



**A leading voice for a healthy and environmentally sustainable community.**

Box 383 Lethbridge AB T1J 3E9

January 29, 2017

To: The Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta

Cc: The Honourable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Alberta Environment & Parks  
Ms. Maria Fitzpatrick, MLA  
Mr. Todd Loewen, MLA

From: Braum Barber  
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment

Re: Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park

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The Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE) would like to thank you for establishing the boundaries of the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park through Orders in Council announced on January 20, 2017. Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation that First Nations were consulted and have enthusiastically supported the designation of these parks.

We commend the Government of Alberta for its ongoing commitment to protect the Castle with its unique biological diversity and its importance as a source of water for Lethbridge and other communities in the Oldman River watershed.

We also appreciate the clear language in the Vision and Value statements in the draft *Castle Management Plan*: the commitment to high standards of conservation, the protection of biodiversity including at-risk species, maintaining the integrity of riparian areas and wetlands, and the recognition and respect for the land-use and values of Indigenous peoples. It also prudently recognizes opportunities for growth in tourism and high-quality outdoor recreational uses that will be a social and economic benefit to the region.

SAGE supports the strong position the Government of Alberta has taken on restricting access to off-highway vehicles and better managing how people can enjoy camping and other outdoor experiences. Science-informed indicators of riparian and wetland health, the integrity of critical habitats, and the impact of linear disturbances provide a sound basis for current conservation decisions and future restoration efforts.

Future generations will value the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. To paraphrase a wise adage: "Nobody has ever wished we had fewer natural areas."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Barber", written in a cursive style.

Braum Barber  
Executive Director