

Since the incorporation of the Regional District, several proposals were received by prospective developers of this property, some of which contained condominiums, golf courses and recreation facilities together with water and sewer systems. One such proposal was presented to the Regional District Parks Advisory Committee in 1995. The Regional Parks Advisory Committee at the time was chaired by Director Ben Lee. The reason that this proposed development was submitted to the Regional Parks Advisory Committee was for the purpose of discussing what area of lakeshore within the development would be dedicated to the Regional District for park purposes. The Administrator, Mr. Harrison, suggested that there might be some possible means by which the Fintry Delta could be purchased under a partnership agreement with the Regional District and the Provincial Government and to turn this property into a Provincial Park. It was felt by the committee that this suggestion had merit and that it could become a jewel in the Provincial Park system in British Columbia. Upon presentation to the Regional Board for consideration, concern was expressed by the Board with regard to the costs of acquiring this property. Mayor Stuart firstly approached City Council with this proposal and strongly supported its acquisition. If not for Mayor Stuart's conviction that this property should be acquired for park purposes, it would likely never have become a Provincial Park as he convinced City Council to agree to the proposal. The City of Kelowna would be responsible for the largest regional share of the costs of purchasing this property and without Council's participation it would not be accomplished. Councils of the District of Lake Country and Peachland could also appreciate the merits of acquiring this property and agreed to participate.

Upon the support of the municipal councils and agreement by the electoral area directors, a letter was forwarded to the Minister Responsible for Parks, the Honourable Moe Sihota in Victoria, proposing that the Regional District and the Provincial Government partner in the acquisition of this property for provincial park purposes. Arrangements were made for the meeting with the Minister and Chair Robert Hobson, Director Ben Lee and Mr. Harrison traveled to Victoria to meet Minister Sihota. After much discussion, Mr. Sihota requested that a full report be submitted by the Regional District setting out details of the property. Chair Hobson and Mr. Harrison gave a commitment to have the report on the Minister's desk the following Tuesday. Though this was a very short time frame, the commitment was met with a full and complete report providing details with respect to site location and description, physical inventory, historical review, existing land use and zoning, the Agricultural Land Reserve, Official Community Plan, the proposed Short's Creek protected area strategy, existing services and previous development proposals together with a number of aerial photographs of the property. Recognition must be given to Hilary Hettinga, Regional Engineer, and Ken Arcuri, Planning Director, and other staff together with UMA Engineering Ltd., engineers and planners with offices in Kelowna, who spent many hours putting this very detailed report together in time to meet the commitment given to Minister Sihota.

Negotiations were then entered into between the Regional District, the Provincial Government and the owner of the property, represented by realtor, Gordon Hirtle. After long discussions and negotiations, the property was purchased for \$7,680,000.00 with the Regional District contributing \$2,000,000.00 of that amount. An official ceremony to

announce purchase of this property for provincial park purposes was subsequently held at the Fintry Delta next to the Manor House with the Friends of Fintry conducting tours of the site. A more formal presentation was held later that day at Okanagan Lake Resort with Chair Robert Hobson hosting the ceremonies. A number of provincial, regional, municipal and First Nation dignitaries were present at the ceremony.

A 1998 Fintry Provincial Park Management Plan was prepared for the Provincial Parks Branch by Hartley and Associates. Since this time, portions of the property have been developed into a provincial park and campground and the Friends of Fintry, together with the Provincial Parks Branch, have contributed money towards restoration of some of the historic buildings on this site. At that time, in order for the region to legally participate in this acquisition and to provide \$2,000,000 towards the purchase, one parcel contained within the overall property was vested in the name of the Regional District. The partnership agreement required that the province have a portion of the delta on the property developed into a provincial campground by the year 2001. The property is now in use for that purpose and the province has contracted to private enterprise to operate it as such. The agreement includes provisions for all of the property to be maintained as a Provincial Park, with costs paid by the Provincial Government.

A number of the heritage buildings on the property have been, or are, in the process of being restored which will add to the beauty and enjoyment of this wonderful property. Short's Creek runs through the property and in the springtime, during runoff, a magnificent view of the waterfall can be seen by climbing the steps that lead to several viewpoints. Adjacent to the parkland there is an area included in the protected area strategy containing some 65,000 acres. This, together with the purchased land, will provide one of the largest and most desirable park properties in the interior of British Columbia.