

**Speech by Tim Harvie, On Behalf of the Harvie Family
Announcement of the Agreement to Purchase Land from the Harvie Family for a
New Provincial Park
August 23, 2006**

Honorable Mr. Ducharme, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before you lies the heart of the Glenbow Ranch, mostly native grassland, that appears today as it has for centuries.

Our family has been ranching in the Bow River Valley for over 70 years, but the history of the ranch extends well over a century.

- The original CPR mainline carved its way up the valley in the 1880s.
- Our ranch land was part of the historic Cochrane Ranche, the first and largest sheep and cattle ranch established in western Canada.
- It also takes in part of the Bow River Horse Ranch, a subsidiary of the Cochrane Ranche, raising horses for the Boer War and prairie pioneers.
- The core of Glenbow Ranch was established by Chester De La Verne in the early 1900s, operating until the depression.
- Purchased by my grandfather, Eric Harvie, in 1933, expanded over time, passed on to my father, Neil, in the fifties, expanded further until the 1960s, ranched by my sister and me since the 1980s.

We have continued to ranch this valley because we love the life and the ranching business. But we have always known that this day would come. We didn't know exactly when or how it would unfold, but we have had our eye on this outcome for a very long time. However, none of the family alive today can lay claim to what we believe is the wonderful idea of protecting this landscape by creating a park.

That idea was long ago seeded in our minds by my late father, Neil Harvie. I clearly remember asking him sometime back in the 70's, as the early stages of acreage development began to sprawl west of Calgary, what would eventually happen to this ranch. And I clearly remember his answer. He predicted that this valley would someday make one heck of a good park for public enjoyment. He also predicted that the public would someday put

equal or greater value on open space and environmental protection than they would on housing development, especially in the vicinity of urban centers. That was some 30 years ago and his prediction could not have been more accurate.

We have a strong motivation to create this lasting legacy:

- We want to showcase Alberta's rich ranching heritage, along with its diverse and rolling native grasslands.
- We believe the ranch tells an interesting story of the early days of Calgary's, and Alberta's, development.
- We envisage a multi-use connecting trail from Calgary to Cochrane, tying into trail systems that already exist in both these communities.
- This will hopefully include foot bridges crossing the Bow River, allowing access to the Park from both sides, and showcasing the ecological diversity that exists on both its north and south facing slopes.

There are many historic points of interest in the valley:

- The centerpiece would be the Glenbow quarry, which operated before the First World War, and provided sandstone that adorns many buildings in Calgary, as well as the Alberta Legislature Building.
- There is the abandoned town site of Glenbow that housed the workers for the quarry.
- There still stands the Glenbow store that was the hub of that small but bustling community and beside it the brickyard that tried to compete with the once famous brick yards of Cochrane.
- There are 2 other smaller sandstone quarries on the hill sides where rock was mined to build 2 mansions commissioned by wealthy easterners for summer retreats.

The Park will also provide for ecological protection of:

- Aquatic life and fish habitat
- Wetlands
- Numerous species of wildlife and vegetation
- Calgary's water supply and that of all down stream water users by preventing encroachment on 14 kms of shoreline between Calgary and Cochrane.

I want people to understand that the creation of this park is being done on an entirely voluntary basis by our family. We could continue to ranch here, probably for several more years. Development can not encroach on us any further as houses are already over our fences in every direction. Public pressures are not yet onerous and agricultural property taxes are still manageable. The ranching business has been good to us and we will continue to ranch on our other lands. We have a new generation coming along but with no certainty that any of them will pursue a career in agriculture. But even if any one of them wanted to, we decided long ago that they should start somewhere else, away from the inevitable urban pressures. The time to create this park seems right and feels right and that is why we are here today.

We have never had to convince anyone that this valley should be protected as a park. I have said many times, “nothing sells the park like the park itself”. Anyone who has shared this magnificent view from this hilltop and ventured the length of the valley to witness the fragile biodiversity, the sharp coulees, the sandstone outcroppings, the fresh water springs, and the wildlife that inhabits this land, has seen the value in ensuring this natural beauty remains in tact.

I live straight across the valley and I have one of the best views of these gorgeous grass slopes right out my front window. Believe me, there has been many evenings, as the sun sets to the west and the hills cast their long shadows across the ravines, that I second guess what we are doing in parting with property that has always been part of my life and been my home. But I remind myself that we only inhabit this earth for a short time and we want this valley to remain as is for all time and future generations to enjoy. While parting ownership with this land is difficult for our family, knowing that it could one day be lost to the bull dozers if not protected is far more unsettling. Therefore, creating a provincial park that all Albertans, present and future will grow to love and cherish and protect gives us great comfort.

In closing, I would like to thank the Alberta government for adopting our dream and realizing the tremendous legacy that is being created here. In particular, I would like to thank Ministers Gary Mar and Denis Ducharme for their vision and forward thinking in helping us achieve this goal. Every project needs a champion to guide it through to a successful conclusion. Mr. Mar got the ball rolling within his department last fall and Mr. Ducharme

got it across the goal line since taking over this spring and we are very grateful for their efforts.

Lastly, I would like to thank our team of family advisors, Andy Crooks, Cam Crawford, Crosbie Cotton, and Urban Systems without whose help we could never have reached our goal. Their advice, wisdom, and friendship has been part of a wonderful ride.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our family is proud to present the future home of the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park.