

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: SOUTH OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council support the creation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve.
2. THAT copies of this report be sent to the Federal Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Provincial Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Burnaby MP's and MLA's, and the Wilderness Committee.

REPORT**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Environment and Social Planning Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2019 May 06, received correspondence from the Wilderness Committee seeking support for the creation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

The recommendations in this report are aligned with the guiding principles and vision of the *Burnaby Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS)*. Section 5 of the Plan outlines 19 principles, including the principle of *Collaboration* which states: “*We work together to achieve our shared goals, across City departments, business sectors, public interests, institutional programs, neighbouring municipalities and other levels of government.*” Further, the ESS vision in Section 6 states: “Burnaby is a global leader in protecting and regenerating ecosystems, supporting a healthy and prosperous community.” The ESS includes strategies, as well, that require leadership from other agencies and levels of government, with the City playing a role of advocacy and support.

The recommendations in this report also support the following goals and sub-goals of the City's *Corporate Strategic Plan*:

- A Connected Community
 - Partnership –
Work collaboratively with businesses, educational institutions, associations, other communities and governments
- A Healthy Community
 - Healthy environment –
Enhance our environmental health, resilience and sustainability
- A Dynamic Community
 - Community development –
Manage change by balancing economic development with environmental protection and maintaining a sense of belonging

3.0 SOUTH OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

The Environment and Social Planning Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2019 May 06, received correspondence from the Wilderness Committee (see *Attachment 1*) expressing concern for the decline of wildlife populations in Canada and the growing number of species at risk, and advocating action to protect the species that are not yet at risk and recover ones that are.

The Wilderness Committee advised that the South Okanagan-Similkameen region is home to over 65 federally listed species at risk, and called for support for the creation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve.

Further, the Wilderness Committee noted that the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) support the park reserve and will be co-managing the park along with the governments of BC and Canada. The South Okanagan-Similkameen is the Syilx/Okanagan Nation's traditional territory and this national park reserve is an important step towards reconciliation.¹

At its meeting on 2019 May 06, the Committee **TABLED** the correspondence to the next Committee meeting to allow staff time to research information regarding any support from other BC local governments or the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for the creation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve.

At its meeting on 2019 June 04, the Committee received a memorandum from staff advising that a resolution was brought forward to the UBCM by Osoyoos in 2014. The UBCM membership endorsed the resolution by a majority vote; however, both the Provincial and Federal Governments at that time did not support a national park reserve for the South Okanagan.

¹ The ONA was formed in 1981 as the inaugural First Nations government in the Okanagan which represents the 8 member communities including: Okanagan Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, Westbank First Nation, Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band and Lower and Upper Similkameen Indian Bands and the Colville Confederated Tribes on areas of common concern.

To: His Worship, the Mayor and Councillors
From: Environment & Social Planning Committee
Re: South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve
2019 June 24..... Page 3

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Wilderness Committee advises that almost 60% of wildlife populations in Canada are declining and the number of species at risk in Canada is growing rapidly. The group states that the South Okanagan-Similkameen region is vital to protecting species at risk and notes it is unlike any other region in Canada with its distinct ecosystems hosting unique, rare and endangered plants and animals. Without protection through a national park reserve, the Wilderness Committee observes, there will be more development, increased cattle grazing and vineyard expansion which may ultimately change the landscape beyond repair and mean the loss of the species living there.

Arising from discussion of the correspondence from the Wilderness Committee and staff's response, the Environment and Social Planning Committee recommends Council support the creation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan
Chair

Councillor J. Keithley
Vice Chair

Copied to:	City Manager
	Director Corporate Services
	Director Engineering
	Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
	Director Planning & Building


**WILDERNESS
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In Vancouver: (604) 683-8220
WildernessCommittee.org

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March 14, 2019

Dear Mayor and Council,

Almost 60 per cent of wildlife populations in Canada are declining and the number of species at risk in Canada is growing rapidly. We need action now to protect the species who are not yet at risk and recover ones who are.

The South Okanagan-Similkameen is key to protecting over 65 federally listed species at risk who call this region home. This part of the country is unlike any other part of Canada with its distinct ecosystems hosting unique, rare and endangered plants and animals.

That is why the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve must become a reality. Without protection through a national park reserve there will be more development, increased cattle grazing and vineyard expansion which may ultimately change the landscape beyond repair and the species living there could be lost forever.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance support the park reserve and will be co-managing the park along with the governments of B.C. and Canada. The South Okanagan-Similkameen is the Syilx/Okanagan Nation's traditional territory and this national park reserve is an important step towards reconciliation. We must support the Okanagan Nation Alliance by assisting them in the creation of a national park reserve.

Will you support the creation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve?

Read our latest publication* and contact me at 778-903-3992 or charlotte@wildernesscommittee.org to discuss these issues further.

Thank you for ensuring we're doing all we can, together, to protect species at risk and wilderness across the country.

* Available in Clerks Office

For the wildlife,

Referred to:

Environment and Social Planning Committee (2019.05.06)

Copied to:

City Manager

Dir. Corporate Services

Dir. Engineering

Dir. Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services


Charlotte Dawe | Conservation & Policy Campaigner