



WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE – MARCH 2, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL RESPONDS TO MINISTER THOMSON'S POVINCIAL ALLOCATION POLICY DECISION – FEB 6, 2015

The Wildlife Stewardship Council is a coalition of First Nations, guide outfitters, concerned individuals and others who share a common mission to be, “A voice and advocate for wildlife and the ecosystems that sustain all life.” We also share common principles of respect for wildlife, looking after wildlife and recognition that everything is connected.

RE: The allocation of recreational wildlife harvest opportunities between BC's resident hunters and guide outfitters:

There has been a well orchestrated campaign of misinformation and manipulation of data coming from a particular segment of the resident hunting community relating to the harvest opportunities enjoyed by British Columbians. As such, it has lead to wide spread confusion and anger over the actual allocation and harvest of BC's wildlife. Following is a list of facts that the WSC feels all British Columbians should be informed of:

- In the 2013 – 2014 license year, 106,500 people participated in licensed recreational hunting in B.C. Of that number 102,000 were residents of BC, and 4500 were clients of guide outfitters. As such, 95.8% of the recreational hunting opportunities in British Columbia were enjoyed by residents of BC. This will continue to be the case going forward with the implementation of the MFLNR's February 6th, 2015 Allocation Policy decision, and is a strong indication of BC's commitment to recreational hunting priority being maintained for resident hunters.
- Of the 47,500 animals harvested by licensed recreational hunters in BC in the 2013 – 2014 license year, 7500 (15.8%) of those animals were managed under a limited entry / quota system for resident hunters and the clients of guide outfitters under the “Provincial Allocation Policy”. It is this share of the harvest that has been the subject of debate. Accordingly, percentage shares of the harvest authorized in the Provincial Allocation Policy is not a true reflection of BC's total harvest of wildlife, and represents a relatively small share of the overall harvest of wildlife by recreational hunters.

- The allocation decision announced by Minister Thomson on February 6th, 2015 affects less than ½ of one percent of the overall harvest of BC's wildlife between residents and the clients of guide outfitters.
- Over 90% of all wildlife harvested in BC each year is harvested by the residents of B.C., and this will continue to be the case with the implementation of the Provincial Allocation Policy.
- The share of wildlife allocated to guide outfitters has been characterized by some as going to 'wealthy foreign trophy hunters.' This is an inflammatory and misleading characterization of a segment of recreational hunters who come from other jurisdictions and who contribute substantially to BC's economy. In fact, many British Columbians travel outside of BC to hunt and fish, and would find it equally offensive to be characterized by their hosts as 'wealthy foreign trophy hunters'.
- Of the 350 million dollars generated by recreational hunting in BC each year, 230 million (66%) is generated by resident hunters, and 120 million (34%) by the guide outfitting industry. It is important to note that the 4.2% of hunters who are clients of guide outfitters generate 34% of the economic activity accrued by recreational hunting. The WSC believes that this is a strong economic return to all British Columbians from a very small share of wildlife harvested by clients of guide outfitters.
- The share of wildlife allocated to Resident Hunters is allocated exclusively to BC resident hunters, while the share of wildlife allocated to guide outfitters is available to resident hunters by hunting with a guide outfitter. Increasingly, resident hunters are choosing to use the services of guide outfitters, as they provide a safe, educational and quality experience for hunters. Any animal harvested by a resident hunter while hunting with a guide outfitter is taken from the quota of the guide outfitter, and has NO IMPACT on the BC resident hunter quotas.
- There has been widespread circulation of information suggesting that 15% -20% of the Roosevelt Elk harvest on Vancouver Island is being given to "wealthy foreign trophy hunters". In reality, of the 400 Roosevelt Elk harvested annually on Vancouver Island, only 25 elk (6.25% of the harvest) have been allocated to the clients of guide outfitters (some of which are BC residents) with the February 6th, 2015 allocation decision made by Minister Thomson.
- Almost one third of BC's landmass is "unallocated" to guide outfitters, meaning there are no licensed guide outfitters operating in those areas and all recreational hunting opportunities in these areas are

reserved strictly for BC residents. Minister Thomson's recent Allocation Policy decision includes a directive that recreational hunting opportunities in these areas be maintained for resident hunters only. This is unprecedented in virtually every jurisdiction in North America, and is a special consideration granted to BC resident recreational hunters.

- Constitutionally protected First Nations sustenance harvesting of wildlife contributes a substantial amount of economic activity for the Province of BC, and the wildlife harvested for sustenance is extremely important to British Columbia resident First Nations families too!
- In spite of the many challenges facing the guide outfitting industry, the WSC strongly supports Minister Thomson's recent allocation decision, and encourages all British Columbians with an interest in wildlife to move beyond this divisive issue and work together for the benefit of all BC's wildlife.

The WSC commends Minister Thomson on making a balanced decision that assures that First Nation's interests are considered, resident hunter priority is retained within the recreational hunting community, and the economic viability of the guide outfitting industry is maintained. We look forward to a future of healthy wildlife populations, healthy communities and a cooperative and collaborative approach to wildlife management in British Columbia.



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