



HABITAT LOSS HAS ENDANGERED ALBERTA'S GRIZZLIES. 500 REMAIN.  
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ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION  
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## ...AND NOW IT'S UP TO US!

*By Nigel Douglas, AWA Conservation Specialist*

If there is one lesson that we can learn from the long drawn-out saga of Alberta's spring grizzly bear hunt, it is that if Albertans care enough, we can change things.

Although provincial scientists had been clear since 2002 that grizzly numbers were low (an estimated 1,000 bears at the time) and that the grizzly should be listed as "threatened," still the government continued with the hunt: the following year, 18 bears were killed.

When the government's own multi-stakeholder Grizzly Recovery Team again recommended in 2004 that the hunt be suspended (by which time population estimates had been revised to "less than 700" bears), the government still refused to act. Ten more grizzlies were killed in the hunt the following spring.

Ultimately, the hunt was suspended in 2006, not because of the science (which had been clear for several years) but because so many "severely normal" Albertans made it abundantly clear that they were

embarrassed by a government that would continue to authorize the hunt of what was in all but name an endangered species. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, you can rely on the Alberta government to do the right thing when it has exhausted all other options!

The one thing that the grizzly hunting lobby and the environmentalists agreed on was that the hunt was not the cause of the grizzly's woes, and suspending the hunt was not going to be the magic wand to solve all of the problems. Now the focus has switched to the desperate need to protect grizzly bear habitat.

With population estimates now at less than 500 grizzlies in Alberta, it is clear that the only way that Alberta will keep its grizzly bears is if the government changes the way it is managing grizzly bear habitat. Grizzlies need secure habitat, safe from the pervading motorized access that is typical of so much of Alberta.

The government has known this for some time, and now it is time for Albertans to step in. Grizzlies urgently

need the help of those Albertans who spoke out against the grizzly hunt. Only if we speak out loudly and clearly will the government make the changes that it knows are necessary if this Alberta icon is to remain in the province.

Please consider writing to your own MLA, as well as the following:

Honourable Ted Morton  
Minister, Sustainable Resource  
Development  
420 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6  
Phone: (780) 415-4815  
Email: [foothills.rockyview@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:foothills.rockyview@assembly.ab.ca)

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