



Sam Sullivan

DISABILITY FOUNDATION

Thursday, October 2, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to support the proposed respite lodge for individuals with disabilities at Cold Water Ranch in Merritt, BC.

It is our understanding that the lodge will be fully accessible, and connected to accessible trails for wheelchairs. Its users will be people with disabilities, supported by care aids and family members.

Leisure opportunities are important for all individuals, regardless of physical ability. However, our organization has found that being able to take part in outdoor activities, such as those offered by a lodge of this nature, plays a significant role in participants' lives, going beyond being an enjoyable pastime or family gathering. We find that programs and activities that allow people with significant disabilities to be *involved* in an activity rather than be passive observers have many long-term benefits, including improving participants' health and employability.

Everyone involved finds that, over time, they gain confidence and become increasingly more active and involved in community life. People that are newly disabled see, in the words of one participant, that "there is life after becoming a quad." This makes participants happier and healthier.

In addition, we have demonstrated that our organizations, which include hiking, sailing and music under the umbrella of the Sam Sullivan Disability Foundation, set the stage for many participants to consider training, education and work. We regard leisure opportunities as a precursor to the pre-employment services.

It is our sincere belief that the whole community benefits from the availability of leisure opportunities for people with significant disabilities.

Duane Geddes,  
Executive Director