



Making a difference...together

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October 31, 2019

File: 0220-20
General Correspondence
0400-20
Correspondence/Meetings/General

The Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture
Room 325 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Via email: AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Popham:

RE: ELK/BEAVER LAKE – REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

I know you share our appreciation of the significance of Elk/Beaver Lake as a natural asset in our region and the environmental, recreational, economic, social and cultural values it provides to residents and visitors.

The regional park receives over 1.5 million visitors each year, is the most heavily fished lake on Vancouver Island, hosts multiple recreational events that attract many visitors to our region, and is home to a wide diversity of flora and fauna. However, the water quality of the lakes has degraded significantly since the 1980s, resulting in frequent toxic algae blooms, increased invasive aquatic plant growth and poor habitat for native fish and other wildlife. This deterioration has negatively impacted local, regional and provincial values, and is largely due to high nutrient levels in the lake.

The Province, as the party responsible for the water column and sediment of Elk/Beaver Lake, established an intergovernmental working group in 2014 to investigate and explore an appropriate solution to restore the health of the lake. The group consists of staff from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Capital Regional District (CRD), District of Saanich and Island Health Authority. In September 2019, CRD staff, with support from the intergovernmental working group and a third-party consultant, recommended an oxygenation system for the overall lake system. The recommended oxygenation system has been estimated at \$1.4 million in capital and \$100,000 annually in operations, maintenance and management

The CRD Board supported the recommendation and directed staff to seek 50% of the costs through external grants and funding opportunities. The system will directly reduce high nutrient levels that have built up in the lake, resulting in improved water quality to support multiple uses of this vital lake system. The project will reduce the frequency and magnitude of blue-green algae blooms, improve water quality for recreational activities, improve habitat and water quality for native fish and other species, and reduce the impact of invasive aquatic plant growth.

In order to preserve this natural asset and improve water quality at Elk/Beaver Lake, on behalf of the Board, I am asking you to consider granting a minimum 50% capital contribution to support the installation of the oxygenation systems. I am also requesting that you consider supporting partnership funding of \$50,000/year to support the ongoing costs to operate, maintain and monitor the system.

If you or your staff require additional information, please contact Larisa Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services, (lhutcheson@crd.bc.ca or 250-360-3085).

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Plant', is positioned above the typed name.

Colin Plant
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

cc: CRD Board Members
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Larisa Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services, CRD