



September 12, 2016

Dear Parkland County Mayor, Rod Shaigec and Parkland County Council,

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has pursued a rare opportunity to protect a 640 acre (260 hectare) property in Parkland County. In June 2016, the Bunchberry campaign was closed successfully. NCC will open Bunchberry to the public in the spring of 2017 as a natural retreat for everyone to enjoy.

Bunchberry Meadows will be opened to the public and utilized for general nature enjoyment and for education programs. NCC is striving to develop the best approach to maintain and enhance the conservation value of the property in a manner consistent with the wishes of the landowners while providing for year round public use and enjoyment.

NCC is planning to build out infrastructure to create an ideal environment for the general public to enjoy and to create a space that lends itself naturally to school groups and educational programming as well as recreational use such as hiking, skiing, and bird watching. These elements include a gravel parking lot, washroom facilities, trailhead and interpretive signage, garbage cans, and picnic area.

A selection of the existing trails will be enhanced with signage that will provide navigational information as well as interpretive and education information that will foster appreciation for the site's natural features. Trails not selected for this purpose will be closed and allowed to return to a natural state to provide a refuge for wildlife on the property. At this time NCC is on target to open the site to the public in the spring of 2017.

There is also the possibility Bunchberry Meadow's trails could connect to the proposed Devonian Gardens Trail. This connection would be made through Tucker's Field to connect to the trailhead at Banksiana Road. The portion of the trail system running through Bunchberry would not be paved but this would provide further connection to The Devonian Gardens Trail, Devon Botanic Gardens, and the day use space at Prospector's Point and create another point of interest for the trail system.

NCC would like to partner with Parkland County on washroom facilities with holding tanks, garbage cans, and year round site access (snow removal). NCC is proposing to purchase and install the toilets and garbage receptacles, using the standards set out by the County and that the County will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of them.

NCC currently has an RFP out to gain some of the technical specification related to the parking lot and site design. Once these specs are confirmed there may be opportunities to partner further with the county.





The general public and especially the local community have been supplied with a wealth of information regarding NCC's purchase of Bunchberry Meadows. Starting in the early spring of 2015, word went out via print media, radio, and our own website around the project. NCC also held an open house at the Blackhawk Golf Course in Devon in May 2015 to allow the local community get to know more about this project and the surrounding campaign.

NCC's ownership and the current plan for development and stewardship have been well supported by the community. The few concerns raised by the community have focused on the impact that public access will have on this site. NCC is committed to ensuring that the site will remain in a natural state and that property signage and NCC presence will be utilized to deter visitors from straying from trails, and prevent unauthorized access from off highway vehicles. Other stewardship plans include not allowing dogs or hunting on the property, and any required buildings such as washroom facilities and sheds will remain at the trail head and not be distributed throughout the interior. NCC also plans to engage the local community to assist in being property stewards of Bunchberry Meadows and having more eyes on the ground.

On the advice of our meeting with Parkland County staff (including assessor Ron Van Dam), NCC would also like to request exemption from future property taxes on this section of land under the Community Organization Property Tax Exemption Regulation (COPTER).

NCC is looking forward to working with Parkland County with this and future projects. The Bunchberry Meadows property will be a valuable amenity for Parkland County residents to enjoy in the future and connect with nature. Please find enclosed our amendment application package in support of re-zoning the Bunchberry Meadows project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Demulder", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bob Demulder
Regional Vice President
Nature Conservancy of Canada, Alberta Region

