

Les Carter  
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November 29, 2006

Hon. Barry Penner  
Minister of Environment  
PO Box 9047  
Station Provincial Government  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Penner:

**Re: Call for proposals for private development in Nancy Greene Lake Provincial Park**

The members of the Friends of the Rossland Range have directed me to express our concerns regarding the possibility of private sector “fixed-roof” accommodation in Nancy Greene Provincial Park.

Residents of Rossland created the Friends of the Rossland Range Society to work toward protection of natural, recreational, and community values in the Rossland Range. We have spoken for these values in other tenure applications, and have achieved results that are both reasonable and consistent with the concerns of the communities that depend on the Rossland Range.

Shortly after our inception, we worked with government agencies, stakeholders, and the community to achieve a new Master Plan and Controlled Recreation Area for Red Mountain Resort. The result was a Plan and a Controlled Recreation Area boundary acceptable to all stakeholders, which facilitated the sale of Red Mountain and the revitalization of Rossland’s economy through development of new recreational accommodation and on-hill amenities.

From 2003 to 2005, we worked with government, stakeholders, and the applicants for a cat-skiing tenure to create tenure boundaries that are viable for the cat-skiing operation while preserving areas that are heavily used by the community for non-motorized recreation, and which are becoming an increasing attraction to visitors. The result has been a successful commercial operation, and a good relationship between the commercial operator and the community

We are now working with government agencies and other stakeholders towards creating a comprehensive plan for recreational use and access in the Rossland Range. Nancy Greene Provincial Park and surrounding area are within the lands contemplated by that plan.

We base our activities on principles which we consider central to good land use planning and stewardship, including the following:

- Natural values in the Rossland Range, including mountain and forest settings, views, wildlife, wilderness recreation, and the experience of wilderness peace and quiet, contribute very heavily to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of communities near the Rossland Range.
- Natural values in the Rossland Range contribute heavily to the attractiveness of our communities to visitors, and are therefore an important economic resource.
- Management of the Rossland Range must recognize the legitimacy of the interests of all stakeholders affected, and must balance those interests fairly and realistically, both among themselves and with regard for the need to preserve the natural values on which all of the various interests depend.
- It may be necessary, in order to preserve important natural values, to place some limitations on human use and access in the Rossland Range.
- Accommodation and other intrusive development should occur within existing urban areas, and should not intrude unnecessarily into natural areas.
- Government planning, and allocation of tenures in the Rossland Range, must meaningfully involve all those who have to live with the outcomes.

With those principles in mind, we offer these observations about the unique qualities and limitations that apply to Nancy Greene Lake:

- Nancy Greene Lake Provincial Park, at the junction of two provincial highways, is already highly accessible from neighbouring communities; it is a “backyard” park for those communities. It is, for example, more accessible in terms of travel time than are Stanley Park, Pacific Spirit Park or Lighthouse Park to most residents of Vancouver. As a result, it often incurs use at near saturation level.
- Nancy Greene Lake is the only lake in the Rossland Range, which makes it both a major recreational attraction and an irreplaceable component of the habitat of many wildlife species, from grizzlies and large ungulates to migratory and water birds. This point bears repeating: *Nancy Greene Lake is the only lake in the*

- entire Rossland Range.* Many, if not most, other areas of BC would offer several lakes of various sizes within the same size of landscape.
- Nancy Greene Lake is small. It is only large enough to support one family of loons. Many other species of wetland bird species depend on the marshes around Nancy Greene Lake. Because the lake is small, all the habitat on which these species depend is easily accessible by boat from the swimming beach, as well as by a short walk from the trail ringing the lake.
  - Mostly because of recent large-scale clear-cutting in the Rossland Range to mitigate the effects of pine beetle infestation, Nancy Greene Lake has become an “island” refuge of standing timber, green plants, and wetland in a landscape of increasingly degraded wildlife habitat.
  - As a result of the commendable efforts of the Columbia Basin Trust’s fish and wildlife restoration program, Nancy Greene Lake is once again the headwaters of a productive trout spawning stream, Blueberry Creek. Trout hatched in Blueberry Creek contribute to the recreational fishery in the Columbia River downstream of the Arrow Lakes. This stretch of the Columbia has been identified as one of the 10 best trout rivers in North America, and is increasingly contributing to tourism revenue in our communities. (Blueberry Creek had been unavailable to trout for many years because of inappropriate culvert and weir construction near Highway 22. Those problems have been removed.)
  - Our observations indicate that Nancy Greene Provincial Park is currently receiving as much recreational use as it can tolerate without seriously impacting important natural values, both in terms of attractiveness for recreational use and in terms of Nancy Green Lake’s vital role to the health of the entire Rossland Range ecosystem and its wildlife.

Further development at Nancy Greene Lake would be inappropriate. Increased use of this small, unique and heavily-visited lake would seriously degrade its value to people and wildlife. In particular:

- The foreshore and plants near the developed part of the lake are already heavily eroded, to the point of being unattractive and in need of restoration. Additional traffic would mean more erosion.
- Additional boating activity, or increased foot access to the shores of the lake, would likely mean loss of the resident loons, as well as diminished populations of other birds. Such activity could also cause disturbance to other wildlife including grizzlies, moose and deer, all of which depend at some time on the lake and its surroundings.
- Development would put water quality in Blueberry Creek at risk, with potentially unacceptable consequences for its spawning trout population.
- Development and additional usage would conflict with Nancy Greene Lake’s present heavy use as a local amenity by its surrounding communities and their visitors.
- Development at Nancy Greene Lake would introduce an intrusive urban presence in a landscape which is best kept as natural as possible.

We believe that the potential of Nancy Greene Lake, including its economic potential, would be better realized by including it in the forthcoming comprehensive recreational planning process for the Rossland Range.

Keeping Nancy Greene Lake as part of a natural “package” readily accessible to visitors based in the excellent accommodation in Rossland, Trail, Castlegar and other nearby communities would encourage more visitors to our region, over a longer portion of the year, than development of accommodation focused on what is, after all, a small and limited lake and wetland surrounded by industrial forest.

**We ask you to remove Nancy Greene Lake Provincial Park from the list of parks available for development, and instead to see it as an existing valuable amenity (and economic resource) for its surrounding communities.**

**We look forward to your instruction to the appropriate government agencies to expedite a comprehensive process of planning for recreational use in the Rossland Range.**

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to hearing from you.

If you require any further information, please contact me at (250) 362-5677, or Kim Deane, Chair of the Friends of the Rossland Range Society, at 362- 5648.

Yours truly,

Les Carter, Director

For:

Kim Deane, Chair, Friends of the Rossland Range Society

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**FRIENDS OF THE ROSSLAND RANGE SOCIETY - MISSION**

The Friends of the Rossland Range Society seeks to promote and foster understanding, appreciation and stewardship of the Rossland Range among residents and visitors through educational and recreational activities and other projects.

We seek sharing of the limited alpine lands in the Rossland Range among historical users while giving full consideration to wildlife and environmental values.