



July 31, 2017

Hon. Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Hon. George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Ministers McKenna and Heyman:

Nature Canada and BC Nature urge you both to take immediate advantage of the present political opportunity and create the South Okanagan – Similkameen National Park Reserve.

Nature Canada is a national voice for nature with more than 45,000 members and supporters and a network of more than 350 naturalist organizations across Canada. BC Nature is the federation of 53 naturalist clubs across British Columbia representing over 6,000 members.

As you are aware, a study process for considering the possibility of such a park was initiated more than a decade ago; in 2012, a joint federal-provincial feasibility study recommended that a national park reserve be established. The proposed park now enjoys a high level of support among British Columbians, whether ranchers, tourism workers, hunters, campers or naturalists. The Okanagan Nation Alliance has expressed support for the national park as have all the nearby Regional District governments, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, all the tourism associations, and the Chambers of Commerce.

This southern interior region is home to more threatened and rare species than anywhere else in British Columbia. Over one-third of all provincially listed species at risk and 57 federally listed species at risk live in the South Okanagan – Similkameen. Establishing the national park will provide a significant boost to British Columbia and Canada in meeting our 17 per cent target for terrestrial and inland water protection under the Aichi Targets of the Biodiversity Treaty. Nature Canada and BC Nature are confident that Parks Canada will manage the park to ensure its ecological integrity as well as stimulate the local economy by attracting more Canadian and international tourists to the region

Please let us know how Nature Canada and/or BC Nature can be of assistance in speeding the creation of this important national park reserve.

Sincerely,



Bob Peart,
Chair, Nature Canada



Alan Burger
President, BC Nature

Cc Richard Cannings, M.P.
Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalists, CONC, NONC
Friends of the Similkameen
Okanagan-Similkameen Parks Society
Osoyoos Desert Society
South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Network