

Cannings secures nomination for NDP

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A familiar face will represent the NDP in the new South Okanagan-West Kootenay riding in the next federal election.

Dick Cannings of Penticton was chosen by party members in a vote announced Saturday in Grand Forks. He outpolled



Cannings

Margaret Maximenko of Christina Lake, the only other candidate in the running.

Cannings, a well-known naturalist and author, represent-

ed the NDP in the Penticton riding during last year's provincial election. He finished second to BC Liberal Dan Ashton by 1,400 votes.

Cannings said Sunday he views his experience in the provincial election as a tremendous learning experience. He pointed to voter dissatisfaction with Stephen Harper's Conservatives as a key issue in the federal campaign in 2015.

"The entire attitude of the Harper government since they became a majority government three years ago - they've really acted very callously and with no regard to democracy," he said.

In addition to the Senate scandal, Cannings said the environment has been taking a beating.

"I think people are embarrassed by Canada's response to climate change," he said.

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"They're just gutting environmental protection laws to encourage pipelines, to encourage oil sands development. A lot of people are thinking this is just going in the wrong direction."

Cannings said Canada needs to be more careful about how we extract our natural resources and not so hurried and profit-driven.

South Okanagan-West Kootenay was formed under federal electoral redistribution. Much of it includes the current B.C. Southern Interior riding held by New Democrat MP Alex Atamanenko who opted not to seek a fourth term in office.

Although the new riding now includes Penticton,

which has traditionally voted Conservative, Cannings said the NDP have a very good chance to hang onto the seat.

"I think we'll have to work hard. We did very well here in the provincial election and that's one reason why I put my name forward for the federal riding," he said. "I think my experience here and that profile will be a great help to the NDP in winning this riding."

Federal NDP leader Tom Mulcair lauded Cannings' commitment to community and the environment, while succeeding Atamanenko as the New Democrat candidate.

"Alex is leaving some big shoes to fill, but there's no question the people in this riding will be extremely well served by Dick Cannings," Mulcair stated in a news release.