



Dear City Council and Interested Stakeholders,

I have been asked to speak on behalf of the Long Lake Flatwater Training Centre Society and share with you the significant role that the Long Lake facilities plays in the education of our students. As an Outdoor Educator at Wellington Secondary, I would like to share with you the many educational trips, events and lessons that take place at Loudon Park and on the shores of Long Lake.

Wellington Secondary is a 10 min walk from Loudon Park and ideally situated for our students to visit and learn at Long Lake. One of the goals of the Wellington Outdoor Education Programs is to deliver positive, safe, and meaningful outdoor experiences. The program offers classes from grades 9-12 and students participate in a variety of activities at Long Lake. These activities include walks, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, stand-up-paddle boarding, rowing, and shelter building. Our students have been directly affected by the loss of the Voyageur Canoes last November, as our program had used the canoe two weeks prior and was planning to paddle it, the following spring. We are hoping a new training centre would prevent further damages to equipment in the future.

Another core value of the outdoor program is Environmental Stewardship. Wellington Secondary has partnered with the City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture department to officially adopt Loudon Park. With this program our students participate throughout the year to pick up trash along the trails, plant flowers, learn about the freshwater ecosystem and remove invasive species along the lake shore. A new centre, would give Wellington Students another focal point to clean, adopt and work to maintain the surrounding park.

This spring, we embarked on a project called "Paddle for All". With the support of SD 68, Wellington Outdoor Program, Nanaimo Canoe and Kayak Club and Far Out Recreational Society, we organized paddling session for various group of students. We often speak about the mental and physical benefits of time spent in green space we believe there is just as much value spent in "blue" space. Safe and meaningful paddling activities on the water have similar mental and physical benefit as time spent exploring forested areas. Paddle of All project also aims to remove physical, mental, and financial barriers for students and allow all abilities to participate in paddling. Traditionally, the outdoors has not been accessible for all students, so we hope to remove these barriers and create a space that promotes more inclusion and indigenous culture. As an educator, community member, and paddler, I invite all stakeholders to not wait any longer and help the Long Lake Flatwater Training Centre Society to create a space that allows educational programs to access paddling activities quickly and safely. A new centre would include universal facilities that allow users to feel safe and functional for all, regardless of gender, orientation, ability, or culture. To honor reconciliation, a new training centre could reflect indigenous culture and educational programs to honor the rich history of paddling culture in the region.

We remain excited and optimistic that a training Centre can be built to allow students access to paddling activities and promote the values of inclusion, safety, and culture.

Thank you & Hay ch q'u



**WELLINGTON**  
SECONDARY SCHOOL



Sincerely, Mike Dang

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