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April 16th, 2010

Capital Regional District Board of Directors
625 Fisgard St, PO Box 1000
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6 Sent by email to Andy Orr [aorr@crd.bc.ca]

Attention: Board Chair Geoff Young and Board of Directors

RE: OFF-ROAD VEHICLES IN CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT PARKS

BC Nature (Federation of British Columbia Naturalists) is a province-wide umbrella organization for 50 natural history clubs throughout the province, with about 4700 members. For 40 years we have been involved in educational and conservation activities, and have represented our member clubs in negotiations in land use planning.

We are writing today out of concern for the proposal to allow off-road vehicles into any Capital Regional District parklands. Not only does this proposal run contrary to your Vision Statement and Mandate, it also poses a significant threat to the very ecosystems these parks have been set aside to protect. Both Garry oak and coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems are among the rarest habitats in Canada, and more than 100 endangered animals and plants call this region home. Allowing further degradation of these habitats by off-road vehicles goes counter to the values that allowed the purchase of these protected areas, and violates our role as stewards of this unique region.

Natural areas cannot withstand the onslaught of these machines, which disturb wildlife, devastate vegetation- particularly rock outcrops where many of the rarest species live, and cause irreparable damage to riparian areas through siltation and oiling. Wild spaces set aside for wildlife and quiet pursuits such as hiking and nature appreciation are significant contributions to future generations –they ensure our grandchildren’s grandchildren will have places to seek solace. Wild spaces provide a venue to counter rising childhood obesity, as well as an opportunity to offset the concerns arising from nature deficit disorder. In addition, the increased risks for public safety must be considered as part of this proposal to allow off-road vehicles in CRD Parks.

Our organization considers the proposed access to the parks in your region by off-road vehicles to be untenable. It is our recommendation that the suggestion be rejected.

If you have any further questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Bev Ramey, President