



Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

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October 23, 2015

By Email: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honorable Mary Polak, M.L.A
Minister of Environment
PO BOX 9047 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister,

Re: National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan Similkameen

I am contacting you on behalf of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC). We are a province-wide organization representing over 5000 individuals from 34 outdoor clubs across B.C. Our membership is comprised of outdoor recreation users including hikers, mountaineers, rock climbers, paddlers, trail runners, backcountry skiers and snowshoers. For over four decades, we have worked on behalf of this community to maintain and improve access to quality, non-motorized, backcountry recreation for both our members and the general public to enjoy.

I am writing to you today to express the FMCBC's support for developing a National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan Similkameen. Our members are pleased that the BC Government has resumed discussions regarding protection of areas in this region and appreciate the challenge associated with providing access for public use while recognizing the needs of private land owners.

The unique landscape of the South Okanagan is of particular interest to our members who recreate in the region and for this reason its protection is of high importance to our organization. We have reviewed the BC government's proposed land protection framework and strongly urge the provincial government to consider including Area 2, the area east of Vaseux Lake and the South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Areas in the proposed National Park Reserve. By including these areas, your government would ensure strong protection of this unique and diverse ecosystem and its endangered species.

I would appreciate a response to this letter including any decision regarding inclusion of additional areas in the proposed National Park Reserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jodi Appleton', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jodi Appleton
Executive Director
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