
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Feb. 25, 2006

The Editor
Times Colonist

I found your editorial about the BC Parks Lodge Strategy to be unnecessarily alarmist and somewhat misleading. It was based almost entirely on draft documents. In fact, most are a year old and have been undergoing numerous revisions.

While your editorial was correct in stating we have a world-class park system, it missed the mark in describing the parks lodge strategy.

In B.C., demographics are changing and so is the way people vacation. Our population is aging and we need to keep this in mind.

Under previous governments, decisions about new lodges were made in the absence of clear and consistent policy.

There are about 160 existing fixed-roof accommodation facilities in our parks, ranging from small, minimally equipped shelters, to more comfortable accommodations like Manning Park Lodge.

We are now proceeding cautiously to develop a policy that works for all British Columbians. There are 604 parks in B.C. Of that number, only 12 (less than two per cent) are being considered at this time for some type of new roofed accommodation. That's because we will only permit facilities where it is appropriate to do so.

When our parks lodge strategy becomes policy, I can assure your readers that any new facility will be a model of sustainability. For example, this will be an opportunity to showcase green technology in our province.

Any new parks lodge policy will be designed to enhance recreational experiences for all British Columbians while protecting the ecological values of our park system.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment