**WORD DOC SAMPLE LETTER**

 **(please adjust to suit you and add any personal story or thoughts!)**

**Dear** *[ see list of officials below ]*

I am writing to urge the City of Kelowna, the Regional District of the Central Okanagan, and the Province of British Columbia to work together to increase the amount of water getting into and staying in Woodhaven Nature Conservancy Regional Park in the lower Mission area of Kelowna. This needs to happen as quickly as possible in order to salvage the rare and sensitive ecosystems of Woodhaven and to alleviate some of the fire hazards the park currently presents.

Woodhaven was once a lush riparian forest with flourishing western red cedar and black cottonwood trees. Years ago, two streams (North Fork Creek and Bonaparte Creek) flowed through the park. The park is home to red-list endangered species, such as the interior subspecies of the Western Screech Owl which is heavily dependent upon riparian ecosystems with mature, large-diameter trees for nesting.

Sadly, in the past several decades, human activity has vastly reduced the amount of water entering and staying in Woodhaven. The creeks that previously flowed through the forest have been cut off, and groundwater is continuously drained out and redirected into the city stormwater system.  As a result, whole stands of centuries-old cedar and cottonwood trees have died and continue to die today.

This once cool, damp forest is now tinder-dry and overloaded with deadfall, causing an enormous fire hazard for surrounding neighbourhoods. Past alterations were done because of fear of flooding; now we live in fear of fire.

Without **urgent action**, the loss of this unique and biodiverse jewel will be irreversible and we will continue to have to worry about how easily the park and surrounding neighbourhood could catch fire.   This issue is a high priority for all of us who live near and care about the park. We believe that the government engineers, forest hydrologists and ecologists can come up with solutions to the improve water alteration works in and around the park. Climate change and development have changed the situation over the past few decades. It is past time to revisit the water issue. The problem is multi-jurisdictional but, as seen in other creek projects in the region, these problems can be tackled together.

I urge you to make this issue a high priority.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFO]

**Send letters to these officials (cont’d on next page):**

Loyal Wooldridge, Chair, Board of the Regional District of the Central Okanagan: lwooldridge@kelowna.ca

Parks Services, Regional District of the Central Okanagan, Contact form: <https://www.rdco.com/en/your-government/departments.aspx#Parks-Services>

Tom Dyas, Mayor of Kelowna, tdyas@kelowna.ca

Melissa Tesche, Executive Director Okanagan Basin Water Board, Melissa.Tesche@obwb.ca

Tamara Davidson, Minister of Environment and Parks, Province of British Columbia, ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Ministry of Environment and Parks, Okanagan Regional Office,

**Environmental Stewardship Division
Parks and Protected Areas Division /Water Stewardship Division**
102 Industrial Place
Penticton B.C.
V2A 7C8

Gavin Dew, MLA Kelowna Mission, #102 - 2121 Ethel Street, Kelowna, BC V1Y 2Z6 Gavin.Dew.MLA@leg.bc.ca