

March 9, 2021

The Honourable Katrine Conroy,
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

URGENT: Purchase and protection of threatened Sickie Point, Skaha Lake, Okanagan Valley, BC

Dear Minister Conroy:

I am writing to you to request your Ministry's and the BC government's financial support for the purchase of the Skaha Lake foreshore marshes and riparian habitat that constitute Sickie Point. This is the last such piece of land remaining on Skaha Lake and one of the few still left in the South Okanagan. At present, the 4.8 acres (1.95 ha) are privately owned, but in receivership and other private developers are showing interest. The local community has been strongly against the private development of the Point since the 1990's. We now have what is likely the last opportunity to have this important wildlife habitat, also of considerable cultural significance for the Sylix First Nations, preserved in perpetuity primarily for its natural features.

I feel that conservation of Sickie Point is urgent for the following reasons:

- As long as the land remains in private hands, especially if building is allowed, the chances of its value for wildlife returning are essentially zero.
- While there has been very serious degradation of the Point's natural habitat values, such wetland-riparian areas can be restored quite rapidly through natural re-growth combined with knowledgeable restoration action.
- Sickie Point is the last wetland-riparian area left on Skaha Lake and one of the few remaining in the South Okanagan.
- Sickie Point provides habitat for provincially endangered species and rare critical habitat for many and for cattail and bullrush stands that are required for a wide range of wildlife and fish.
- Sickie Point is culturally important to the people of snpink'tn, Sylix Nation and has been used for hundreds of generations as part of their culture.
- The KVR Trail is an extremely important amenity for non-motorized recreation for both local people and visitors; however since it is the only possible access to the Sickie Point property, if the property were built on, hikers, bicyclists and horseback riders would have to contend with vehicles (possibly on a paved road with higher speeds). Aside from being dangerous it would most certainly reduce the value of the trail for recreation. To date, over 200 people, some of whom do not even live in the immediate area, have pledged almost \$300,000. While this amount is a long way from the approximately \$2.5 million asking price for the property, it indicates the importance of this piece of land to people in the South Okanagan and visitors. To save this precious, increasingly rare, type of lakeshore land in the South Okanagan before the opportunity disappears, we

need the help of your government to purchase it so that it may be restored to its former glory as wildlife habitat.

If possible, I also request that there be an immediate stay on any development of Sickle Point under the Environment and Land Use Act, to protect this last example of a rare habitat before it is lost forever.

As you may have noticed my Alberta address, I became aware of this situation while spending the winter in Okanagan Falls and have hiked out to Sickle Point and have witnessed the degradation of the area that has been undertaken and can see the need for rejuvenation of Sickle Point to its original wildlife habitat. Also I not come here to admire the architectural wonders that keep popping up on the lakeshore and mountainside but rather to admire the natural wonders of the area so I have pledged and I am asking for your support of this group's efforts.

Yours truly,

John Pinter

Cc: Hon. Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
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