
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

March 17, 2006

The Editor
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A recent letter to the editor by Lawrence Woodhall contained so many inaccuracies it's hard to know where to start.

Mr. Woodhall's contention that Bill 84, introduced by our government in 2003, made it possible for lodges to be built in parks is incorrect. Applications for new lodges have always been permitted. That's why lodges have been found in Kokanee Glacier, Tweedsmuir, Manning and Mount Assiniboine provincial parks for many, many years.

In fact, the previous NDP government approved a new lodge in Kokanee Glacier Park in the late 1990s. BC Parks is now working to clarify existing policy regarding new lodge applications.

As a former BC Park Ranger, I couldn't disagree more with Mr. Woodhall's notion that "parks were designed to protect the flora and fauna and were not designed for people." While many parks have as their primary purpose the protection of biodiversity, parks are also for people to enjoy. I believe a majority of British Columbians share my view.

By exposing people to the natural wonders of BC Parks, we can encourage physical fitness through active lifestyles while increasing public appreciation for wilderness protection.

There are 604 parks in B.C. Of that number, only 12 (less than two per cent) are now being considered for some type of new roofed accommodation. That's because we will only permit facilities where it is appropriate to do so and where it won't compromise the ecological integrity of the parks system.

This is an opportunity to showcase green technology in our province by ensuring that any new facility will be a model of sustainability.

We are proceeding cautiously to develop a policy that works for all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment