

To whom it may concern,

I wish to express my support for the efforts of the Long Lake Flatwater Training Centre Society to bring a new facility to Loudon Park.

I grew up at Long Lake paddling with the Nanaimo Canoe and Kayak Club (NCKC). My family took an introductory "Splash Clinic" when I was 10, and from there, I was hooked. NCKC helped me develop both as a paddler and as a person and I saw many successes in my years involved with the club. I became national champion, pan-am champion and placed third in the world all while proudly representing NCKC, but the club was also where I had my first job interview, where I discovered my love of working with kids, and where I found a sport for life. I owe so many of my successes to the people I met and mentored under at NCKC and for that I will always be grateful.

The dream of building a new training centre was around long before I became involved with the club, and knowing that they are so close to having it be a reality is very encouraging. I know what a heated facility after a cold winter paddle, a gym that athletes have free access to, and a safe and accessible space will mean to the current and future paddlers, because I know what a boost those resources would have given me.

Given the inclusive and accessible nature of the sport of Canoe/Kayak, the addition of the fully accessible facility will allow NCKC to share the sport with a much larger audience. The idea of a community space in the building is also very appealing. Besides the dedicated athletes out in all weather, Loudon Park sees most of its use in fair weather. A community space would allow the park to be better utilized year round.

Long Lake is one of the places where I have always felt the most at home. I would love for as many people as possible to be able to feel the same way and I think that building a new facility will be a big step in having that become a reality.

Yours in paddling,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leigh Dewar', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Leigh Dewar
NCKC Athlete 1996-2004
NCKC Coach 1999-2004
Paddler for Life