October 30, 2026

Jim Standen, Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Environment and Parks
Cc:
The Honourable Lorne Doerkson, Premier-elect
Benjamin Van der Steen, South Coast Regional Director
Dave Richmond, Thompson Okanagan Regional Director

Re: Public consultation and long-term planning for Mount Seymour, Cypress and Manning Provincial Parks

Dear Mr. Standen,

We are writing on behalf of outdoor recreation, conservation and community organizations to raise serious concerns about the public consultation process for the proposed Ski Resort Development Plans for Mount Seymour, Cypress and Manning Provincial Parks.

We recognize that ski resorts provide important recreation opportunities and contribute to local economies. We also understand the need to plan for changing climate conditions and growing demand for outdoor recreation.

However, these resorts operate within provincial parks. These parks protect important natural areas and provide year-round recreation opportunities for thousands of people, including many who visit independently of the ski resorts. Based on BC Parks' 2024-25 Visitor Use Attendance Report, Mount Seymour, Cypress and Manning alone account for 16% of the millions of annual visitors to BC's provincial parks. Decisions about their future must consider the interests of all park users and the long-term protection of park values.

We do not believe the current consultation process is adequate for decisions that could shape these parks for the next 60 years.

Public engagement has largely consisted of information sessions and online surveys. While surveys and information sessions provide opportunities for feedback, they are not a substitute for meaningful discussion of the proposed changes, their cumulative impacts or the long-term implications for public parkland.

There are important questions that remain unanswered. Will existing trails and backcountry areas remain accessible? How will old-growth forests, wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems be protected? What will the proposed developments mean for parking, traffic and public infrastructure? How will the needs of other park users be balanced with commercial resort operations?

At Mount Seymour, the proposed expansion beyond the existing Controlled Recreation Area raises particular concerns about impacts on natural areas and backcountry access, including areas around De Pencier Bluffs, Goldie Lake and Flower Lake. At Cypress, questions remain about proposed developments, previous approvals and potential impacts on established trails and public access. At Manning Park, the postponement of public meetings raises questions about whether park users and community organizations will have sufficient opportunities to review and discuss the proposals before decisions are made.

More broadly, we are concerned about whether the proposed developments are being considered within an adequate, up-to-date park-wide planning framework. Decisions about major resort developments should be guided by an understanding of each park as a whole, including its conservation values, existing recreational uses and future public needs. These matters cannot be adequately addressed through assessments of individual development projects alone.

There is also a need for greater transparency about park use permits. These permits establish important conditions for commercial operations and public access within resort areas. The public needs to understand how approval of the development plans may relate to permit renewals, possible changes to Controlled Recreation Areas and future access to public parkland. These decisions should not be made without public scrutiny.

We ask the Ministry to take the following steps before approving any of the three development plans or making related long-term permit decisions:

1. **Provide meaningful public consultation**. Hold meetings led by BC Parks where recreation, conservation and community organizations can ask questions, discuss concerns and provide input directly. Ensure that the postponed meetings for Manning Park are rescheduled and that all three consultation processes allow sufficient time for public review and discussion.
2. **Ensure that park-wide planning comes first**. Prepare or update park management plans, where needed, before approving major resort expansions or changes that could affect conservation, recreation and public access. This is particularly important at Mount Seymour, where an updated park management plan is needed. Planning should consider cumulative impacts across the parks, not just individual projects.
3. **Make park use permit decisions transparent**. Publicly explain how the proposed development plans relate to existing permits, possible renewals and changes to Controlled Recreation Areas. Make relevant permit documents and proposed changes available for public review, and provide an opportunity for input before long-term decisions are made. BC Parks should also disclose the expected timing of any permit renewals and clarify whether these decisions could be made at the same time as the development plans are approved.
4. **Provide the information needed to assess the proposals**. Share detailed maps showing proposed developments alongside existing trails, backcountry access routes, sensitive ecosystems and conservation areas. Clearly identify which developments have

already been approved, which remain proposals and what further assessments will be required.

5. **Provide clarity regarding responsibility for sewer, water and parking infrastructure.** The sewer, water and parking infrastructures are significant components in all three SRDPs but responsibility for the infrastructure appears to be inconsistent from permit to permit.
6. **Show how public input will influence decisions**. Publish a summary of the feedback received, respond to the main concerns raised and explain how that feedback has influenced any changes to the plans. This should happen before final decisions are made, not afterward.

Our organizations bring considerable knowledge of these parks, their natural values and the ways people use them throughout the year. We want to contribute to a planning process that protects what makes these places special while allowing for responsible recreation development.

These are public parks, and decisions about their future need to be made in the public interest. Meaningful consultation must take place while there is still an opportunity to influence the outcome.

We ask the Ministry to confirm that decisions on the proposed development plans, changes to Controlled Recreation Areas, and related long-term park use permits will be deferred until the public has been given the information and opportunities needed to participate meaningfully, and the concerns raised through consultation have been addressed.

We would appreciate a written response outlining how the Ministry intends to address these requests, including the next steps and anticipated timelines. We would also welcome a meeting with BC Parks to discuss our concerns.

Sincerely,

Brian Harder, Back Country Horsemen of BC
Harold Sellers, BC Nature
Rick Careless, BC Spaces for Nature
Tori Ball, CPAWS-BC
Mark Haddock, Elders Council for Parks in BC
Robb MacDonald, Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC
Alex Wallace, Friends of Cypress Provincial Park
Ellen Wilcox, Golden Age Hiking Club
John Martin, Nature Vancouver
Steven Jones, North Shore Dawn Patrol
Lesley R. Bohm, North Shore Hikers
Louise Pedersen, Outdoor Recreation Council of BC

Ciel Sander, Trails BC
Elizabeth Chu, UBC Varsity Outdoor Club