

TAHLTAN

Central Government

November 3, 2017

E-mail: FirstNationsEngagement@gov.bc.ca

Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development
Director, Fish and Wildlife Branch
PO Box 9816
Stn Prov Govt Victoria, BC V8W 9W3

Subject: Tahltan Central Government Response to the Grizzly Bear Trophy Hunting Closure

Dear Jennifer Psyllakis,

The Tahltan Central Government (TCG) has several concerns regarding the proposed closure of grizzly bear hunting for trophy purposes as proposed by the Province. TCG agrees with other stakeholders who have highlighted the issues of poor consultation and a lack of rationale for this decision. We have not seen a breakdown of logical reasoning leading to this proposed change; there is currently no convincing compilation of data (ie. local knowledge of residents, traditional knowledge of Tahltan, and other scientific work) that leads us to believe shutting down trophy hunting for the grizzly bear is productive for the Tahltan Nation or the Province within our territory.

The Tahltan Nation is highly involved with the guide outfitting industry and shutting down trophy hunting in our territory would have adverse impacts on our community financially, socially, and culturally. We have strong connections with the guide outfitters in our community and do not want to see this industry negatively impacted without adequate reasoning. We recently signed an agreement with the Tahltan Guide Outfitting Association (TGOA) in the summer of 2017 and remain united in partnership to advocate for smarter wildlife management throughout Tahltan territory with all stakeholders.

The TCG, TGOA and the vast majority of Tahltan hunters are very concerned with the rise of grizzly bears in and around Tahltan communities and other cultural areas commonly utilized by our people. According to our local knowledge, grizzly bears are a growing safety concern for our region and we would hate to see any attacks as was the case with some of our neighbouring First Nations in recent years. If grizzly bear numbers continue to rise, our people and others are concerned that grizzly bears will increasingly compete with Tahltan people (and resident hunters) for moose, caribou and other wildlife we depend on for sustenance and ceremonial purposes.



More recently, with the evolution of TCG's Wildlife Department, Wildlife Guardian Program and ongoing collaborations with other wildlife stakeholders across the Province, the Tahltan Nation has been trying to strategize internally on how to deal with predator management; this is a practice our people practiced since time immemorial with grizzly bears amongst other species. The proposal by the Province to eliminate trophy hunting for grizzly bears is counter productive to our goals in this regard. If ungulate populations are negatively impacted by further predators in the form of grizzly bears, this will inevitably lead to further conflicts between our local hunters and resident hunters during the hunting season, which has increasingly become a safety concern for everyone.

In conclusion, the Tahltan Nation's view is that our grizzly bear populations in our region are healthy with viable numbers for harvest and have negligible habitat degradation as identified in the recent Auditor General's report. Local and traditional knowledge indicate increasing grizzly bear populations, greater possibility for human-bear safety concerns, and greater impacts on large ungulate populations within our region. Many wildlife species are managed differently based on the relative risks and impacts from hunting, habitat loss, human wildlife conflicts, disease, and non-hunting related mortality across the Province.

We appreciate the opportunity to have our concerns heard and remain hopeful the Province will take a better approach, both scientifically and socially, with this important issue. The Tahltan people need to become a vital part of any major decisions with wildlife management within our territory; we look forward to enhancing our involvement and relationships with the Province and other stakeholders to create better wildlife management practices together.

Meduh (Thank you),

Chad Norman Day



President
Tahltan Central Government
BOX 69 TATL'AH (Dease Lake) BC
V0C 1L0

