



1 November, 2017

Honourable George Heyman

**Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy**

P.O. Box 9339 Prov BC

Victoria, BC V8W 9M1

Dear Minister Heyman:

**re: Singing Pass Trail Access, Garibaldi Provincial Park**

Further to my letter dated 11 August, 2017, one of the critical access issues that we would like to discuss is the Singing Pass trail in Garibaldi Provincial Park.

The Singing Pass trail is one of only a few access points to Garibaldi Provincial Park and has been identified as a main access by BC Parks. It was built in the 1960s by BC Parks with volunteers from Lower Mainland clubs. Over 20 years ago, a small landslide about 2 km from Whistler village blocked vehicle access to the trailhead. Whistler Blackcomb then built a bike park and closed the road to vehicles. As a result, the roundtrip to Singing Pass has increased by about 10 km, making the trail no longer feasible for day trips for most park users and less rewarding for weekend trips.

About 10 years ago, Innergex Renewable Energy built a small independent power project on the Fitzsimmons Creek, close to the old Singing Pass trailhead and parking lot. A logging road on the north side (Blackcomb side) of the Creek was upgraded to a wide, level industrial road without significant geotechnical issues to provide access to the IPP. With some improvements, including building a footbridge across the Creek, the road and several small gravel areas suitable for parking near the IPP make this an attractive option for restoring vehicle access to the trailhead.

In February 2014, BC Parks approved the Spearhead Amendment to the Garibaldi Park 1990 Master Plan. BC Parks recognized restoring vehicle access to the Singing Pass trailhead as a high priority strategy, specifically identifying north side of Fitzsimmons Creek as the means to do so: *"work with adjacent land managers to establish a new vehicle-accessible trailhead on the north side of Fitzsimmons Creek to provide summer access to the Singing Pass Trail."*

Unfortunately, BC Parks has not made much progress on this file, primarily due to resistance from the Whistler Blackcomb resort and a lack of will from the Mountain Resorts Branch.

In the meantime, the slump on the Whistler side remains active, particularly with heavy rainfall, and requires annual maintenance (approximately \$50,000 was spent last year, with additional amounts spent this year). BC Parks put up warning signs about the safety risk of hiking the trail, given the risks of falling when traversing the landslip.

2...

The implementation of pay parking and parking restrictions by the Resort Municipality of Whistler in the summer of 2017 increases the need for a new parking area on the north side of the Fitzsimmons Creek. The construction of the first of three Spearhead huts, which also started this summer, only intensifies the need for the new vehicle-accessible trailhead as proposed by our members and recommended by BC Parks in early 2014.

With your encouragement, we believe BC Parks staff and the Mountain Resorts Branch could advance this file. A Singing Pass Trail Parking and Access Proposal (a copy of which is attached) has been developed by the BC Mountaineering Club and endorsed by lower mainland clubs. It is consistent with BC Parks' north side proposal, which we believe will allow the public, including families, to again enjoy the beautiful Singing Pass area of Garibaldi Provincial Park.

I will be following up with your Assistant Deputy Minister to see how we can help BC Parks with this issue.

We still would appreciate a meeting with you to discuss other matters such as BC Parks funding, management planning for BC parks and access issues in general. I will follow-up with your office again to arrange a meeting in the new year as suggested by your staff. Hopefully by then, progress will have been made in advancing this file, and we will not need to include the Singing Pass Trail among the issues to be discussed.

Sincerely yours,

Barry J Janyk  
Executive Director

attach.

cc. Minister Doug Donaldson, Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations