



Alberta Wilderness Association  
"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

August 21, 2024

Hon. Todd Loewen  
Minister of Forestry and Parks  
Government of Alberta  
By e-mail: FP.Minister@gov.ab.ca, [Todd.Loewen@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Todd.Loewen@gov.ab.ca)

Dear Minister Loewen,

Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is writing to oppose the recent changes to the Wildlife Act that enable a "network of wildlife management responders" to kill grizzly bears, a threatened species in Alberta. As you know, AWA has been a steward of Alberta's wild lands and wildlife since 1965. With over 7,500 members and supporters, we seek a network of representative protected areas throughout Alberta and responsible science-based management of Alberta's public lands, waters, and biodiversity.

AWA requests that you immediately reverse these policy changes, and that you provide the following information:

- 1. Provide the scientific report to back up the claim in the July 9, 2024 Government of Alberta news release that there are more than 1,150 grizzly bears in Alberta.**

The most recent available grizzly bear population estimates from Alberta Environment and Protected Areas indicate that there are between 856 and 973 grizzly bears in the province. If there have been additional scientific assessments of grizzly bear population size in Alberta, these reports must be made public to ensure accountability and transparency in government decision-making. Additionally, grizzly bears are listed as threatened in Alberta in part because their population is below 1,000 mature individuals. Respected grizzly bear biologist Gord Stenhouse estimated that in order to have 1,000 mature individuals in the province, the total grizzly bear population would need to be around 2,222.

- 2. Make public the data on human-grizzly bear conflicts and human-caused grizzly bear mortality.**

The most recent available data from the Government of Alberta indicate that 34 grizzly bears were euthanized in Alberta between 2010 to 2019. Your public statement that 20 grizzly bears per year are euthanized contradicts this data. A few euthanizations per year does not put a large burden on the trained and qualified wildlife and conservation officers who are paid to handle these dangerous situations. I implore you to release the most recent data on grizzly bear conflicts and mortalities including euthanizations. Allowing hunters to do the job of wildlife and conservation officers will not help protect lives and property, but will likely put those hunters and the public in danger.

**3. Explain why you did not provide an opportunity for grizzly bear experts and the general public to weigh in on these policy changes.**

You have promised that these policy changes will not increase the number of grizzly bears that are killed, contradicting the claim that this method of management is necessary. Therefore, it is clear that the “network of wildlife management responders” is a thinly-veiled scheme to provide trophy hunting opportunities of a threatened and beloved Alberta species, rather than a decision that was made to protect lives and property. Albertans are justifiably horrified and offended by this, and will continue to speak out until these changes are reversed. We are also very disappointed that Alberta’s best experts in human-grizzly bear conflict were not consulted, as they are opposed to these policy changes. You are elected by Albertans and tasked with representing Albertans’ best interests. It is your responsibility to retract these changes until you’ve provided a clear and open public engagement process and consulted openly with experts.

**4. Explain why the recommendations outlined in the Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan are not being implemented.**

The Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (AGBRP) was developed via engagement with public stakeholders, grizzly bear experts, and consultation with Indigenous peoples. This plan is meant to be the guiding document for grizzly bear recovery and management of human-grizzly bear conflict. You must adopt the non-lethal recommendations outlined in the AGBRP, such as hiring regional human-wildlife conflict specialists. In combination with management of attractants, many non-lethal tools are supported by scientific evidence to be effective in reducing conflict between people and bears.

AWA recognizes that there are cases where euthanization of bears is necessary. This must be a last resort and should be avoided by taking all possible measures to prevent conflicts from occurring in the first place. Each landowner in Alberta who faces challenges associated with living and working in bear country deserves to have a face-to-face conversation with a human-wildlife conflict specialist to discuss solutions that will work on their land to prevent grizzly bear conflicts from happening. There is no circumstance that justifies members of the public taking on the tragic role of killing a bear that has become habituated to humans or human food, and then keeping the carcass as a trophy.

AWA looks forward to your timely response to each of the four points outlined above, and to seeing the scientific assessments to back up your claims.

Sincerely,  
ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION



Devon Earl, Conservation Specialist



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