



Press Release

Broad-based group of Canadians demands a stop to commercialization of Canada's national parks.

Banff, AB. – September 16, 2015 – Today a diverse group of Canadians with a deep concern for the well-being of our national parks gathered in Banff to call for an end to inappropriate commercialization of Canada's national parks.

Recent commercial projects in Banff and Jasper National Parks have privatized public spaces and threatened the very framework that controls development in our parks.

The Glacier Skywalk and the proposed new accommodation at Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park both convert public space for private gain. The approval of the massive expansion of the Lake Louise ski hill involves releasing new land, which is currently designated as protected wilderness, for commercial development in a much-loved backcountry area.

Canada's national parks belong to all Canadians. It's up to all of us to protect the natural values our parks are intended to protect, and to pass them on unimpaired to future generations.

"My family has been involved with Banff National Park throughout the park's entire history," said Harvey Locke, a Banff resident and globally recognized authority on national parks. "In 1996 I was appointed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to advise on the Banff National Park Management Plan that set a balanced framework in place to protect the park and provide a first-class experience for visitors. I am appalled that a recent surge in commercial development approvals threatens the rules that keep development under control and protect nature in this UNESCO World Heritage Site."

"When I was superintendent of Banff National Park, we consulted Canadians in preparation for the 2010 management plan," said Kevin Van Tighem, a career Parks Canada employee who retired as Superintendent of Banff National Park in 2011. "Over 1000 Canadians participated; none of them called for more commercial development and a lot of them expressed concern about there being too much."

"We Shuswap (Secwepemc First Nation) people have a long history with these lands now in National Parks," said Audrey Eugene, Culture & History Liaison for the Kinbasket Shuswap Band. "They need to be managed for nature. Privatizing them for commercial gain is wrong. We feel so strongly about this that our Secwepemc First Nation Elders have passed a statement against privatization of our national parks."

"As a business owner with a significant investment in both the town of Banff and in an outlying area of the Park, I count on there being a predictable regulatory framework that is fair and protects the Park because the National Park is the essence of my business," said Peter Poole, principal of Arctos & Bird, Bison Courtyard and Juniper Hotel. "When longstanding policies are waived to



favour one private business over another, it is not only unfair, it is harmful to the rest of us and hurts Banff's brand."

Rallying under the banner of [FightForYourParks](#) is a wide range of individuals, business owners, environmental organizations such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y), Alberta Wilderness Association, Wildsight, Jasper Environmental Association, Wild Canada Conservation Alliance, scientists, First Nations, and former Parks Canada staff.

Fight For Your Parks intends to shine a spotlight on this serious risk to our national parks during the federal election. Together we will engage Canadians from coast to coast to coast and will work for these specific outcomes:

1. A reversal of the last-minute approval of Lake Louise Ski Resort's massive expansion;
2. A return to the longstanding policy that no new lands will be released for commercial development in our national parks;
3. A return to honouring the National Parks Act's emphasis on putting nature (ecological integrity) first in all our national parks; and
4. A commitment that legally protected wilderness in our national parks will stay that way forever.

National Parks are a public good. They belong to all Canadians. Fight For Your Parks insists that the dedication clause of our National Parks Act be honoured in spirit and in law by Parks Canada.

*"The national parks of Canada are **hereby dedicated to the people of Canada** for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, **and the parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.**"* – Canada's National Parks Act

"Every 20 years there is a frontal assault on the frameworks that control development in our national parks by those who seek to exploit them for private gain," said Harvey Locke. "Now in 2015 it is our turn to stand up and Fight For Your Parks. We invite everyone to join us."

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