



January 8, 2020

General Open Letter to Our Members – Position Statement

BC Interior SCI recently received a copy of an open letter one of our members sent to the BC Wildlife Federation (BCWF) regarding wildlife/habitat management in BC and the author's belief that the BCWF is not living up to its mandate or doing its job as their members have so directed them.

More specifically, this letter referenced the use of glyphosate for vegetation control and its affects on mule deer, road densities, affect on predator and prey alike and the overall lack of effective wildlife management in BC.

In that these same issues affect us all, and BC Interior SCI has concerns about these same topics, we respond with a view from an organization that has a diverse membership with a wide range of beliefs, wishes and desires.

In general, it is exceedingly difficult for organizations such as ours to take "*hard*" stands where the request is an "*all or nothing*", or "*take it or leave it*" proposition.

First, we start with the reference to better wildlife and habitat management.

This is easy to support, and we do, as there is almost universal agreement that BC needs better and more effective wildlife management that supports the needs of all our critters and their habitats so these same critters can and will thrive.

But that is where broad based support ends.

Getting support for how to accomplish better management is another can of worms. Solutions will vary widely, depending upon location, species and what the specific management strategy may accomplish or affect.

One needs to look no further than the public reaction to our government's proposal for caribou management in the south Peace River area to see the debacle poorly thought-out plans and implementation processes created.

As an organization we should be able to say, "***We Support***" plans and processes that are based on science, supported at the local or regional level, and that consider the affects that they may have on the local people and communities.

Simple to say, hard to accomplish.

What is much more difficult to do is support the "*all or nothing*" proposals.

If we do not support the “stop the wolf kill”, “ban the grizzly bear hunt”, or “take our guns away”, why would we unilaterally support the “stop the spray” for glyphosate as some ask?

Fairly simple answer.

These types of proposals are usually based on the theory that if it is being used incorrectly or inappropriately in one place, then it must be so for all other places; or it is an emotional issue where “I” wish to impose “my” beliefs on “you” and “I” really do not care what “you” or others think or believe.

We, as an executive are confident that 100% of our membership believe that wolves are part of our environment and do not wish to see them eliminated. Come below that standard and opinions begin to vary as to where they should be managed and how many wolves we should have.

Same for grizzly bears.

Pretty confident that 100% of our membership does not believe grizzly bear hunting is appropriate for all parts of BC, or that all bears should be fair game. Come below that level and like the wolf debate, opinions begin to diverge.

Same arguments for gun control.

The use of glyphosate creates much the same dilemma for an organization such as ours.

Pretty much 100% of our membership support the belief that glyphosate should not be used everywhere with no controls or rules. Once we come below that level and get to the “how and where”, support varies.

Some will not come off the just ban it stump, and that is their prerogative, just as it is for others to believe there is a need for glyphosate to be used for specific management objectives.

Rather than get into these no-win debates, BC Interior SCI would much rather see our government(s) view the use and management of glyphosate as a priority and create a process where its use is managed to respect a wider range of needs than currently considered.

Just as we are joining with other organizations to create a coalition and process that will lobby/pressure government to make wildlife and wildlife management a priority for BC, so should we for the use of glyphosate.

We, as the executive of this organization do wish for some understanding from our members that we only exist because of you, our members, and that if we wish to take up sides or views that are only supported by part of our organization and membership, we will fail to meet the needs of others, which can affect our ability to survive.

We want to encourage our members such as the one who wrote in (below) to please continue to advocate for wildlife! Let’s keep raising our voice and expecting better wildlife management for today & tomorrow.

Thanks, and we do appreciate any comments you may have.

Your Executive,

**HUNTERS FOR BC
INTERIOR CHAPTER SCI**

An Open Letter To the BCWF

From a concerned citizen of British Columbia

**A Hunters View:
BCWF Southern Interior
Mule Deer Project**

The webinar posted by the British Columbia Wildlife Federation regarding the Interior Mule Deer Project, I believe, contains some important information that needs to be acted upon immediately.

Having spoken to some individuals in the BCWF, there appears to be concern with the lack of unity, co-operation, and leadership preventing timely action on the Membership's resolutions from taking place. At the BCWF's 63rd Annual General Meeting a policy statement was passed against the spraying of glyphosates that effect the availability of food for ungulates especially deer.

This stance was voiced over a year ago and the webinar makes the point that if the BCWF had taken action at that time progress could have been made reducing the loss of wildlife numbers.

Habitat (food) loss, predators and the construction of roads are the three biggest issues that should be addressed by the BCWF if we are to see an increase in Mule Deer numbers.

The BCWF is no stranger to the misfortunes of helping with predator management and the outcry of the uneducated special interest groups that follow. Wolf management projects supported by the BCWF went unheralded to avoid public scrutiny at the cost of its own members not being aware of rebalancing the predator prey ration necessary for the effective propagation of both species.

An online petition in May of 2019 was created to defend science-based game management initiatives, which are opposed by foreign funded, wrongly informed, wildlife advocacy groups.

One of the objectives of the BCWF is keeping as much back country and crown land open to the public as possible. However it seems that while attempting to achieve this we have hit an impasse when it comes to the strategic closure and removal of roads.

It is not enough to restrict motorized vehicle access, because by their very existence they affect predator access to traditionally safe habitat for many prey species. This results in easy access and for predators and man made inflated predator success rates through easy mobility.

This seems to be a key point in making sure all other endeavour to help Mule Deer and other ungulate species recover, are wasted due to an access policy that inadvertently and temporarily helps predator populations grow. In fact a short term increase in prey populations could have catastrophic effects for both prey populations, such as Mule Deer and predator populations as access issues coupled with the increased food source affects the migration and hunting patterns of all species.

Conclusion

Food sources during the wintering season, stopping Glyphosate based spraying, and promoting controlled burns, are essential concerns and activities for ungulate and all wildlife health. These actions will help entire ecosystems stay safe and healthy for generations to come.

This topic is not new to the public or to the BCWF. In fact, the BCWF proudly boasted at the 63rd annual general meeting that they opposed the Glyphosate spraying, yet we have seen nothing come out of it.

All hunters, anglers, and recreationists of British Columbia including First Nations, have apposed Glyphosate spraying with the desire to see ecosystems thrive in a more natural state.

Myself, and many others feel that the BCWF is failing its members by sitting idly by as the provincial government steams roles its way to “manage wildlife to zero.”

This is beyond infuriating, Regions and Clubs, have also expressed concerns about the apparent the lack of direction and communication with the BCWF.

Now is the time to make this new provincial NDP government understand how powerful the concerned citizens of this province can be.

I would hope to receive a response in a reasonable time.

(Hunters for BC – Interior Chapter SCI received this letter from the original writer November, 2020. We thank the member for bringing forward his concerns.)