



October 5, 2023

Honourable Bruce Ralston
Ministry of Forests
Government of British Columbia
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**OPEN LETTER BY COALITION CALLS ON BC
GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT BC GRIZZLY BEARS**

Dear Minister,

We, the undersigned environment and wildlife protection organizations, conservationists and wildlife-based businesses, in response to the recent British Columbia survey asking for feedback to the draft Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework, provide the following eleven points that outline the importance of continued protection of the grizzly bear from innumerable impacts that threaten their existence and resilience, notably habitat destruction and hunting.

While this is about all wildlife, the most immediate concern is regarding species at risk, particularly the grizzly bear.

In this time of unprecedented challenges, uncertainty, and unpredictability, we urgently require a shift from managing wildlife for consumptive use by humans to managing for the survival of species, using the precautionary principle, as described in the following points.

1. That B.C.'s wildlife belongs to ALL British Columbians, a great majority of whom value experiencing wild species alive, as sentient beings, as key links to ecosystem integrity, and as an integral part of our natural heritage.
2. In this time of severe biodiversity loss and climate change disasters, B.C. has 2,000 species at risk. As well, scientists have said that these two crises endanger human life, and they are becoming worse each year.
3. In view of this situation, the B.C. government has a responsibility to shift its wildlife management away from prioritizing consumptive uses of wildlife (hunting, trapping, and killing predators to benefit hunters), towards serving the full public interest by the application of conservation biology, and by respecting the humanitarian and moral values of British Columbians.
4. For instance, the increasing cruel slaughter of B.C.'s wild carnivores ignores the proven science of the ecological roles of predators. A recent poll by Research Co., sponsored by Pacific Wild, has shown that 84% of British Columbians across BC disapprove of the sport/trophy hunting of grizzly bears. Popular opinion and moral values of the public are thus consistent with the principles of conservation biology and the scientific assessment of grizzly bears as a species at risk.
5. In order to mitigate the massive loss of biodiversity, the B.C. government must also shift from profit-first exploitation of wildlife habitat to the protection of our last remaining intact

natural areas. This correlates to the provincial and federal commitment to protect 30% of the land and sea by 2030.

6. Unfortunately, the Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework minimizes the threats posed by climate change and continued severe fragmentation of B.C. land and forests. The shift that's needed must prioritize counteracting climate change that endangers us all. The preservation of B.C.'s remaining old-growth forest will be of crucial benefit by continuing the absorption and storage of carbon from the atmosphere.
7. The undersigned strongly object to the fact that the B.C. government has turned a blind eye to species at risk and evaded the federal *Species at Risk* Act in a number of ways, including with regard to the spotted owl, mountain caribou, grizzly bears and salmon.
8. Claims of the application of science to the hunting regulations of grizzly bears have been narrowly focused on the goal of setting ample hunting quotas. This process has been found by B.C.'s Auditor General and many independent biologists to be unreliable. In addition, it has bypassed rigorous cumulative effects and threat analysis, and it has been carried out without regard to the health of ecosystems.
9. Additionally, the Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework envisions the creation of local, regional, and territorial wildlife advisory committees to create grizzly bear management plans. The intent of this program, to fragment grizzly bear planning among local and regional committees composed largely of hunting, trapping, industrial and political interests. is inconceivably irresponsible.
10. The management of all our species at risk requires an independent, expert wildlife stewardship team that is dedicated to conservation of species across the province on behalf of all British Columbians.
11. In addition, the undersigned assert that the killing of grizzly bears for sport is equally as inhumane and repugnant today as it was in 2017 when 78% of the respondents in a planning process said "no" to grizzly bear hunting. Closing the hunt was one of the best wildlife decisions the B.C. government has made, and reopening it to licenced hunters would be one of its worst, and one that will be as hugely offensive to the general public, as to the undersigned organizations and individuals.

Sincerely,

Animal Alliance of Canada
 Animal Justice (*signed Oct 19, 2023*)
 Animal Protection Party of Canada
 Arrowsmith Naturalists
 Bears Matter
 Bear With Us/Education and Outreach
 Cochrane Ecological Institute
 Conservation North
 Cougar Coexistence Initiative
 Coyote Watch Canada
 Friends of Ecological Reserves
 Great Bear Chalet, Ltd.
 Mt. Willet Wilderness Forever
 North Shore Black Bear Society
 Ocean Light Adventures

Okanagan-Similkameen Park Society
 Pacific Wild
 Save the Cedar League (*signed Oct 19, 2023*)
 Spectacled Bear Conservation Soc.
 Ursa Project Society
 Vancouver Humane Society
 Valhalla Wilderness Society
 Wildlife Preservation Canada
 Wilderness Committee
 Wildsight Revelstoke
 Wild Wise Society
 Wolf Awareness

Individuals:

Amber Peters, Wildlife Biologist
 Amelia Porter, MSc, EP, RPBio, Ecologist (*signed Oct 19, 2023*)
 Baden Cross, Applied Conservation GIS
 Brody Wilson, The Flow Wilderness Retreat
 Cas Sowa, Stikine Wild Images
 Cheryl Alexander, Founder Takaya Legacy & Wildlife Images
 Cindy Lewis, Cranberry Coho Photography
 Colin Griffinson, Pacific Yellowfin Charters
 Daniel Billy, Elder We Wai Kai, First Nation
 Ellie Lamb, Bear Viewing Guide & Educator
 Eric Boyum, owner/operator Ocean Adventures Charter Co.
 Faisal Moola, Assoc. Prof. of Geog, Enviro and Geomatics, Univ of Guelph
 Garry Henkel, Aboriginal Journeys Wildlife Adventures Tours
 Gosia Bryja, Ph.D., Conservation Scientist
 Holly Arntzen and Kevin Wright, Artist Response Team
 Judy Malone, Founder Tourists Against Trophy Hunting
 Ian McAllister, Filmmaker & Author, Co-founder of Pacific Wild Alliance, BC
 Kelly Carson, Legislate Kindness
 Marianne Abraham, Backcountry Chef
 Mike Handley, Wild Eyes Photography
 Paul Paquet, Ph.D., Biologist, BC
 Rebeka Breder, Animal Law Lawyer
 Reno Sommerhelder, Bear Specialist
 Rolf Hicker, Owner Vancouver Island Photo Tours,
 Sadie Parr, Wolf Researcher
 Steve Williamson, Owner Steve Williamson Wildlife Photography
 Sylvia Dolson, Fmr. Dir Get Bear Smart Society, Founder BC Bear Alliance
 Trevor Goward, Inland Rainforest Research
 Trish Boyum, Trish Boyum Nature Photography
 Vicky Husband, Order of Canada, Order of BC
 Wayne McCrory, Bear Biologist, R.P.Bio

Additional Signatories Post October 5:

CC:

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Hon. Lana Popham, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
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Hon. George Heyman, Environment Minister and Climate Change of B.C.
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Hon. Minister Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
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