

SUBMISSION TO PROFESSIONAL RELIANCE REVIEW

from the Upper Clearwater Referral Group

submitted by Trevor Goward, spokesperson

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The Upper Clearwater Referral Group is a citizen committee convened by the BC government in 2000 and mandated to uphold the terms of a formal land-use agreement signed into effect by the BC Forest Service in 1999. The *Guiding Principles* agreement was intended to give Upper Clearwater residents a meaningful say in local forestry decisions (<https://1000clearcuts.ca/guiding-principles/>). Though quietly abandoned by the BC Liberal Government a few years later during transition to FRPA, this agreement continues to garner respect locally from industry and FLNRO, both professing a willingness to abide by its terms.

Unfortunately, recent interactions with professionals working under professional reliance have created insurmountable problems for the Referral Group's mandate in the form of: (1) a professional hydrologist who signed off on cutting plans without taking into account the downstream hydrological risks associated with deepening climate change; (2) an RPBio with little expertise on caribou biology who nonetheless signed off on cutting plans highly detrimental to the local Mountain Caribou herd (<https://tinyurl.com/ya77k2j6>); (3) an industry RFT who hired these and other consultants and then refused free access to their reports; (4) a FLNRO District Manager who claimed to be legally obligated to award cutting permits that directly contravene the *Guiding Principles* on several points; and (5) a succession of RPFs, PTFs and RPBios unable to explain who would be held accountable and to what extent in the event of downstream damages arising from their land-use recommendations. After 17 years, these and other iniquities of professional reliance recently forced the Referral Group to shift from its original watchdog function to a temporary advocacy role (<https://1000clearcuts.ca/referral-group/>). Full documentation available upon request.

The Upper Clearwater Referral Group takes the position that with rights must come responsibilities; that professional reliance will remain fatally flawed until such time as qualified professionals given authority under it are consistently and meaningfully held accountable for transgressions against their professional ethics; and that the same is true of the professional bodies who oversee the behaviour of qualified professionals: they too must consistently and meaningfully be held accountable for failure to protect the long-term public interest.