



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

July 22, 2005

The Editor
The Kelowna Daily Courier

Editor:

I would like to respond to comments made about BC Parks by BCGEU president George Heyman in a July 16 article (Parks Day rings hollow for critics of B.C. Liberals).

The statements made by Mr. Heyman were disappointing and your readers deserve clarification.

The fact is, since 2001 the Province has invested more than \$24 million in capital improvements to BC Parks. This year alone we will invest \$12.2 million in campground, facility and infrastructure improvements – the largest BC Parks' capital budget for improvements in more than 15 years. All told, we will be making \$20 million in capital improvements over the next three years.

Your article also included comments from Scott Alexander indicating that he hasn't seen any parks staff this year. This is not only a stretch, but it's also unfair to the men and women working in our parks and it overlooks the additional staff we have hired this year. I have met many people in our parks system who are striving to bring parks visitors a memorable experience.

Over the next three years, the Province will invest \$16.5 million to improve park conservation and safety with up to 50 new conservation officers and park rangers, and the new B.C. Conservation Corps.

B.C.'s parks are among our most treasured assets and this government is committed to ensuring they continue to bring pleasure to everyone who visits.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment