

30 July 2018

~~Ministry of Environment / FLURORD~~

~~205 Industrial Rd E~~

~~CRANBROOK BC VIC 765.~~

gov.bc.ca/wildlifeandhabitat

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Ideas to Assist Declining Wildlife and Their Habitat

An article in our local newspaper said that the BC Government is soliciting ideas as to how to stop declining wildlife populations and restore habitat up until 31 July 2018. Here are mine..

First, all living creatures require exactly what we give ourselves: abundant nourishment, shelter and safety – none of which our wildlife has. A leading grizzly bear biologist from the US said, “Contrary to popular opinion, grizzlies can co-exist with human beings. What they cannot tolerate, however, is being hunted and killed.”

These are my suggestions:

1. Indigenous and non-indigenous persons alike must abide by the same rules. Currently, indigenous persons (at least around here) hunt and fish as much as they like, whenever they like (all year round) and however they like (pit-lamping, etc.). They use fishing boats that resemble coast guard vessels equipped with every sounding device imaginable and fill their huge coolers (I'm told they are as big as caskets) with ling cod, etc. and take it all back to the Okanagan (Westbank). With snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, dirt-bikes and high-powered rifles at their disposal, the animals don't have a chance. You should listen to some of the Conservation Officers about this. They simply don't know what to do.
2. Create large wildlife corridors that are simply out-of-bounds to people and dogs – such as the Yellowstone to Yukon wildlife corridor which, if you tie in all the small protected areas is halfway there.. These corridors must have abundant food and protection – not some rocky out-post on top of the mountain. For instance, a large area near Trout Lake (north-east of the Arrow Lakes) has just been put aside for the Mountain Caribou. Why? It has been logged out and so is of no more interest to the logging companies anymore. Caribou need old growth forest with caribou moss, etc. growing on them, not a logged out area. Nothing substantive

is ever done to assist wildlife – it is just cosmetic. Prescribed burns is another dubious practice. Culling 600-plus moose around Lake Williston in an attempt to persuade the wolves to leave the area and not go after the caribou was another brilliant, made-in-Victoria move. What happened? The wolves went after the caribou – predictably. The hunters in my area are wondering why mule deer are still allowed to be hunted when they are virtually extirpated from the region.

3. Phase out all trapping – it is very cruel and totally unnecessary in this day and age of beautiful faux fur. All the trappers that I know here only trap because it gives them a reason to go out for the day on their snowmobiles and make \$500 per pelt for lynx and bobcat, etc. Phase out snaring wolves, drowning muskrats in those under-water cages which drown 7 at a time. Have you seen an animal die in those self-locking wire snares? It takes a long time.
4. Phase out clearcut logging – an excellent method of devastating wildlife habitat.
5. Dogs – everyone takes their dogs onto Crown Land and lets them off the leash to chase everything that moves. What defense do the alpine creatures such as picas have against dogs. I have seen deer chased by dogs out onto the ice in the Arrow Reservoir and drown. Bring in a law that all dogs must be on a leash the moment they leave their owners' private property or are in a registered dog park. No dog should be allowed to run free on Crown land.
6. No commercial "wild-crafting" – berries and mushrooms. I was told that flying squirrels' food source is almost exclusively mushrooms. A local family picked 1500 pounds of huckleberries last year to sell to a Vernon winery. Mountain ash, elderberries, huckleberries, blueberries must be left for wildlife – we have eradicated the salmon runs so they need other food sources.
7. Dams. The Columbia River Treaty dams inundated some 300,000 acres of BC's finest southern interior valleys and, 50 years later, 85 species of bird, 24 species of mammal and 4 (probably more) species of amphibian have not managed a come-back to the pre-dam days. The Arrow Lakes Valley used to be second only to the Fraser Valley for its agricultural productivity. Half a century later, all the valleys behind the Hugh Keenleyside Dam, the Duncan Dam, the Mica Dam and the Libby Dam languish in stagnation and decay. The valleys behind the Revelstoke Dam and the WAC Bennett Dam equally languish in stagnation and decay. There is no comparison between the lake and a reservoir – a lake is a very complex, life-support system while a reservoir is simply impounded slack-water.

No human development presents as singular and visible a threat to a river as a dam. Dams have the unique capacity to utterly disrupt an entire river ecosystem with one act of construction. And while a dam may not be forever, its monumental presence promises to outlast several human generations and the animal species whose habitat it destroys. For the first 19 years of my life I lived on our family farm on the shores of the undimmed Canadian portion of the Columbia River. I was one of the 2,300 people dispossessed by

the Columbia River Treaty. And now you are pushing through the Site C dam on the Peace River, destroying BC's last agricultural valley and eradicating the habitat of 76 species of bats which have lived for millennia between the layers of a shale outcrop right along the shores of the Peace which creates a unique micro-climate allowing them to hibernate over-winter and not freeze. The dikka (spelling?) virus has made it to Canada I was told – we need our bats. Every economic study has come to the same conclusion – that any returns from electricity sales from the dam cannot justify the costs. As for social or environmental studies – are there any? I would be grateful if you would write to me and tell me why the BC Government is pursuing this appalling project? I see that the entire reservoir is located east of the Rocky Mountains in pipeline country. Is its real purpose bulk water exports to the US? Shame.

8. Roads. BC is carved up into minute pieces by highways (i.e. the Coquahala), roads and trails, all of which cut animals off their pathways to food, water and safety which they have established for millennia. Stop putting in more roads and have people use the existing ones.

9. I leave you with an excerpt from two documents:

The first is from the World Charter for Nature, adopted by the United Nations on the 28th October 1982, and reads: "Every form of life is unique, warranting respect regardless of its worth to man, and, to accord other organisms such recognition, man must be guided by a moral code of action".

The second is from the Constitution of the Government of Ecuador in 2008 and reads: "Rights of Nature recognize the Earth and all its ecosystems as a living being with inalienable rights: to exist, to live free of cruel treatment, to maintain vital processes necessary for the harmonious balance that supports all life".

Enshrine these two sentiments into law.

Yours truly,

