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April 26, 2022

Premier John Horgan
Province of British Columbia
PO Box 9042
Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Mr. Premier,

**Spruce Lake and South Chilcotin Mountains/Big Creek Parks are Under
Siege by BC Parks and We Need Your Help to Resolve the Situation**

This June BC Parks plans on building a ranger station on the NE shore of remote Spruce Lake, the jewel of South Chilcotin Mountains Park and a 4 ½ hour hike from the nearest forestry road. Until now the east side of the Lake has been untouched, like the south and virtually all of the west side. This building would be the canary in the coal mine for not just Spruce Lake but also for SCM Park. There are three dealbreaker reasons why this should not be allowed to happen. Any one of the three is more than enough reason to change the site but to date the many letters and phone calls to BC Parks have not been enough for Parks to reconsider. This is in spite of the unanimous support for a new location from everyone who knows of the situation:

1. A building at this site will be defacing one of BC's most beautiful wilderness lakes. Call it BC Parks sprawl, infrastructure creep and complete disregard for wildlife (all in violation of the South Chilcotin Mountains/Big Creek Parks Management Plan's commitments and promises). With this initiative Parks would do more to erode the wilderness values of Spruce Lake and its surroundings than any action since the 1950s. In the 1950s there were three cabins on the lake and if you don't count Chilcotin Holiday's outfitter camp there are still only three cabins on the Lake.....that is until now. Making a clearing large enough to accommodate BC Park's plan for the second largest building on the Lake and a helipad is a ruinous decision and would destroy the Spruce Lake I have known since my first time into the Lake in 1962 (and every year since). At the moment its pretty much in that same unchanged state from the 1950s. Page 41 of the Plan ironically states that "park management will not introduce any developments that will take away from the scenic backdrop of the Lake". This pending travesty should be discussed right at the top of the Ministry of Environment to make sure this type of government imposed

erosion of our wilderness lakes does not become a de facto BC Park's practice in BC's other wilderness parks.

2. BC Parks has completely failed to abide by its promises and obligations to consult with the stakeholders on virtually all material Park matters as stated in the SCMP Management Plan (attached). This is a breach of public trust. Page 24 of the Plan states Park's commitment to "meet collectively with stakeholders on a regular basis (at least annually)" so that "this group would be active participants in the stewardship of the park and in providing advice on park management". BC Parks has not called even one stakeholder meeting. If there had been we would have collectively decided on an optimal off the Lake location for the structure, rather than Parks making a poorly conceived decision in 2009 to create a shocking clearcut (in process of healing), now to be enlarged significantly and developed, which is against the public interest and against the Plan. Page 28 and other pages state more of the same regarding BC Park's promises to consult stakeholders and public interest groups. emails from Parks as far back as 2009 state the same.

Ironically, Volker Michelfelder, the Regional Director of BC Parks who we are trying to communicate with, is making all the decisions and he is also the person who signed the Management Plan.

BC Parks is also contravening the Park Act as the only explanation we have had from Parks as to why they chose this site are verbal statements that it is away from the public campsite which will provide privacy and less pressure to be involved with the public. This is completely at odds with the duty of Park rangers as per the Park Act.

3. The third dealbreaker is that from every practical viewpoint this location is absolutely the last place you would want to locate a ranger station. The logistics make no sense. There are far better locations. Note the attached Site Diagram and Site Comparison. Both show how truly illogical Park's proposed site is. It's a long way from the public campsite, the bear bins, the firewood, the BC Park's dock, the public outhouses etc. As you can see the only short route to Park's proposed building site is by walking along the water and across private property, Lot 8061, which is where two of the three cabins on the Lake are. Parks is creating a private property buffer because they have stated they want privacy. The other route from Park's big new dock, which you see on the diagram, is to boat over but they have told us very strongly that they would not be putting in a dock at the new site. We don't believe this..... and the public does not have boats.


I have attached the Management Plan and have highlighted the many key points to make it easy to follow. If a column of comments appears to the right, I would simply maximize the Plan and every time you want to see our comments regarding a highlight just click on the hamburger box that shows beside the highlight. Use the same approach for the highlights from the Park Act website as it states that the responsibility of a Park ranger is to liaise with and help the public.

There is also another big issue. Blackcomb Helicopters has just recently bought out Tyax Adventures, the dominant wilderness tourism operator in SCM/Big Creek Parks'. This seems to be a conflict of interests given BC Park's number one obligation is to protect our Parks' natural values. At the very least this takeover should be subject to consultation with the public (mandatory if this were happening on crown land) and should only be approved based on the current status quo use of helicopters in the Parks and no new heli concessions. Again the lack of consultation is in violation of the Plan. The government biologists do not even have a say. What is at risk are the Spruce Lake grizzly and one of the largest and most important mountain goat herds in SW BC. It is about 100 strong and is one of the few herds which is growing. At times the herd can be seen in just a one hour hike from Spruce Lake. California bighorn sheep also inhabit the ridge just above Spruce Lake.

BC Parks is running amok in SCM/Big Creek Parks and we are asking you to bring it to light and fix it. We hope you will agree that BC Parks must heed the many promises and commitments it makes in the SCM/Big Creek Parks Management Plan to consult with stakeholders. This would allow the public a voice regarding a helicopter company becoming the dominant wilderness tourism operator in the Park and a big re-think of the location of a new Park ranger station at Spruce Lake.

Please confirm that BC Parks will agree to consult with the stakeholders to find an acceptable site for the Park ranger station and at the same time protect the precious wilderness values of Spruce Lake and South Chilcotin Mountains Park.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis Perry 
On behalf of the
Friends of Spruce Lake

cc The Honourable George Heyman,
Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy

Kelly Greene, MLA,
Parliamentary Secretary for Environment