



October 20, 2016

To: Evan Siddall, President, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation  
[Evan.siddall@cmhc.ca](mailto:Evan.siddall@cmhc.ca)

## Re: New “No Trespassing” Signs Posted by the CMHC

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FMCBC) is a democratic, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting and maintaining access to quality non-motorized backcountry recreation in BC’s mountains and wilderness areas. As our name indicates, we are a federation of outdoor clubs with a membership of over 5000 people from 37 clubs across BC. Our membership is comprised of a diverse group of non-motorized backcountry recreationists, including hikers, rock climbers, mountaineers, trail runners, kayakers, mountain bikers, backcountry skiers and snowshoers.

Across the province, the FMCBC is involved in many situations where public access to public land is being eroded. Access is one of the most important and fundamental needs for BC residents to be able to enjoy the outdoors.

We are particularly concerned about the new “No Trespassing” signs posted by the CMHC at the various trailheads around the former Blair Rifle Range in North Vancouver, BC. We are concerned for the following reasons:

- The forest in question is used very heavily for recreation by a wide range of users including joggers, hikers, dog walkers and mountain bikers. This section of forest has been used for those activities for a very long time.
- There is a confusing patchwork of government bodies that are responsible for forests in North Vancouver, but the trails travel seamlessly across different sections of forest. If this particular section of forest is closed to the public, it will have an impact on the entire network of trails and will make it much harder to engage in recreation across the larger area.
- The new “No Trespassing” signs are extremely aggressive, banning all forms of recreation and access. The ban was implemented without any public notice.
- The CMHC did not post any contact information on the signs and has not published any maps to indicate the areas that they want people to avoid.
- CMHC is a crown corporation and these are ultimately public lands. Public access to public lands should only be limited when there is strong justification, such as active mining or construction. We are unaware of any new justification for blocking public access.
- We anticipate the potential for unintended consequences. One of the reasons that this section of forest is safe and clean is because of the continuous presence of recreational users.
- The CMHC has stated that the access has been cut off for safety reasons but we are unaware of any new safety hazards that warrant the change. CMHC has provided no



further information or explanation. To ensure that the public throughout the province treats safety-related closures with respect, it is important that evidence be provided when safety is used to justify banning public access to a public lands.

We are of the opinion that an immediate ban on recreation in this important section of forest is unacceptable and unwarranted.

We request that the CMHC remove the signs immediately and engage in a consultation process with the community.

We could anticipate a new set of signs in the future that:

- 1) Establish basic rules for anyone who wishes to use this area of forest. For example, no fires, no overnight camping and no littering.
- 2) State that the CMHC is not responsible for injuries or damage to personal property.
- 3) Include contact information for the CMHC should anyone have questions or require further information.

We look forward to engaging with the CMHC on this matter.

Yours truly,

Monika Bittel and Brian Wood,  
Co-chairs of the SWBC Recreation & Conservation Committee  
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

- cc. Terry Beech, MP for Burnaby - North Seymour  
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- cc. Jean-Yves Duclos, MP responsible for CMHC  
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- cc. North Vancouver District – Mayor & Council  
<https://www.dnv.org/contact-us/share-your-thoughts-mayor-and-council>