

COASTAL FIRST NATIONS

GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE



Date: September 8, 2015

(Klemtu, BC, September 8, 2015) Trophy bear hunting has been banned by First Nations on BC's North and Central Coast in their traditional territories since 2012. "This ban is still firmly in effect; we are re-affirming our position that trophy bear hunting is banned," said Kitsoo/Xai'xais First Nation Chief Doug Neasloss.

Although the trophy bear hunt ban has been in place for several years, bears are still being killed, said Neasloss. "Despite overwhelming public support, the provincial government refuses to recognize the ban." Indeed, 9 in 10 British Columbians support the end of trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest.

We are moving in the right direction, our allies are purchasing commercial hunting licenses from guides in our territories and resident hunters have begun to surrender their grizzly tags to us in compliance with our ban, he said. "We welcome resident hunters to voluntarily comply with the ban by surrendering their grizzly tag to the Coastal First Nations".

Bears offer an exciting opportunity for Coastal First Nation communities as a sustainable, non-extractive industry. "We are happy to share the experience of spending time close to bears with people from around the world, as long as they come with cameras, not guns", said Jason Moody, the Fisheries Manager of the Nuxalk Nation.

Killing bears for trophy not only threatens a more sustainable local economy, it is an affront on our culture, said Moody. "We hunt animals for food, not for sport".

With the opening of the fall grizzly bear hunt, the Coastal First Nations will now redouble our monitoring and enforcement efforts, said William Housty from the Heiltsuk Nation. "With the number of areas hunted commercially dwindling, we can increase our focus on problem areas". We are coordinating efforts to patrol our territories to monitor and enforce the closure of this senseless trophy hunt.

The Coastal First Nations are an alliance of First Nations that includes the Wuikinuxv Nation, Heiltsuk, Kitsoo/Xai'xais, Nuxalk, Gitga'at, Haisla, Metlakatla, Old Massett, Skidegate, and Council of the Haida Nation working together to create a sustainable economy on British Columbia's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii.

For more information contact:

Chief Councilor Doug Neasloss, Kitsoo/Xai'xais Nation (604) 354-5989
William Housty, Heiltsuk Nation (250) 957-7133