



NEW POLL SHOWS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS BAN ON TROPHY HUNTING IN THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

(VANCOUVER, BC, September 4 2013) - Poll results released today show overwhelming public support for the year-old ban on trophy hunting for bears in the Great Bear Rainforest. Introduced last September under the tribal laws of nine coastal First Nations, the ban enjoys the approval of 87 percent of British Columbians.

"Today's poll results confirm what we've always believed," said Kitasoo/Xai'xais councillor Douglas Neasloss. "This issue does more than unite First Nations on the coast. It turns out British Columbians from all walks of life stand behind our communities, trusting indigenous people to lead the way on bear conservation."

The telephone poll, conducted by McAllister Opinion Research for the Coastal First Nations (CFN) Bear Working Group, asked 805 British Columbians across the province for their views on "trophy hunting for bears in the Great Bear Rainforest". 87 percent agree the hunt should be banned. 78 percent of those surveyed say they are "strongly" in favour of the ban.

"Public opinion on trophy hunting has shifted over the last five years," said McAllister Opinion Research president Angus McAllister. "In a poll conducted in 2008, our firm found 73 percent approval for a province-wide ban on grizzly hunting. That number has now climbed to 80 percent. And when you ask people about bears in the Great Bear Rainforest, support for a trophy hunting ban rises even further".

"The attitudes of hunters included in the sample are especially interesting," said McAllister. "91 percent agree that their fellow hunters should respect First Nations laws and customs when on First Nations territory. And 95 percent of hunters agree that people should not be hunting if they're not prepared to eat what they kill."

After being shot, a bear's head, paws and skin are usually removed, with the meat left to rot. "This so-called sport is a violation of First Nations laws and customs," said Heiltsuk Coastwatch Director William Housty. "And this poll shows people across the province share these values. Trophy hunting for bears is wasteful and unfair."

Current provincial regulations permit trophy hunting for bears in the Great Bear Rainforest each spring and fall. Trophy hunters may pursue bears that have just awoken from hibernation, or bears feeding on the banks of salmon streams. Some use spotting planes or even SUVs that are brought up the coast by barge so they don't have to hike.

Once again this season, First Nations are vowing to use whatever non-violent means available to prevent bears from being needlessly shot. "If I have to stand between feeding bears and people with guns, I will," said councillor Douglas Neasloss, who also works as a professional bear viewing guide. "But this year I hope visitors to the Great Bear Rainforest leave the safari guns at home and bring their cameras instead. If they do that, I'd be happy to introduce them to some truly magnificent bears."

The Great Bear Rainforest stretches along the BC Coast from the Discovery Islands to the Alaska panhandle. It encompasses the world's largest intact temperate rainforest, and is home to both grizzly bears and black bears. The iconic all-white Kermode, or "spirit bear," is found nowhere else on earth.

Coastal First Nations is an alliance of Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'xais, Nuxalk, Gitga'at, Metlakatla, Old Massett, Skidegate, and the Council of the Haida Nation, working together to create a sustainable economy on British Columbia's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. On September 12th 2012, CFN announced a ban on trophy hunting for bears within the unceded territories of member nations, which closely correspond to the area known as the Great Bear Rainforest.

Survey results are based on a random digit dial telephone poll of 805 British Columbia residents aged 18 years or older, fielded July 13-25, 2013, inclusive. The margin of error is better than $\pm 3.5\%$, nineteen times out of twenty. Full results are available [at www.BearsForever.ca](http://www.BearsForever.ca)

McAllister Opinion Research abides by the ICC/ESOMAR International code of Marketing and Social Research Practice.

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