



WILD SHEEP SOCIETY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wildlife across the province once again being made a bargaining chip
Science-based decision making not a part of the government strategy

Victoria, British Columbia- May 20, 2022

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

The Wild Sheep Society of BC is disappointed to learn that the provincial government has moved ahead with the proposals to move Region 4 bighorn sheep from a General Open Season to Limited Entry Hunting (LEH), to remove the bighorn LEH in Okanagan Mountain Park, as well as a myriad of other proposals including the removal of caribou hunting in region 7b. There is also an email from Front Counter BC that says Haida Gwaii will be “closed to all hunting” – with the province paying millions of dollars to cull an overpopulation of deer; if there is any truth to this email – this is again a vast overreach of emotional management.

For years, the government has pulled the regulations lever to rebuild populations of wildlife, instead of offering any meaningful solutions with tangible results. It is critical that we admit managing the consumptive practices around wildlife does not equate to wildlife management. We do applaud the continued predator reduction; however, this needs to be done in conjunction with multiple efforts that utilize the best available science, and Indigenous Knowledge, not management by regulating consumption of wildlife.

May 17, 2022, Minister Conroy was questioned in the House regarding LEH decision making strategies, and stated “Yes, our decisions are influenced by science.” The document released May 19, 2022, clearly states that “social media has increased the vulnerability of sheep to harvest across the region (R4)”. Social media posts are not science-based decision making. These decisions have been made in blatant contradiction to the Vision, Principles & Goals of Together for Wildlife, the Provincial Wildlife Management Strategy. It is unacceptable that in the adolescence of the Strategy's implementation its Vision, Principles and Goals are being disregarded in decision making.

The credibility of the strategy to deliver fundamental transformation of wildlife management in BC is significantly undermined by this decision. Instead of upholding these, the proposed decisions are being made under the guise of social values, instead of science and evidence-based management and dealing with the cumulative effects of resource extraction. It is imperative to the longevity and health of wildlife and habitat in BC that we cautiously analyze why these decisions are still enabled and realized.

It is of great concern that unsustainable industrial development, and profiteering from BC' natural resources remains acceptable under the current decision-making cycles, while wildlife and habitat continue to suffer. If BC is to save the reputation of the Together for Wildlife Strategy, it must enact & legislate species objectives that place wildlife and habitat as a co-equal value, required to be considered prior to further developments.

The WSSBC fully supports the rights and title of Indigenous people and continues to work towards reconciliation together. It is important that BC limits the frustrations and animosities felt by impassioned groups who care about wildlife populations and quality habitat. This doesn't require Indigenous peoples, residents or guide outfitters requiring a greater allocation of what's left, this requires a focus on cultivating more before we lose it all.

This current decision does not advocate for that, nor does it aid in how WSSBC and our Indigenous Partners may reconcile when we are forced to consider each other's consumption of wildlife as problematic, rather than industrial development & climate changes' influence as the required focal point.

It is critical to sound, successful stewardship that the province supports organizations like ours in building bridges between Stakeholder, Non-Governmental Conservation Organizations and First Nations in pursuit of bettering shared values, rather than place us at ends with one another.

We encourage everyone that is concerned by this to engage their MLA and voice their thoughts in a rational and intelligent manner.

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About the Wild Sheep Society of BC

The Wild Sheep Society of BC is a non-profit registered Society dedicated to the protection and enhancement of wild sheep and wild sheep habitat throughout “Beautiful British Columbia”. Putting tens of thousands of volunteer hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars into conservation projects in BC since 1998, the WSSBC is committed to its vision statement of 'Putting more sheep on the mountains”.

Kyle Stelter
Chief Executive Officer
250-619-8415
kstelter@wildsheepsociety.com