

# More space to roam in Okanagan parks

Three provincial parks in the Okanagan are among the 16 in B.C. that are being expanded by the government.

A total of 650 hectares of land is being added to the parks, including Okanagan Mountain Park south of Kelowna (21 ha), Skaha Bluffs Park in Penticton (65 ha), and Cathedral Park south of Keremeos (82 ha).

"Our parks and protected areas are among the natural treasures of our province and play an important role in our overall health and well-being, especially during COVID-19," Environment Minister George Hayman said in a Wednesday release.

"Acquiring additional land means more species and ecosystems will be protected and the land will be here for generations to come," he said.

To expand existing provincial parks, the government either buys land, acquires it through partnerships with conservation groups, gains title through subdivision processes, or simply benefits from the generosity of individual donors.

Total value of the newly acquired land is \$9.7 million. Here are details on the three Okanagan parks to be expanded:

- Skaha Bluffs Park provides a variety of recreational opportunities including hiking, rock climbing, and wildlife viewing, while also protecting habitat for a variety of species at risk, including Big Horn sheep, night snakes, and the Western Screech owl. The expansion was an ecological gift valued at \$1 million.

- Okanagan Mountain Park dominates the east side of Okanagan Lake between Kelowna and Peachland. It has secluded bays, sandy beaches, and six marine campgrounds along 33 km of shoreline. The expansion land was donated through a rezoning process.

- Cathedral Park is located south of Keremeos between the dense, wet forests of the Cascade Mountains and the Okanagan. The expansion land was transferred to the government from Okanagan College for \$1. Okanagan Valley Newspaper Group