



Valhalla Wilderness Society

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CALL FOR ACTION

Dear Valhalla Wilderness Society members,

We hope that 2016 has gotten off to a good start for you and your family. Thank you for your kind comments about Valhalla Wilderness Society's (VWS) newsletter and your very generous donations. Without your support and encouragement, we would not be able to continue the good fight for our environment and wildlife.

Speaking of wildlife, I am sure you are as appalled as we are that BC's Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) is proposing to triple the number of limited entry hunt (LEH) permits for resident hunters to kill grizzly bears in MU 7-52, a remote area in the Peace. The MFLNRO is also proposing to lift the limitations on the number of wolves that hunters can kill in the Kootenays, the Peace, Thompson-Nicola and Omineca, to allow hunters to kill wolves year round, including when pups are in the den, and for trappers to trap wolves on private land.

The government is seeking public input on these proposed increases with an initial deadline of December 31, 2015. VWS dashed a letter over the holidays and submitted comments to the government website. Due to technical difficulties with its website, the government has extended until January 31 2016.

This provides you with the opportunity to overwhelm the government with your opposition to these proposed trophy hunting and trapping increases. Please take the time to submit your opposition through the government website, which is the most effective way to stop these proposed hunting and trapping increases from being implemented. Illogically, the government is also seeking public input on amending snow mobile closures in the South Selkirks and South Purcells under these hunting and trapping regulations. VWS respectfully asks you to support these closures. The process for submitting your comments is explained below followed by the reasons why VWS opposes these proposed increases. For more detailed information about these reasons, please refer to the attached letter VWS sent to the government on December 31, 2015.

HOW TO VOICE YOUR OPPOSITION TO THESE PROPOSED HUNTING & TRAPPING INCREASES

British Columbians need to voice their opposition loud and clear to send a strong message that these proposed hunting and trapping increases are scientifically, morally and ethically unacceptable.

1. Go to the government website <http://apps.nrs.gov.bc.ca/pub/ahte>
2. Click on the green hunting and trapping icon at the bottom right of the link's page and register or log in. To register, you will need to create a username. You will be sent an email with a temporary password, allowing you to log-in and select a new password before you can comment. Check your spam folder in case the email was sent to this folder.
3. If you have any difficulty logging in or registering, please contact FishandWildlife@gov.bc.ca to tell them that technical difficulties still persist.
4. Once you have registered or logged in, go back to the previous page, look for grizzly bears and wolves in the species column and click on the link to the left of these species (grizzly bears: page 1; wolves Peace: page 2; wolves Omineca and Kootenays: page 3; and wolf hunting and trapping Thompson-Nicola: page 4). Please click on "oppose" to show you do not support trophy hunting or trapping.
5. VWS encourages you to also submit your comments and have prepared the following points to help you.

Proposed tripling of LEH grizzly permits in MU 7-52 for resident hunters (page 1)

- The rationale provided for this proposed increase lacks any solid scientific basis given that the BC government does not have accurate population numbers of grizzly bears. Notwithstanding its claim of precisely 459 bears in MU 7-52 based on population modeling, BC grizzly bear population estimates are notoriously inaccurate and include subjective assumptions and wide margins of scientific error that are not reflected in the misleading claim of 459 bears.
- Given uncertainty about population numbers and unreported grizzly bear kills, the peer-reviewed Artelle *et al.* study (2013) underscores that hunting targets should be reduced by 47% to 81% on average to compensate for the afore-mentioned uncertainties and to prevent excess mortality. Proposing to increase LEH permits is contrary to sound science-based wildlife management and reflects the government's pandering to the vocal hunting lobby instead of making conservation of grizzly bear populations a higher priority.
- The proposed tripling ignores the fact that 91 percent of rural and urban British Columbians strongly oppose trophy hunting according to a September 2015 Insights West poll.

Proposed increases to hunting and trapping of wolves (see pages 2; 3; and 4)

- The rationales provided for the proposed hunting and trapping increases in the Kootenays, the Peace, Thompson-Nicola and Omineca lack any scientific basis given that the BC government does not have accurate population estimates of the number of wolves in BC. Making policy decisions based on highly speculative and anecdotal observations about wolf population numbers is unacceptable, especially when the some of the numbers used by government biologists have been provided by vested interest groups, including hunters and trappers.
- Hunting and trapping wolves year round is cruel and inhumane, as killing mothers while their pups are in dens can result in the pups starving to death. Hunting during denning season was even opposed by the BC Trappers Association as being inhumane.

- Killing wolves with traps and snares is grossly inhumane. Wolves can suffer in agony for days before the traps are checked.
- The BC government needs to stop scape-goating wolves: there is widespread scientific consensus, including among government biologists, that the main causes of mountain caribou declines are loss and fragmentation of habitat by industry and displacement from critical winter feeding grounds by motorized recreation, particularly snowmobiling and commercial heli-skiing. Studies have shown that wolf control programs sanctioned by government biologists in BC and in Alberta has not resulted in increased caribou populations. These programs waste tax payers' money that should be directed to establishing parks and restoring mountain caribou habitat.

Proposed amendments to snowmobile closures in mountain caribou habitat (page 2)

Please express your support for the proposed amendments to snowmobile closures in mountain caribou habitat the South Selkirks and South Purcells. In the comments, it is important to demand that the BC government close off all critical mountain caribou winter habitat to motorized winter recreation given that it has been proven that disturbances by snowmobiles, helicopters and snow cats can displace and stress mountain caribou at a time when they most need to conserve energy and reduce their survival rate.

Please share this info with concerned family and friends!

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- **For VWS supporters who live in BC:** Email your submission to elected officials, copying VWS. To find your MLA's contact details, please go to <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members>). Ask her or him where they stand on these proposed issues.
- **For VWS supporters who do not live in BC:** Please send an email stating your opposition to the Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, Steve Thomson, and the assistant deputy minister, Tim Sheldan. As a non-resident, take a moment to explain why you were moved to respond to this issue. They can be emailed at: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca, Tim.Sheldan@gov.bc.ca.
- **Still with us?** We very much appreciate your support for our conservation efforts on behalf of wolves and grizzly bears. **Please call the Minister and/or Deputy Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations.** It is unlikely you will get to talk to them but please leave a message explaining why you oppose these proposed increases. You can reach **Minister Steve Thomson** at 250 387 6240 or email. FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca. **Mr. Tim Sheldan is the** Deputy Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and he can be reached at 250 952 6500 or Tim.Sheldan@gov.bc.ca.

**Thank you so much for taking action and contributing to
the well-being of our grizzly bear
and wolf populations**