



THE HONOURABLE JAMES R. CHABOT
MINISTER OF LANDS, PARKS AND HOUSING

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SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF LANDS FOR SIDNEY ISLAND PROVINCIAL PARK

In a joint statement made today, Lands, Parks and Housing Minister James R. Chabot and Hugh Curtis, Provincial Secretary and M.L.A. for Saanich and the Islands announced that agreement has been reached to purchase approximately 105 acres of Sidney Island as an addition to the existing Sidney Island Marine Park.

Mr. Chabot indicated that the purchase of the property adds substantially to the existing park which has 170 acres of land area with the spit itself being subject to flooding at high tide. The Minister added that the purchase of the property at an appraised value of \$300,000 was made possible through equal contributions from the Lottery Fund and the Devonian Society.

Mr. Curtis expressed delight in the successful conclusion of this purchase. "This has been a priority for the people in the Greater Victoria and Southern Vancouver Island area and their support for conservation of all or part of the Island has been instrumental in assisting me in my efforts to reach a government decision on this area." Mr. Curtis has indicated appreciation for the co-operation and assistance of the current owners, which includes Mr. Jack Todd of Victoria. "Mr. Todd," said Mr. Curtis, "has always felt that this portion of the Island should remain in public ownership and has, over the years, repeatedly urged that the province acquire this property."

Mr. Curtis went on to elaborate on the significant recreation and conservation efforts of the government in the

Gulf Islands in recent years. This purchase is one of a series of purchases that has been carried out in conjunction with the Devonian Foundation of Calgary in the past year. Already acquired are Winter Cove on Saturna Island and Tribune Bay on Hornby Island, both outstanding areas which will be managed as provincial parks. Cabbage Island, adjacent to Saturna Island was also purchased in co-operation with the Devonian Foundation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. These areas will be added to the existing marine parks system which already includes some 20 locations in the Gulf Islands.

The area being purchased, in addition to its recreational value also contains significant natural and ecological values, including salt marshes and lagoons, an abundant variety of wildlife and extensive beaches and shoreline features.

The area will be developed and managed for two purposes. Recreational facilities will be developed at a moderate level to provide outdoor experiences for hiking, viewing, picnicking, and related activities, while the significant ecological areas will be protected and managed to ensure their existence on a continuing basis. The purchase of this property is seen as bringing significant long-term benefits to the quality of life for residents of this region.