



Entrance sign of now defunct Talisman Resort, Grey Highlands.

PHOTO: ROGER KLEIN

Sale of Talisman Lands

Dear Editor,
Many in our community have fond memories of skiing and gathering at the old Talisman Resort in the heart of the Beaver Valley. While the ski hill is gone for good, the site still boasts world-renowned, environmentally significant features, including the Niagara Escarpment, an UNESCO-designed biosphere reserve, and the Bruce Trail, Canada's longest marked footpath, as well as the Beaver River and the complex water system that feeds it.

We now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ensure that this spectacular site can be enjoyed by generations to come. But only if we stop the Municipality of Grey Highlands' misguided conditional sale of 133.8 acres of public land. The ski hill at Talisman closed 10 years ago. Two years ago, Talisman owners defaulted on water and tax bills, and ownership of 133.8 acres, about half the site, shifted to the Municipality of Grey Highlands (MGH). In March 2021, the municipality and the owner of the remaining privately-owned lands (which include the buildings and the ski hill) entered into a joint venture agreement to market both properties together in order to "maximize profits" and development.

At this point the community mobilized, arguing for an alternative vision of the public lands, one that would enhance environmental protection and public access. The Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy made an offer for the public lands to accomplish this, but in July, behind closed doors, the

municipality decided to sell the public land to private interests for development. Council went ahead with the conditional sale without even waiting to hear the results of a consultation study it had commissioned to obtain the citizens' views for the future of the Beaver Valley. This report endorsed enhancing those features of the Valley that make it a great place to work, live, and visit — the rural character and natural features of the land, the wildlife, amazing outdoor activities, and diverse local businesses.

The community has written letters and emails, appeared in front of council, submitted a Freedom of Information Act request, and organized petitions to stop the sale of public land at Talisman. Now, the Protecting Talisman Lands Association has filed an application to the Ontario Superior Court to stop the sale. The application alleges that the Municipality has failed to comply with certain provisions of the Municipal Act and its own policy concerning the sale of surplus lands.

It is not too late to help create a truly visionary plan that will benefit all and leave a legacy for future generations. We welcome your support and interest. To learn more, go to protecttalisman.ca. Donate by email transfer (email below) or by going to our gofundme site: <https://gofund.me/21b749f0>. All contributions will go towards our legal and public engagement campaign.

Sincerely,
Kate Lazier for Protecting Talisman Lands Association
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Fri 11/12/22

ON
THE
BAY

Winter
2022