

# **Formal Public Support for South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park<sup>1</sup>**

January 2011 – June 2016

## **Government of BC:**

- **Province of BC** Consultation Summary 2016 – confirms support for national park from 4,000 respondents.
- **Province of BC** Intentions Paper, Fall 2015. States that the Province intends to establish a national park and seeks input on boundaries of park.
- **Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services** 2015: Province needs to discuss natl park

## **Regional Government support (formally approved resolutions):**

- **Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)** represents and serves all local governments in B.C.
- **Okanagan Basin Water Board** represents the three Okanagan regional districts governments, Okanagan Nation Alliance, the Water Supply Association of BC, & the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council.
- **Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen** represents Penticton, Summerland, Osoyoos, Oliver, Princeton, Keremeos, Kaleden/Okanagan Falls, Naramata, Okanagan Lake West/West Bench, Keremeos, Hedley, Cawston and rural areas.
- **Regional District of Kootenay Boundary** represents Fruitvale, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Midway, Montrose, Rossland, Trail, Warfield and 5 rural areas.
- **Regional District of the Central Okanagan** represents Kelowna, West Kelowna, Peachland and Lake Country, and two unincorporated electoral areas.
- **Regional District of the North Okanagan** represents Armstrong, Coldstream, Enderby, Lumby, Spallumcheen, Vernon and six electoral areas

**First Nations formal support:** Okanagan Nation Alliance's national park feasibility study received unanimous approval from all leadership & communities. Requested gov't to gov't discussions re nat'l park.

## **Chambers of Commerce & other business (formally approved resolutions):**

- **BC Chamber of Commerce** represents 200 Chambers in BC (resolution from Kelowna Chamber supported by Penticton, Peachland, Summerland and South Okanagan Chambers & West Kelowna Bd of Trade)
- **BC Wine Institute** represents 137 winery members, 21 wine stores, 15 grapegrower partners
- **Kelowna Chamber of Commerce** represents 1,250+ businesses
- **South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce** represents 350+ businesses
- **Oliver Women's Institute**
- **London Drugs** serves 35 major markets and 45 million customers

## **Tourism (formally approved resolutions):**

- **Thompson-Okanagan Tourism Association** represents 90 agencies & 28 First Nation Bands
- **Destination Osoyoos** represents tourism businesses in the Osoyoos region
- **Tourism Penticton** represents tourism businesses in Penticton & Wine Country
- **Oliver Tourism Association** represents tourism businesses in Oliver

**Municipal Govt Support** (formal resolutions): Osoyoos, Vernon, Midway, Greenwood, Grand Forks

## **Environmental Groups (20):**

- BC Nature, BC Spaces for Nature, CPAWS, David Suzuki Foundation, Georgia Strait Alliance, ForestEthics, Greenpeace, Nature BC, Nature Canada, Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, Oliver Osoyoos Naturalists Club, Osoyoos Desert Society, Sierra Club, South Okanagan Naturalists Club, South Okanagan Rehab Centre for Owls, South Okanagan-Similkameen Nat'l Park Network, Twin Lakes Aquifer Group, West Coast Environmental Law, Wildsight, and WWF-Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolutions either support the national park reserve or ask the Province to return to the formal park establishment process

## Stakeholder support of proposed SOS National Park Reserve: 2003–2016

Government speeches, agreements and studies; surveys, polls, petitions

- 2003: **Throne Speech:** Province of BC expresses interest in national park via 2003 Throne Speech
- 2003: **Memorandum of Understanding:** BC & Canada sign national park feasibility study agrmt, define financial/job dev benefits, agree businesses in park area must be accommodated
- 2004: **Parks Canada Open Houses:** large park concept (including Snowy) presented.
  - 900+ attendees and 200+ surveys: Results showed the proposed park was too big.
- 2006: **Parks Canada Open Houses:** Smaller park concept (57% of the initial proposal) is presented:
  - 900+ attendees/250+ surveys: Smaller park concept supported by the public
- 2007: **Parks Canada phone survey:** Random phone survey of 770 people:
  - national park supporters outnumber opposition by approximately 2:1
- 2008: **SOSNSP Petition:** 20,000+ pro-park names (9,000 local) presented to Parliament & BC Legislature
- 2008: **SOSCP's Species at Risk Public Opinion Poll:** Random phone survey of 300 residences:
  - strong support for the land to be protected.
- 2009: **Similkameen Valley Planning Society's public opinion poll** (Similkameen/South Ok):
  - 76% do not oppose, 24% of Similkameen citizens opposed, less opposition in S Okanagan
- 2010: **8-year federal-provincial National Park Feasibility Study Report** concludes national park:
  - is feasible and confirms businesses, e.g. ranchers/grazing & HNZ will continue within the park,
  - confirms that all outstanding issues can be resolved, and
  - recommends that federal-provincial national park negotiations begin immediately
- 2010: **McAllister Opinion Research Public Opinion Poll:** Random poll of 405 residents in RDOS:
  - 63% support the national park, 26% oppose.
- 2011: **233 scientists** write to Province supporting the protection of the area for scientific reasons
- 2011: **TOTA 10-year Regional Plan:** 90 agencies & all FN communities support national park
- 2012: **3-year ONA feasibility study:** Nat'l park is feasible, all FN communities unanimously agree
- 2013: **Village of Keremeos tax payer's survey:** Voluntary response survey: split response
- 2013: **MP Alex Atamanenko & MLA Dan Ashton:** formally request that the Province re-engage in discussions with the Gov't of Canada and ensure that ranchers & HNZ are given long term security.
- 2015 **McAllister Opinion Research Public Opinion Poll:** Random poll of 501 residents found strong majority support and decreased opposition to the national park:
  - 3:1 support in RDOS, 2:1 in Boundary-Similkameen Constituency, 4:1 in Penticton Constituency.
  - Strong majority support from all activities including hunting, ATVing, & farmer/ranchers.
  - 90% believe protection of endangered species is a high priority.
  - 79% believe that MLAs should listen to Chambers of Commerce, regional governments, tourism associations, and First Nations who all support the national park process.