



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suspending Grizzly Bear Hunt

Won't Save Bears!

(Edmonton Tuesday, March 07, 2006)... Alberta's largest **conservation** group, the **Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA)**, says that suspending the annual grizzly bear hunt was not the right direction in ensuring a healthy and sustainable population of grizzlies in Alberta.

In his scientific peer review of the Provincial Government's Draft Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan, Dr. Charles Schwartz, who is actively involved in grizzly bear research and management in Montana and Yellowstone, made some interesting comments which tend to support the AFGA's stance that a regulated hunt poses no threat to the grizzly.

In his comments he states that; *"Hunting is a very easy form of mortality to control. However, I feel it is very important to state somewhere in this document that "regulated hunting" and "sustainable harvests" are not the "cause" of grizzly bear declines in Alberta. Closing hunting seasons gives the false impression to the public that once hunting is closed, all is well for the bears. Hunting is in fact a very minor symptom of a much greater erosion of habitat by humans. Stopping hunting in all but intact habitats will not reverse a downward trend in a population unless the harvest quotas were never set at a sustainable level."*

He further states that; *"The report lacks adequate data to evaluate the recommendation to close hunting province-wide. More information should be provided."*

AFGA President Randy Collins said, "These expert comments only further support what AFGA has been saying all along that it's industry whether oil, logging, agriculture, or recreational development that has the major impact on grizzly numbers. Further, Dr. Schwartz also mentions that harvesting a few males will have very little or no impact on grizzly populations."

Mr. Collins continued saying, "This whole suspension reeks of a decision forced by pressures from anti-hunting groups. It is now up to the hunting and conversation community such as the AFGA to educate these groups that hunting has been and will continue to be an acceptable management tool for all wild species including the grizzly and that it does not have a negative impact on their future sustainability."

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization proud to serve Albertans in the promotion of the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources and

the conservation of their habitats. Celebrating its 98th anniversary the AFGA has been active since 1908 in working towards these goals. It has a province-wide membership of more than 14,000 individuals spread among 100+ Clubs.

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