

Valhalla Wilderness Society

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WOLF SLAUGHTER FROM HELICOPTERS COULD BEGIN SOON IN BC'S INTERIOR WETBELT LETTERS URGENTLY NEEDED

Sources wishing to remain anonymous have told the Valhalla Wilderness Society (VWS) that the provincial government will make a decision very soon on whether to begin slaughtering wolves from helicopters. The use of helicopters is an escalation of the widespread slaughter of wolves and cougars that has been happening over the last three years under the excuse of saving mountain caribou. Prey species that attract wolves are also being targeted for increased killing, especially moose. Hunters are allowed to kill cows and calves. Cougars are being eliminated in some areas.

Progress Board Stacked with Vested Interests Operates in Secrecy Public and Dissenting Environmental Groups Locked Out

In 2008 ten environmental groups signed confidentiality agreements to collaborate in the creation of a mountain caribou recovery plan that placed heavy reliance on the killing of BC's large carnivores. In return for endorsing the government's plan, they were appointed to a "Progress Board" heavily stacked with interests that want to use mountain caribou habitat for profit or pleasure: logging interests, snowmobile clubs and heli-ski businesses. Despite claims that the Progress Board would keep the public informed, it's website on the Internet can no longer be found. The minutes of the monthly meetings are kept secret, as the board collaborates with government to lock the public and all dissenting organizations out of management issues related to this endangered species and its predators.

Mountain Caribou coalition poised to make big decision

Environmental organizations remaining on the Progress Board include: ForestEthics (U.S.-based), Wildsight, Conservation Northwest (U.S.-based), CPAWS, B.C. Sierra Club and the BC Nature Federation. These organizations now have a big decision to make. Government has been using these groups' endorsements to kill wolves and cougars for three years. The groups take public donations and they have a duty to inform the public of their position. Their representatives also have a duty to inform their boards about these issues. How can they collaborate behind closed doors on a program that has been slaughtering wolves and cougars and now proposes, for greater efficiency, to use helicopters?

Snowmobilers and heli-skiers play while wolves, cougars and moose die

Wolves have limited access to mountain caribou in winter, unless snowmobiles pack down snow. Snowmobiles drive mountain caribou from preferred winter feeding grounds and leave behind tracks for wolves. There are not enough snowmobile closures, and the closed areas are not big enough. In the Revelstoke area, the South Columbia mountain caribou herd has plummeted from *105 in 1994, to 29 in 2002, to just 13 animals in 2009!* Yet there have been only minimal snowmobile closures in the areas used by that herd. Instead wolves and cougars are being wiped

out, despite the fact that previous scientific studies had shown very little wolf predation on mountain caribou around Revelstoke.

Don't believe government claims that it is killing only selected predators in the immediate vicinity of mountain caribou. The government has been misleading the public with that claim for several years now. The leghold traps and open bag limits that are currently being used are not selective methods, and they are being implemented over a very large area.

Save the caribou, destroy its ecosystem

“Government scientists admit that excessive logging has brought the moose and increased wolves,” says Anne Sherrod, Chair of VWS. “Yet the mountain caribou recovery plan decreed that over 99% of the Timber Harvesting Land Base would remain open for logging. Mining, which logs huge swathes of forest for roads, hasn't been curtailed at all. Thus the government is causing the problem it claims it wants to solve by shooting wolves.

Scientific studies show that killing top predators eliminates other species and can do a great deal of damage to ecosystems. One well-known example of this is the failure of the Caledonia pine forests in Scotland to recover from deforestation. One of the problems was that wolves were wiped out, which caused the red deer population to explode far beyond what hunters could kill. The red deer have eaten all the young trees for many years. The very few groves of magnificent centuries-old trees are dying out, along with species such as lichens that they harbour. The only replacements have been planted by Findhorn volunteers in recent years and nurtured behind fences to keep the deer out. Saving a species by wrecking its ecosystem doesn't make sense and will not work in the end.

The Hidden Agenda Behind Persecuting Wolves

Ecologically ignorant politicians have been trying to wipe out wolves for years. In the 1980s wolves were slaughtered by helicopter killing sprees and baits poisoned with compound 1080, which caused the horrific deaths of any carnivores that ate the broadcast baits. *That program was approved by government biologists*, one of whom went to the press with the message: “When in doubt, wipe them out.” (*Harrowsmith*, July/Aug. 1984)

The public fought tooth and nail to save its wolves, and it won. Environmental groups went to court to save wolves, people held protests, activists handcuffed themselves to the desk of BC's tourism office in Los Angeles, and people wrote many hundreds of letters. This worked. It pressed back most of the wolf killing for almost 10 years. But now the government is trying to sneak it through by limiting public input to only the groups on the Progress Board. These groups — CPAWS, the BC Nature Federation, ForestEthics, Wildsight and others — are literally partners of government in this mountain caribou recovery plan and have signed confidentiality agreements.

URGENT! PLEASE WRITE LETTERS NOW!

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