

# JADEN LANGFORD

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Long Lake Flatwater Training Center Society  
c/o PO Box 946 Stn A  
Nanaimo BC  
V9R 5N2

## **Dear Long Lake Flatwater Training Center Society:**

I am pleased to offer a letter in support of a new building at Loudon Park for rowing and paddling. My involvement with the Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club began in 1993 when my mom signed me up for a summer program through Parks & Rec. Little did I know the impact that would have on my life for the decades that followed. I don't believe I would be the person I am today had these organizations, facilities and programs not existed in the area.

I went on to become an athlete at the Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club attending BC Summer Games in 1995 and 1996, and eventually became the club's head coach in 1998. While away at the University of Victoria I served on Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club's board and was their Commodore from 2002 to 2003. Following this, in 2007 I founded a new organization, Victoria Youth Paddling Club, modeled after the club I knew growing up in Nanaimo.

I support this project wholeheartedly because there is a tremendous need for activities for youth who don't fit into traditional sports. I was an overweight child and failed to find acceptance or success in any other program. Due to the low-impact nature of rowing and paddling sports it's possible for heavier kids to become athletes and improve their self-esteem in the process. These sports are highly accessible for people with various abilities or disabilities.

As outdoor sports, rowing and paddling also promote greater environmental awareness and stewardship among the participants. Since waterways are integral to participate in these sports the construction of a new facility at Long Lake promotes greater enjoyment and care for the aquatic environment. This impression is not only left on athletes, but also on the

thousands of people who participate in introductory programs and summer camps hosted by the rowing and paddling clubs.

The facility being proposed is *much* more than a storage building for canoes, kayaks, and rowing shells. It's a safe and welcoming place that people have been coming to for 35 years. They come to take a lesson or practice, attend summer camp, or hang-out when there's nowhere else to go. There are so many opportunities offered by the host organizations from one-time lessons, to summer programs, year-round training programs, volunteering, and leadership.

A new facility also has a tremendous economic impact. The rowing and paddling organizations provide an income for full-time and seasonal coaches and instructors. They also bring large events to Long Lake generating sport tourism revenue. Having improved facilities will enable higher caliber events to be hosted, and therefore lead to more dollars coming into the local community.

In addition to economic benefit, the rowing and paddling organizations offer many community programs and partnerships. This includes participation in parades, Canada Day festivities, day camp visits, school programs and multi-sport crossover. In other words, the new facility will benefit more than just the above-mentioned organizations. It will enrich the lives of many others in the local community through these ongoing partnerships.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that this project is something that cannot wait. The existing facilities are based on a re-purposed picnic shelter from the 1980s and temporary structures / fencing which are both insecure and unsightly. Please assist in any way you can with the required funding and/or approvals to see this project through for the generations to come!

Sincerely,

**Jaden Langford**