



**Stony Plain Fish and Game Association and
Wabamun Gun Club
Box 2218
Stony Plain, Alberta
T7Z 1X7**

March 10, 2015

The Honourable Jim Prentice, Premier of Alberta
President of Executive Council
307 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Prentice:

Re: Wolf-Cull Program in Northern Alberta

As President of the Stony Plain Fish and Game Association, I am writing to bring to your attention the concern our members have expressed about the extensive wolf-culling program occurring in northern Alberta. Many of our 650 members regularly hunt in northern Alberta, especially in the northwest in the areas occupied by and adjacent to the La Peche and Little Smoky woodland caribou herds where the wolf-culling program is underway. These members report a great reduction of ungulate numbers believed to be related to the moose-reduction program, the killing of ungulates for bait in the wolf-cull program and the general destruction of ungulate habitat as a result of frenzied forestry and petroleum operations.

With the exception of the forestry and petroleum operations, we understand these programs are in aid of restoring the threatened caribou herds. However, we fail to see the logic of carrying out these programs when the forestry and petroleum operations are removing much caribou habitat (old-growth forest) or chopping it up into isolated patches too small to protect caribou herds while allowing easy access to predators like wolves and bears.

Wolf Poisoning

One of the most offensive operations in the wolf-culling program is the poisoning of wolves using toxicants that kill many more animal species than wolves. Our members have noted a lack of scavenging animals, such as blue jays, gray jays, ravens, eagles and coyotes in the region. They have talked with trappers in the area who have found the carcasses of these non-target species, plus weasels and bears at or near wolf-baiting sites. The trappers have also seen wolf carcasses at these sites left to rot. This is a despicable way of doing wildlife management in this day and time.

Shooting of Wolves and Ungulates from the Air

Another action our members find inexcusable is the killing of wolves from the air, plus the shooting of moose and elk from the air to provide bait carcasses for the poisoning program. This

is a very expensive operation that wastes much wildlife for questionable goals. The shooting of wolves and leaving their carcasses to rot we find especially repugnant. Many of our members hunt wolves but they do so in a respectful manner and value the hide they obtain as a result. The wolf is an iconic species of the Canadian wilderness and deserves more respect than aerial shooting provides.

While we understand the moose are being reduced in number to discourage wolves from hunting in the caribou area, we fail to understand how that will preserve the caribou when caribou habitat is being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. It is a well known that species cannot exist in an area if there is not sufficient habitat available to provide adequate food and cover. We would support a temporary wolf-control program if we had confidence caribou habitat would indeed be protected and there was hope for the caribou to survive. However, the province's industrial activities in these areas do not provide that confidence.

Our research into the scientific literature on this subject has determined that it will take over 100 years for the caribou habitat that has been destroyed to regenerate to suitable habitat capable of supporting a population of caribou in the future. Is the Alberta Government prepared to continue the expensive and controversial wolf-cull program into the next 100 years until suitable caribou habitat can be regenerated after the forestry and petroleum industries have extracted their resources? We strongly doubt it.

We understand these are complicated issues. However, our members fear that the Alberta Government, by downgrading the value of its fish and wildlife (e.g., dispersing the former Fish and Wildlife Division into various silos in the Alberta Government and "arms length" public agencies), has lost its focus on what Albertans value. It's not just jobs and low taxes (which we all value) but Albertans also value our natural heritage and our ability to conserve that heritage while using it to expand our insights and understanding of the value of our environment to our lives. Please Mr. Premier, end the wolf-culling and moose reduction programs and convene a public enquiry into the future of woodland caribou in this province.

Sincerely,

Copy of Original Signed Document

James Wright, President

Stony Plain Fish and Game Association

cc (via e-mail):

Honourable Kyle Fawcett, Minister of Environment, calgary.klein@assembly.ab.ca

Ken Lempke, MLA for Stony Plain, stony.plain@assembly.ab.ca

Heather Forsyth, Leader of Opposition, calgary.fishcreek@assembly.ab.ca

Rachel Notley, Leader of New Democrats, edmonton.strathcona@assembly.ab.ca

David Swann, Leader of Alberta Liberals, calgary.mountainview@assembly.ab.ca

Alberta Fish and Game Association, office@afga.org

bcc: various concerned members of the public