

Nigel Douglas

From: Alberta Wilderness Association [Alberta_Wilderness_Association@mail.vresp.com]
Sent: November-03-10 3:56 PM
To: awa.nd@shaw.ca
Subject: Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders - Potatogate



Alberta Wilderness Association

November 3, 2010



Dear Nigel,

Firstly, a great big THANK YOU and CONGRATULATIONS to all of those folks who took the time to write letters and emails about 'Potatogate'! We received more calls, letters and emails on this issue than any other issue in many years. Due in no small part to your efforts, the proposed sale of 16,000 acres of public land has now been cancelled. Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders have a great deal to be proud of: 'people power' really does work!

But though this piece of land has received a temporary reprieve, the system that allows for the sale of irreplaceable public land with no public input is still very much in place. So we are asking you to help strike when the iron is still hot, and help us work towards a new and more accountable system of managing and disposing of our priceless Public Lands.

- Nigel Douglas, AWA Conservation Specialist

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AWA
www.AlbertaWilderness.ca
1-866-313-0713

“Potatogate” Deal is Dead: Now it is Time to Fix the Real Problem

Background

“Potatogate”, the shady Alberta government deal to sell off 16,000 acres of public land – scarce native grassland and endangered species habitat – has finally been shelved, following an unprecedented public outcry. Despite the fact that only 30% of Alberta’s native grassland remains (and less than 1% of the Grassland region is protected), and that the area was known to be habitat for a number of endangered species (including burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, Sprague’s pipit, long-billed curlew, short-horned lizard and prairie rattlesnake), the land was proposed to be sold off, to be ploughed up to grow potatoes.

The public outcry was truly impressive. You are one of more than 700 members of Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders, and your voice really counts! Politicians received literally hundreds of calls and messages on Potatogate. Opposition came from



environmentalists, ranchers, hunters and many other Albertans who were disgusted by the secretive process that allows our land to be sold off with no public input.

The Issue

But while this particular piece of land has received a temporary reprieve, the system which allows for secretive backroom deals to sell off public land, and with no public input, is still very much in place.

Now AWA is calling on the provincial government to listen to the overwhelming demands of Albertans and bring in a new and open system to oversee any future sales of public land.

Proposed changes to the regulations for the Public Land Act are already in the pipeline, but still do not address the fact that a minister can decide to sell off public land, with no requirement to consult or even to inform the public. "Our priceless public lands deserve so much better than this," says Douglas.

Take Action

We do not want to have to keep fighting "Potatogate" battles in the future. Alberta desperately needs to change its Public Land Act and its Regulations to guarantee a public process if our Public Lands are to be sold or traded.

Please consider writing to Premier Stelmach:

The Hon. Ed Stelmach
Premier of Alberta
Room 307, Legislature Building
10800 – 97th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Email: premier@gov.ab.ca

And to opposition parties:

Alberta Liberal Party leader
Dr. David Swann
201 Legislature Annex
9718 - 107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E4
Phone: 780 427-2292
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Email: calgary.mountainview@assembly.ab.ca

Alberta NDP Party leader
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Wild Rose Alliance
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calgary.glenmore@assembly.ab.ca

And don't forget to send us a copy to awa.nd@shaw.ca

Thank you for your continued support!
Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action

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