



February 5, 2013

## UPDATE

### **Overlander's ATV Society Proposal for the area located close to Range Road 30 and Township Road 534**

The Overlanders ATV Society approached Council in October with a proposal to develop an OHV Staging area on a piece of municipal reserve land situated close to an area regularly used by OHVs along Twp Road 534 between Rg Road 30 and Rg Road 24 (locally known as Hells' Half Acre). This is a popular OHV area as it includes a significant amount of publically-accessible land made up of Parkland County land and Crown lands. The Overlanders are looking to provide a spot, off the existing residential roads, where people coming to OHV there can park and safely off-load.

Parkland County has not made a decision regarding the Overlanders OHV group proposal. Council is very community-minded and expressed the importance of gathering feedback from County residents, especially residents in the area, regarding this proposal. Council recognizes the importance of making decisions with the best possible information and in this case knowing what residents in the area think is a vital piece of information they require prior to making a decision about the Overlanders proposal.

Residents were invited to provide feedback on this proposals through several means including a direct mail out survey to residents living in the surrounding area, an on line survey and through an Open House. Parkland County committed to sharing the information gathered with those who indicated an interest in receiving it, as well as those residents living within the surrounding area. The Survey Report which provides a summary of the results is attached for your information. Parkland County also committed to informing interested residents of the date that this information and Administrative Recommendations will be presented to Council for their consideration and decision. **The date this item will be before Council is at their Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting on Tuesday February 19, 2013.**

The Administrative Report containing the recommendation (s) regarding the proposal will be made available on our website the Thursday prior to this meeting, which will be on **Thursday, February 14, 2013** in the afternoon. This is our normal process for releasing Council Agenda and reports. Please follow the directions below to access the Agenda and Report:

Step 1 – Go to Parkland County's website at [www.parklandcounty.com](http://www.parklandcounty.com)

Step 2 – Click on the "Governance" Tab at top of screen

Step 3 – Click on Council Meetings

- This takes you to a page that provides information on Council Meetings and what opportunities are available to you, if you wish to speak to Council. Please be advised that these are formal meetings and the only times people are allowed to address Council is during the times specified.

Step 4 – Click on "Council and GPC Meetings and Agendas"

Step 5 – In the view line at top of screen make sure the year is "2013" and "Governance and Priorities Committee" is showing.

Step 6 – Click on February 19, 2-13 Meeting Agenda

Step 7 – Scroll through Agenda to the item and click on the report.

Council meetings can also be viewed live on line through our website. You can access it through the same steps above and clicking on "In Progress"

For further information please contact Dave Cross (Acting Manager – Community and Protective Services) at 780-968-3231 or at [dcross@parklandcounty.com](mailto:dcross@parklandcounty.com) .

**OVERLANDER'S ATV SOCIETY PROPOSAL  
SURVEY REPORT  
FEBRUARY 2013**

## Background

Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) include snowmobiles, quads, mini bikes and any additional means of transportation built for cross country travel on land powered by means other than by muscular or wind power.

The Alberta Traffic Safety Act allows municipalities to enact a Bylaw to regulate Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on public lands. Parkland County, under Bylaw 04-2011 (OHV Bylaw) has set out a number of rules/regulations regarding the operation and use of OHV's within Parkland County.

These include:

- All operators must be 16 years of age and hold a valid Class 5 Operators License
- Helmets must be worn
- OHV's must be registered and insured
- OHV must be equipped with a muffler that has not been modified.
- Use is permitted between 8am and 10pm
- OHV use is prohibited on any land marked with County signage stating so, such as environmental reserves and school property. OHV use is permitted on all other County owned lands, including municipal reserves and Buck for Wildlife lands.
- OHV users may use subdivision or hamlet road as to leave from and return to their residence. Maximum speed while on these road surfaces is 30km/hr
- OHV are allowed on Township and Range Roads and in ditches along these roads. Max speed on road is 50km/hr and in the ditch is 30km/hr.
- OHV use is not permitted in ditches along Provincial highways.

An area commonly referred to as "Hell's Half Acre" is located east of the Canterbury Estates subdivision. This area consists of a portion of Canterbury Estates municipal reserve, two Buck for Wildlife quarters and six quarters of Crown land. Of that Crown land, four quarters are situated in Parkland County, with two of those being leased; the remaining two quarters are located in Lac St. Anne County, with one of those being leased. See Attached Map #1. Hell's Half Acre is a significant assembly of land where approximately 5.5 quarters are available for public use.

Parkland County participates in the "Buck for Wildlife" Program; a program created by the Province in the early 70s to encourage landowners to retain lands in their natural habitat for the benefit of wildlife. Parkland County owns 14 quarters of land throughout the County that through an agreement with the Province will be kept in its natural state, as opposed to clearing for agriculture use or residential development. The term of the current agreement is for a period of 30 years and expires in 2020. The Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) manages the "Buck for Wildlife" program under agreement with the Province of Alberta.

The public are welcome to use the sites under this program for recreation, which does include Off Highway Vehicle use. Hunting is also allowed during the appropriate season EXCEPT for on the three quarters which abut subdivision developments in Parkland County. Those quarters where hunting is not allowed include the two quarters alongside Canterbury Estates and one quarter alongside Amisk Acres.

The Hell's Half Acre area experiences significant usage by Off Highway Vehicle enthusiasts. In October 2012, the Overlander's Off Highway Vehicle Association approached Council seeking support and assistance to develop a "Staging Area" for the safe loading and off loading of OHV's to access the existing trails in Hell's Half Acre. This development would provide a safer place to unload/load their OHVs and remove them from the roadways where they have been impacting resident access to property. The group also expressed their intent to act as stewards in the area to help ensure OHV users respect the environment, local residential property owners and encourage OHV use in an appropriate manner. Their concept is to build a 300 sq. Ft parking area accessible off of Range Road 30 that would accommodate approximately 60-80 units. The area is identified on Map #1. They are also seeking financial support in the amount of \$140,000 to develop the staging area.

Council directed Administration to gather feedback from the public regarding this proposal and report back in early 2013. The following provides a summary of the process used and feedback received regarding the proposal.

### **Research Objectives**

- identify current impacts/issues of the area on residents/users
- identify current level and type of usage of area
- identify level of support for the proposed development
- targeted effort to obtain feedback from residents living around the area identified for development
- gather feedback from other agencies including the Province of Alberta, Alberta Conservation Association, Lac St. Anne County, Pipeline Companies with assets in area and other County Departments including Engineering and Planning and Development

### **Data Collection Process**

A survey was developed and administered by mail, online and at an Open House. It must be noted that the survey and corresponding results were not intended to provide statistically valid results, but to obtain a general sense of direction from those members of the public participating in the process. A total of 203 surveys were returned. It should also be noted that some respondent's skipped questions, so numbers in the results section vary based on this fact.

Details are as follows:

#### Mail Out Survey

- A Mail-out including a survey, self addressed stamped envelope and an information sheet advising people of the November 22, 2012 Open House was mailed directly to all property owners within the area north of Highway 16 between Range Road 31 and Range Road 24. The intent of this direct mail out was to ensure that property owners in the area surrounding the proposed development were informed directly of the proposal and had opportunity to provide feedback.
- Total packages mailed out was 342; total returned was 82

#### Online Survey

- The survey was also made available online for other interested residents who may or may not live in the surrounding area to provide feedback
- Total respondents was 102

#### Open House

- The purpose of the Open House was to provide an opportunity for residents to discuss the proposal directly with representatives from the Overlanders group and County staff. The Overlanders shared their presentation shown to Council the month prior, followed by questions and answers. Residents were asked to provide feedback through the survey form that was available at the meeting.
- Approximately 70 residents attended the Open House
- Total surveys returned was 23

#### Other Agencies

- Information regarding the proposal was shared via e-mail or phone with the Province, Lac St. Anne County, Alberta Conservation Association, Taqa North Ltd., St. Anne Natural Gas Co-op Ltd., Parkland County Engineering and Planning and Development departments
- Summary of discussions are included in Agency Feedback

## Marketing/Communication of Opportunities for Feedback

- These opportunities were promoted through print media including Stony Plain Reporter, Spruce Grove Examiner, Community Voice, Parkland County Communicator, direct mail out to neighbouring residents, County website, as well as two display signs placed in the neighbouring community
- County Recreation staff made personal contact with agencies listed

## Analysis

- Parks, Recreation and Culture staff conducted the analysis of the survey results and summarised the findings as contained in this report
- Care was taken to identify and capture the general directions given by those respondents living within the area versus those living outside of it
- Results are divided based on survey feedback and agency feedback

## Survey Results

### Current Use

***I am aware of the local area “Hells Half Acre” and the ongoing use by ATV riders.***

	Mail In	Open House	Online	OVERALL
YES	65	22	88	175
NO	12	1	11	24

- Respondents are familiar with the area of proposed development.

***Do you live within the identified area on Map #1?***

	Mail In	Open House	Online	OVERALL
YES	76	14	36	126
NO	3	9	64	76

- 62% of respondents indicate that they live within the surrounding area

***Do you personally utilize the area for ATV or other use?***

Mail in survey	1-2 visits	3-9 visits	10-20 visits	21 or more visits	Do not visit
Total use	30 (48%)				32 (52%)
Average use by frequency	40%	26%	22%	12%	
<b>Open House</b>					
Total use	8 (50%)				8 (50%)
Average use by frequency	15%	15%	20%	50%	
<b>Online Survey</b>					
Total use	60 (64%)				34 (36%)
Average use by frequency	49%	25%	18%	8%	

Use by Season	1-2 visits	3-9 visits	10-20 visits	21 or more visits	Do not visit
Winter (Dec – Feb)	41	25	11	9	80
Spring (Mar-May)	36	22	19	9	73
Summer (June-Aug)	39	22	22	15	70
Autumn (Sept-Nov)	48	20	18	12	68

- Given that the mail-in survey targeted those people living close to the area (95% of respondents) and that the majority of attendees at the Open House (66% of respondents) were also from the area, numbers indicate that half of the respondents living close to the area use it and half do not
- The online survey respondents tended to be from outside the area (62% of respondents), numbers indicate that two-thirds of the respondents who live outside the area make use of it
- Those respondents who use the site tend to use it in a fairly consistent manner over the various seasons

## Issues

### *How does the current use affect your day to day life?*

		Mail in (84)	Open House (28)	Online (102)
1	Increased noise	55	16	19
2	Increased traffic	48	16	19
3	Trail/natural space deterioration	39	17	22
4	Increased enjoyment/use of natural areas	21	6	32
5	It does not affect my life	16	1	42
6	Trail/user safety	21	13	17
7	Ability to feel safe in the space and educate others	15	3	21

- Three most frequent mail in responses: Noise, Traffic and Trail/natural space deterioration
- Three most frequent Open House responses: Trail/natural space deterioration, Traffic and Noise
- Three most frequent online responses: It does not affect my life, Increased enjoyment/use of natural areas and Trail/natural space deterioration
- Numbers indicate that mail in and Open House respondents live in close proximity to the area
- Numbers indicate that online respondents tend to be from outside the area

### *What issues are most important to you in this area? (scale of 1 to 6, 1 being the most important)*

	Mail in	Open House	Online
Trucks, trailer and ATV traffic	5	4	5
Trail deterioration	3	3	2
Trail & user safety	6	3	1
Parking and loading areas	4	3	4
Declining of Natural areas	1	2	3
Noise	2	1	6

- The three most important issues for mail-in respondents were: Declining of Natural areas, Noise and Trail deterioration
- The three most important issues for Open House respondents were: Noise and Declining of Natural areas and Parking and loading areas
- The three most important issues for online respondents were: Trail & user safety, Trail deterioration and Declining of natural areas

#### Support for Proposal

***Given that this area has a history of ATV use, are you supportive of future use of the trails and development of a staging area?***

	Mail In (84)	Open House (28)	Online (102)	OVERALL
YES	32	6	69	107
NO	44	14	21	79

- Overall 58% of respondents are supportive of the proposed development
- Mail-in respondents, who live in close proximity to the proposed development, 42% were in favor of the proposed development
- Of Open House respondents 30% were in favour of the proposed development
- Of online respondents, where close to two-thirds do not live in close proximity to the area, 77% were in favor of the proposed development

***Do you have any other comments about this area or proposed development?***

#### Mail In Survey

Those respondents that indicate support for the proposal made additional comments that referred to the following:

- Need to manage and control the area
- Concerns regarding increased traffic, property damage, noise
- Need to keep it natural, don't allow further damage to the land
- Good place to go
- Need for legal, safe, managed areas for OHV sport users close to Parkland County
- No trucks or jeeps
- Concern about increased usage by people from urban municipalities in the area

Those respondents that are not in support of the proposal made additional comments that referred to the following:

- Concerned about environmental damage from use
- Too close to residential subdivisions
- Concern about increased noise, garbage, property damage
- Concerns about increased activities like partying, drinking, fires
- Concerns about damage to gas lines running through the area
- More development means more use means more problems
- Doubts as to ability of group and County to manage this type of use in the area
- Natural area should be left for wildlife and less invasive uses by the public
- Reference to grazing lease on crown land and impacts such as fence damage caused by OHV users
- Increase opportunity for non-OHV activities such as hiking, skiing, equestrian use, etc and that residents don't use the area for these activities out of safety concerns related to the OHV use.
- Negative impacts such as private property damage by OHV users, wildlife concerns and general disrespect by OHV user shown to private property owners in the area.

## Open House

Those respondents that indicate support for the proposal made additional comments that referred to the following:

- Only if it helps control the OHV activity

Those respondents that are not in support of the proposal made additional comments that referred to the following:

- More development will bring in more people, more noise, more property damage and disrespect to area property owners
- More damage to this natural area
- Concerns over impact on gas lines in the area
- Unsuitable for Jeeps/4 X 4's

## Online Survey

Those respondents that indicate support for the proposal made additional comments that referred to the following:

- Need a legal place to go ride OHV
- This would minimize abuse of areas where it is illegal to ride
- Need for OHV groups to self-police and manage an area of use for benefit of all users
- Need place for jeep/4x4 off roading
- Positive impact of having a safe, legal, accessible area to use OHVs year round,
- Support of a family friendly OHV area in the county.
- A parking area will address resident parking concerns

Those respondents that are not in support of the proposal made additional comments that referred to the following:

- Too close to developed subdivisions
- Users from outside the area don't respect the environment, nor OHV safety
- Increased garbage, noise
- Concerns about environmental damage, loss of the wildlife habitat
- County and group don't have resources to manage and control the area

## **Agency Feedback**

### ***Province of Alberta – Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD)***

- Do not believe that there will be a benefit if the staging area is approved
- The Crown land in the area is a very popular destination for OHV users, unfortunately not all of these users show proper respect for Crown land resulting in a heavily used area with unofficial trails developed
- If a staging area is developed they have concerns that the OHV use of the area will increase even more resulting in further damage to the area
- They recognize that the proposed staging area is on County land and have no authority over it so if approved by the County ask that the County and the Overlanders commit to working with ESRD to minimize the impacts that OHV use has on crown lands in the area

### ***Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)***

- Aim of Buck for Wildlife program is preservation of natural habitat for wildlife
- OHV use is not a use that is permitted or supported on sites they actively manage
- Foot access is a primary focus



- This is not a site they actively manage but would prefer that there be no OHV use, however, if allowed would like access controlled and managed to minimize the environmental impact
- If this proposal is approved they ask that the County meet with the ACA to review the agreement

***Lac St. Anne County***

- No formal response

***TAQA North Ltd.***

- Know and understand that OHV's travel over Pipeline Right of Ways and are okay with that use unless they cause safety issues
- TAQA North monitors their areas and if safety issues arise they would take steps to address them
- Relative to developing a staging area/parking lot they do not want any development within the Pipeline Right of Way

***Ste. Anne Natural Gas Co-op***

- Know that OHV's travel over their Pipeline Right of Way, they have issues usually in the spring when the ground is wet and ruts occur above the pipeline
- Do not want any development within the Pipeline Right of Way and have concerns about non-OHV traffic (trucks/Trailers) driving across pipeline

***Parkland County Engineering***

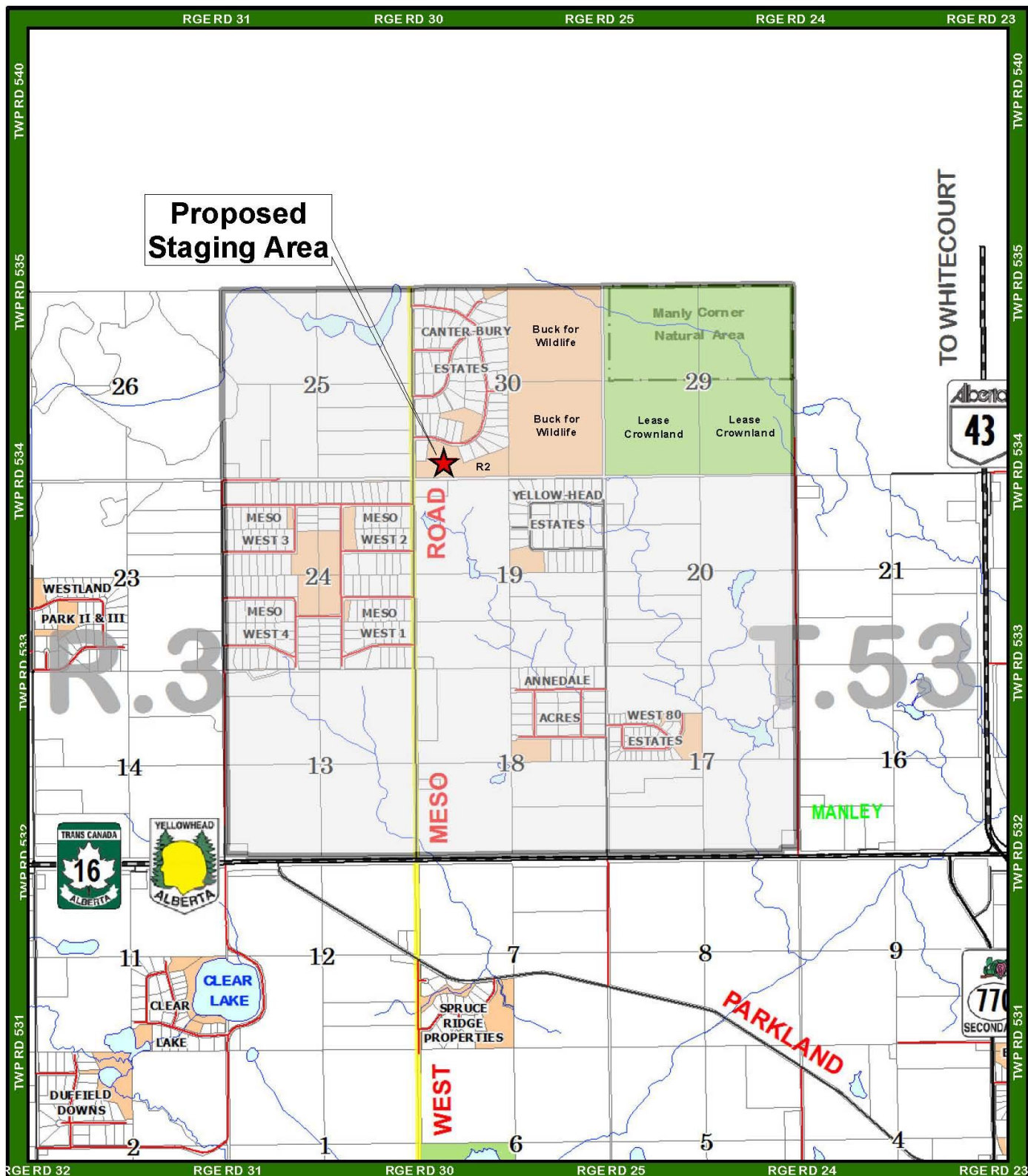
- No comment



***Parkland County Planning and Development***

- No issues if this is what Council chooses to approve

***Parkland County Enforcement Services***

- Parkland County Enforcement Services has Peace Officers that enforce OHV regulations, including a dedicated OHV Point Person who is familiar with the area and has made connections with residents in the community. In 2010, a number of proactive patrols were conducted in the Hell's Half Acre area enforcing the OHV Bylaw and issuing fines when it was warranted. As a result, the level of activity and/or the number of complaints we receive from the area has declined over 2011 and 2012 resulting in our staff focussing efforts elsewhere.
- In 2010, there were four complaints, 10 proactive patrols and 19 violation tickets issued.
- In 2011, there was 1 complaint, 2 proactive patrols and 4 violation tickets issued.
- In 2012, there were 3 complaints, 2 proactive patrols and 5 violation tickets issued.
- The proactive patrols are patrols that Enforcement Services conducted on their own, not responding to any complaints.
- At the November 22 Open House a number of residents raised concerns over the lack of enforcement in the area and the issues that still exist. Staff was unaware that these issues still existed as people were not reporting them. Enforcement Services staff made note of the concerns raised and will work to address in the next season.



 <p><b>parkland county</b></p> <p><small>Disclaimer: Parkland County offers this information in good faith, but makes no warranty with regard to correctness, and accuracy of the data.</small></p>	<p><b>MAP 1 - YELLOWHEAD OVERLANDERS OHV PROPOSED STAGING AREA DIRECT MAIL OUT AREA</b></p>			
	<p>Drawn By: brh Date: February 05, 2013</p>	<p>2011 Orthophotography Scale: 1:42,000</p>	<p>Geopositional Accuracy (+/- 3-5m)</p> <p>0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200 1400 1600 1800 2000 2200 2400 2600 2800 3000 3200 3400 3600 3800 4000 4200 4400 4600 4800 5000 5200 5400 5600 5800 6000 6200 6400 6600 6800 7000 7200 7400 7600 7800 8000 8200 8400 8600 8800 9000 9200 9400 9600 9800 10000</p>	