

From: Audrey [mailto:astapleton@ns.sympatico.ca]

Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 8:30 PM

To: 'Fleming, Carl'

Subject: Park Chooses Rocks Over Veterans (0.4 hectare from 26 000 hectares of the same rock)

Letter to the Editor of the Cape Breton Post

12:30, February 5th, 2016,

Parks Canada callously delivered a shocking and devastating message which flummoxed, disgusted, and inflamed the anger of the citizens North of Smokey. After 4 years of support from the Canadian Government, the Veterans Memorial was tossed to the curb; a project, the vast majority of citizens from Smokey to Meat Cove had rallied to support. The almost 1700 members of "the People North of Smokey Who AGREE to Having Our Monument at Green Cove" united the community. The naysayers were mainly from away and some not even from Canada. Far from splitting the community; the Mother Canada project gave a united resolve to us.

Once again, the people North of Smokey have been let down by Parks Canada. The expropriation of land at \$6 an acre and the promise of jobs was the first kick. Once again, the politicians and mandarins operating out of Ottawa have disappointed and a wonderful project has been disparaged. Hopes have been dashed.

Despite receiving hundreds of postcards from Veterans' loved ones, 10 petitions with 1115 signatures, a support letter from 60 former Highlands employees still living North of Smokey, and despite Park's own mandate which has been in place since 1985 – Parks chose rocks over Veterans! That letter from 28 former senior managers was admitted to being false by one of its cosigners. Incidentally, what is the relationship between the originator of that letter, Nikita Lopoukhine, and Minister McKenna?

Article 3.2.5 of the Park's Management Plan states: "Parks Canada must ensure that cultural resources and cultural landscapes are recognized, protected, and PRESENTED so that the public can learn about and better appreciate the Park's cultural heritage ". The Armed Forces figure prominently in our culture and our Veterans are forever on our mind. Putting up a little bird house and acquiring a part time interpreter for visiting dignitaries does not present our cultural heritage.

THIS "WAR" IS NOT OVER. Ron Clarke showed us the way. Parks Canada, which appointed an overseer to guide the Foundation, has to be held accountable for their "about face ". The decision makers at Parks, along with Minister McKenna, must provide answers. Specious arguments used to renege on the Government's promise were well planned and orchestrated by Park mandarins well beforehand. The DIA and MEK's report were not mentioned in the Press Release. Why not! Did they raise any legitimate concerns? I think not.

It is disconcerting that the Liberals are co-funding a controversial monument in Minister McKenna's riding while, at the same time, denying the Never Forgotten National Memorial Foundation - raising its own funds – the same opportunity to honour the 114 000 fallen Veterans who never made it "HOME". After endorsement by Veterans Affairs, Environment and 4 years of encouragement from Parks this legacy project was tossed.

Minister McKenna, did you meet with the NFNM Foundation or local MP, Mark Eyking? Have you visited Green Cove? Did the hundreds of postcards from Veterans' loved ones resonate with you? Did the 10 support petitions get read? I sent you a comprehensive information package; was that read? Did you consult with other Ministers about the opportunities this memorial would bring to employment, families, small

business, heritage and veterans? Do you know the unemployment rate (38%), the child poverty rate (35 %), and the obesity/overweight rate (68 %) in this area? What happened to the Prime Minister's collegial decision making? In your Prime Ministerial Mandate Letter, you and Minister Joly were mandated to work together to provide job opportunities in cultural areas within the Parks; what happened? Will you come to Ingonish to explain your decision? And, please, don't have the temerity to tell us it was a Park's decision.

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