanup will be possible. The stand is generally cedar-leading with a significant component of Douglas-fir present. Watercourses have been reserved from harvesting with buffers that exceed provincial requirements. Any large veteran trees of any species, deciduous trees, Ponderosa Pine, and White pine are to be retained wherever found within safety and operational constraints. There will be additional dispersed and grouped retention of other species within the harvest area.

**Block 4** – Block 4 lies on steeper terrain and will be primarily harvested using an overhead cable system. The total harvest area is 10.1ha, 2.8ha of which will see very little timber removal. The stand is generally dominated by Douglas-fir, with scattered deciduous and other tree species present. Watercourses have been reserved from harvesting with buffers that exceed provincial requirements. Any large veteran trees of any species, deciduous trees, Ponderosa Pine, and White pine are to be retained wherever found within safety and operational constraints. There will be additional dispersed and grouped retention of other species within the harvest area. Post-harvest fuel reduction becomes more technical on steep terrain, where mechanized equipment is not able to traverse the ground. Hand-cut fuel free lines may be utilized to guard a prescribed burn of the area instead.

**Block 5** – Accessed through private land to the east, Block 5 has a proposed harvest area of 4.6ha. Moderate terrain will allow for conventional ground-based harvest. This block and a small patch of Block 6 to the northwest will facilitate the upgrade of the powerline road which will allow better access for fire suppression crews if required. The stand is predominantly Douglas-fir with a significant cedar component, as well as scattered specimens of other species. Some nearby stands in this area have a significant deciduous component and are not all in a highly flammable condition. Conventional ground-based equipment should be able to prepare excess fuels for burning off post-harvest.

**Block 6** – This area becomes more steep and rocky toward the west. Block 6 sees the extension of the existing road to where the terrain becomes problematic for timber harvest and fuel cleanup beyond. Most of the block requires a cable harvest system, and hand treatments to reduce excess fuels will be the likely method for post-harvest cleanup. The harvest area is 8.0ha, and the stand consists mostly of Douglas-fir.

### **Public Engagement Summary:**

Kalesnikoff is committed to transparent communications and engagement with Indigenous communities, local stakeholders and the general public throughout the planning, road construction and harvest operations, and silviculture phases of our woodlands program. We will share information on our website and by email with any interested parties who provide their contact information. While engagement and referral periods for individual projects will have dates specified in order to receive timely feedback, the public is welcome to contact us at any time with questions, concerns, or comments related to our activities. We will strive to respond to individual queries in a prompt and comprehensive manner.

The following feedback form includes a few specific topics of interest to Kalesnikoff for public feedback, however we wish to receive feedback and questions regarding any aspect of our operations you may consider important. Please take moment to fill out and return the form, or get in touch by any of the means listed in this document in order to share your thoughts.

## Feedback Form:

Kalesnikoff is seeking feedback with respect to this harvest plan. We intend to begin operations within this area sometime in 2024.

We are seeking input from Indigenous peoples, local stakeholders and the interested public regarding what you think we should know and consider as we move forward in finalizing our plans. We'd like to hear from you about:

1. Infrastructure (buildings, roads, fencing, water-works, rec trails, etc.)
2. Natural features or important resource values not identified in our proposed plan.
3. Wildfire risk reduction in your community.
4. Other information you would like to receive.
5. How you would prefer to be kept informed.
6. Any other questions, comments or concerns you may have.

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### Topic 1: Existing and Proposed Infrastructure:

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Consistent with our commitments, we will use modern road building practices with attention to drainage control and will monitor and maintain roads and structures on a regular basis.

- 1. Are there any key pieces of infrastructure or sites of interest (roads, buildings, fencing, water-works, rec trails etc.) that you would like to know more about or think we should know more about? (Ongoing road maintenance issues, siltation problems, seasonal issues, values at risk etc.) Is there any other infrastructure we should be aware of, or that you would like more information on?***

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**Topic 2: Natural or Significant Features**

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Kalesnikoff consistently adheres to government regulations and guidelines when planning and conducting forest harvesting activities, including those protecting or maintaining features of environmental, social or cultural significance. Whenever possible, we also respect significant local and informal features and landmarks of importance to the community.

***2. Are there any key environmental, social or cultural features that were not identified in our proposed harvest plan that should be considered? Please provide a description and location of each feature.***

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**Topic 3: Wildfire Risk Reduction**

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As our collective understanding of climate change and the increased potential for catastrophic wildfires grows, there is a need for further discussion as to how we may best approach and mitigate this hazard. Forest licences are viewed as a key component in this process as we hold tenure rights to harvest timber on public forestlands and have a high level of interest in maintaining healthy forest cover over the landscape through proactive forest health management. There is a growing consensus that Provincial funding will not be able to cover the entire cost of fuel reduction treatments due to the vast scope of the issue, and that some amount of timber harvesting near and adjacent to communities can help to reduce wildfire risk. This type of work requires collaboration and careful consideration in the planning process. Kalesnikoff is committed to working with communities where we operate to arrive at locally supported decisions around tackling this important issue. Please help move this conversation forward by giving us some input to consider.

***3. Are you in favor of wildfire hazard mitigation treatments around your community? Do you own property that is at risk, or which may currently be in a condition that contributes to the risk? Please give us your thoughts.***

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**Topic 4: Other information**

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We are committed to ongoing engagement and communications to help ensure local communities are aware of our harvest and related activities. We are open to continuing communication throughout and beyond our harvest planning processes.

**4. What other information, if any, would you like to receive?**

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**Topic 5: Preferred Method of Communication**

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**5. Please check your preferred form of communication for this project:**

You can get in touch with us at any time using the contact information listed below. Please let us know how you would like to receive any additional information from us. If you received this referral package via email and would rather not receive further updates for this project, you can be removed from our email list by checking the third box.

- Email     
  Kalesnikoff website     
  I know enough. I don't want more information

If you chose "Email", please provide yours here: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Topic 6: Other Related Input**

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**6. Please provide any other questions, comments or concerns you may have regarding our proposed harvest plans.**

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## How Public Input Will Be Used:

Your feedback is important to us. Input received through this community consultation will be compiled, reviewed and considered by Kalesnikoff Lumber Company along with technical, environmental and social considerations in planning for this harvest. We'll do our best to alleviate any concerns and incorporate public input into our plans.

## How you can return your Feedback Form to Us:

1. Mail your completed form to:
  - Woodlands Team, c/o Gerald Cordeiro  
Kalesnikoff Lumber Company  
PO Box 3000 Hwy 3A  
Thrums, BC  
V1N 4N1
2. Drop your Feedback Form off at our office:
  - 2090 Hwy 3A  
Thrums, BC
3. Scan and email your completed Feedback Form to: [referrals@kalesnikoff.com](mailto:referrals@kalesnikoff.com)
4. Provide a written submission by email or regular mail (addresses above).

## To sign-up for a mailing list:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code (optional)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give us a brief description of your area of interest (community, neighborhood, watershed, etc.)

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\*If you don't wish to enter your address, you may still identify your neighborhood by entering a postal code only.