



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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Family Traditions lose out under proposed Castle Parks!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Edmonton February 16, 2017)...

After 16 months of so-called public consultation by the Government of Alberta with regards to the proposed Castle Parks, the process has proven the Alberta Fish and Game Association's (AFGA) initial suspicions correct. The very first consultation meeting was more of a presentation on what the provincial government was planning for the Parks and the activities and development that were going to be allowed.

At that point AFGA was led to believe that Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) use would be a permitted activity on well designated trails throughout the proposed Castle Parks and that there would be added enforcement to ensure that use remained to those trails. This recognized the significant contributions in both time and money that OHV organizations had invested into improving the trail system and minimizing its impact on the environment.

It wasn't until the January 20, 2017 Castle Parks announcement that AFGA learned of the elimination of all OHV use within the proposed Castle Parks. It confirmed the complete disregard for those Albertan's who have invested significant time and money into the trail systems of this area so that they and their families can enjoy being there. For many Albertan's whose ONLY means of getting into some of these areas to enjoy them is by means of an OHV, they are now being told they can no longer have that level of enjoyment and connection with nature that they had grown to love over theirs and their family's entire lifetimes.

Many families in the area have had multi-generational enjoyment of the Castle area and have long standing family traditions that relate specifically to the Castle region. Furthermore, it also restricts traditional hunting and fishing opportunities for these same Albertans as it eliminates their means of getting into the backcountry to hunt and fish as well as their only means of removing their harvest.

This process has been a disgrace to the system of public consultation and an example of the decision maker's implementation of their own ideals regardless of the public input given. It is also ironic how the "on-side" organizations were made aware of this well before the January 20th announcement in Pincher Creek. Premier Rachel Notley and associates had carefully chosen who was and who was not going to be in attendance for the announcement as they knew exactly how it would go had the opposing organizations been made aware of the announcement beforehand.

AFGA and its members call upon the Alberta Government to reverse this ban on OHV's within the proposed Castle Parks. It is currently a draft proposal that is open for comment and this is an opportunity for the Alberta Government to show that they do in fact listen to and respect the opinions of ALL Albertans.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization proud to serve Albertans in the promotion of the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources and the conservation of their habitats. The AFGA has been active since 1908 in working towards these goals and has a province-wide membership of more than 25,000 individuals spread among 80+ Clubs.

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