

2014/15 Estimates Debate

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

.....

Issue: New Grizzly Bear hunts in the Cariboo and Kootenay Regions

Key Facts Regarding Issue:

In January, 2014, five wildlife Management Units (MU's or portions of a MU) were opened to Grizzly bear Limited Entry Hunting (LEH); three in the Kootenay Region and two in the Cariboo Region.

The opening of these hunts has received media attention in light of recent polls that indicated 87% of the public are opposed to Grizzly bear hunting, a recent scientific document critical of BC's grizzly bear management, and an economic study that indicates the value of grizzly bear hunting in coastal areas is very low compared to the value generated by grizzly bear viewing.

The Kootenay areas (MU 420 and Zones A&B of MU 423) were closed in 2011, and the Cariboo areas (MU 505 and 506) were closed in 2000. Both were closed due to human caused mortality exceeding allowable limits.

The reopening on these hunts is based on recent inventory and modelling that indicates the Grizzly bear population in these areas is healthy and able to sustain a limited hunt. These hunts are being managed conservatively as the number of LEH authorizations has been set intentionally low to ensure sustainable harvest levels are not exceeded. It is expected that the LEH authorizations for these hunts will continue to be set low until the Ministry collects adequate hunter success rate data. At that time, the number of LEH authorizations may be increased to achieve the desired harvest.

Advice and Recommended Response:

s.13

Date Prepared/Revised: February 18, 2013

Ministry Executive Sponsor:

Tom Ethier, ADM Resource Stewardship

Phone: 250 356-0972

Alternate Contact for Issue:

Albert Nussbaum, A/Director

Phone: 250 387-5657

**MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS
INFORMATION NOTE**

Date: December 23, 2013
Date of previous note: N/A
File:
CLIFF/tracking #: 203227

PREPARED FOR: Bill Bennett, MLA Kootenay East, Minister, Energy & Mines;
Steve Thomson, Minister, FLNRO.

ISSUE: Proposed Grizzly Bear hunting regulation amendments for 2014, Kootenay Boundary and Cariboo Regions.

BACKGROUND:

Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Management Branch completes a comprehensive hunting regulation review process every two years. It is anticipated that a Ministerial Order containing all hunting regulatory amendments will be forwarded to Minister Thomson for decision in late February of 2014.

Four Grizzly bear-related regulation amendments are under consideration for the 2014-2016 hunting seasons. Three of these amendments involve opening areas currently closed to Grizzly bear hunting (Kootenay Boundary -2 Management Units (MU); Cariboo Region -1 MU). The fourth is to implement regulations requiring hunters to remove the edible portions of harvested Grizzly bears on the coast or province wide. These amendments apply to the spring Limited Entry Hunting (LEH) Seasons.

Public opposition to the grizzly bear harvest in BC has increased following recent publications questioning grizzly bear population estimates in BC. In November 2013, researchers from Simon Fraser University and Raincoast Conservation Society published a paper (Artelle et al. 2013) suggesting management of grizzly bears in BC was risky due to uncertainty in population estimates and how uncertainty is factored into harvest management decisions. FLNRO responded in defence of its conservative grizzly bear harvest management procedures. In December 2013, FLNRO biologists (Mowat et al. 2013) published updated population estimates and identified underlying knowledge gaps.

DISCUSSION:

For several years the Cariboo Region has received representations from certain FN communities, hunting groups, guide outfitters, land owners and livestock producers about re-opening grizzly bear hunting. The population unit occupying MU 5-05 and 5-06 (west of Chilko Lake) has been determined by regional FLNRO staff as able to support a limited grizzly bear harvest

In the Kootenay Boundary Region there are 2 proposals to open areas to Grizzly bear hunting (South Rockies Grizzly Bear Population Unit (GBPU), Zones A and B of MU 4-23, and South-Central Purcell GBPU, MU 4-20). These areas were closed to hunting in 2011 as a result of mortality rates being over allowable thresholds for the 2007-2011 harvest allocation period. Current population estimates and harvest data analysis by regional FLNRO staff suggest that hunting does not represent a conservation concern. .

Public interest in the proposed grizzly bear hunting regulation amendments has been considerable; however, most concerns have focused on the social acceptability of the grizzly bear hunt rather than the sustainability of the hunt.

SUMMARY/NEXT STEPS:

BC has a conservative grizzly bear harvest management procedure. Science-based information supports the sustainability of the proposed grizzly bear hunt openings in MU 5-05, 5-06, 4-23 Zone A&B and 4-20. Wildlife Branch will finalize proposed regulation amendments and will be making their final recommendation to the Minister late February 2014.

Consultation on proposed hunting regulations changes is extensive, open, and transparent. s.13

s.13

Contact:

Paul Rasmussen

*Director Resource
Management, KBR
250.354.6947*


Alternate Contact:

Andrew Wilson

*Director
Fish, Wildlife & Habitat
Management Branch
250.387.5657*

Prepared by:

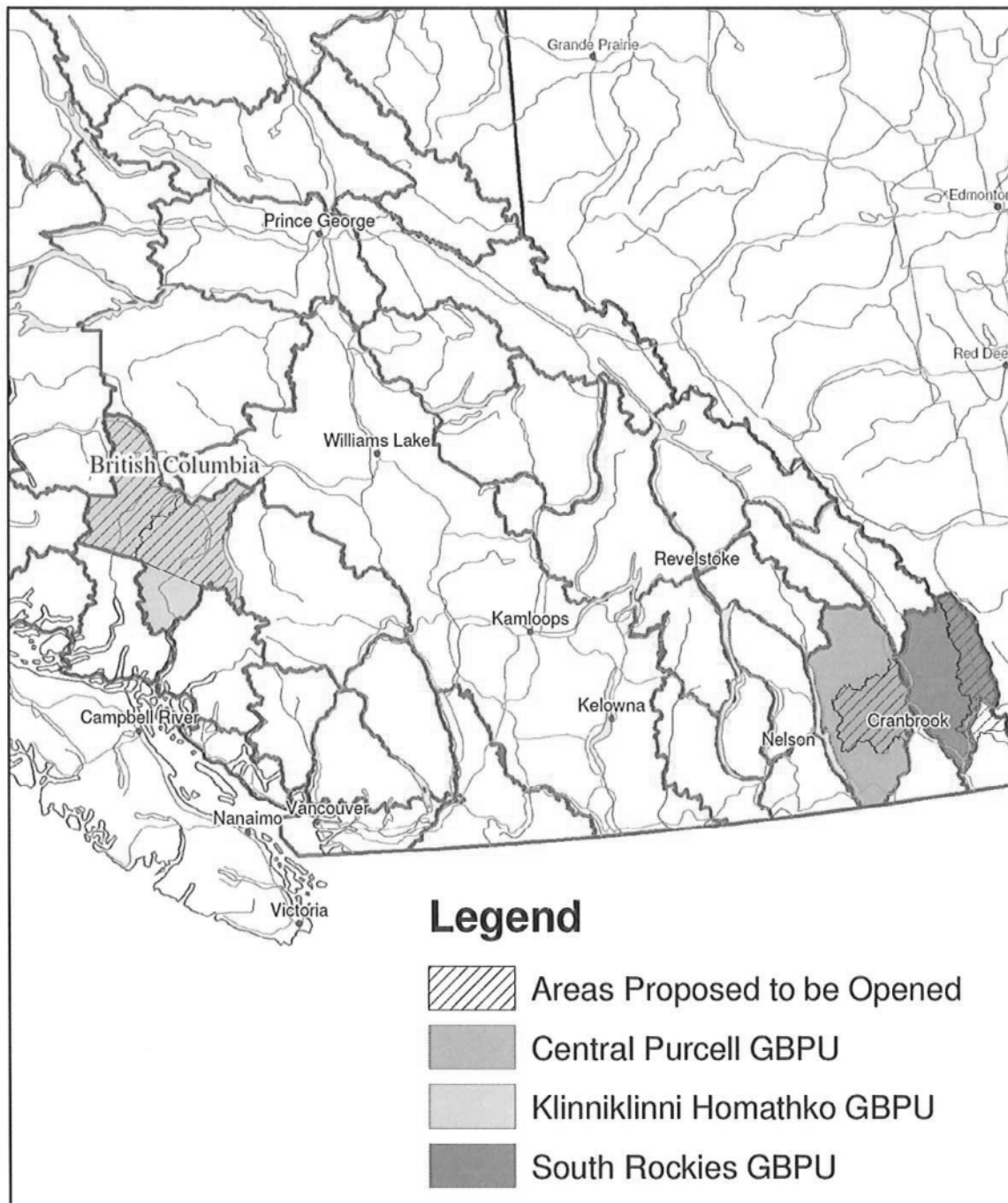
*John Krebs
F & W Section Head
KBR
250.489.8547*

Reviewed by	Initials	Date
DM		14.01.06
DMO		
ADM	KD A/ADM	Jan 3, 2014
RED	RM A/RED	Jan 3, 2014

DRM	PR	Dec 23, 2013
Author	JK	Dec 23, 2013


Attached: Appendix A (map): 2014 Grizzly Bear Hunting Regulation Proposals
 Appendix A:

2014 Grizzly Bear Hunting Regulation Proposals



FW: Estimates notes Grizzly and

Thursday, March 19, 2015
12:04 PM

Subject	FW: Estimates notes Grizzly and
From	Wiebe, Wendy CSNR:EX
To	Wiebe, Wendy CSNR:EX
Sent	Thursday, March 19, 2015 12:02 PM
Attachments	 IN_grizzly bear LEH o...

Wendy Wiebe

Regional Records/ FOIPPA Coordinator, Kootenay Boundary Region | Corporate Services for the
Natural Resource

From: Hatter, Ian FLNR:EX
Sent: Monday, March 3, 2014 5:04 PM
To: MacDougall, Gerry L FLNR:EX; Stewart, Rodger W FLNR:EX
Cc: Rasmussen, Paul FLNR:EX
Subject: RE: Estimates notes Grizzly and

Here is an issues note that goes into the openings in more detail.

Ian

From: MacDougall, Gerry L FLNR:EX
Sent: March-03-14 5:00 PM
To: Hatter, Ian FLNR:EX
Subject: RE: Estimates notes Grizzly and

Thank you!

From: Hatter, Ian FLNR:EX
Sent: Monday, March 3, 2014 5:00 PM
To: MacDougall, Gerry L FLNR:EX
Cc: Manwaring, Richard G FLNR:EX; Rasmussen, Paul FLNR:EX
Subject: RE: Estimates notes Grizzly and

Here is what we had prepared. Quite high level.

From: MacDougall, Gerry L FLNR:EX
Sent: March-03-14 4:58 PM
To: Hatter, Ian FLNR:EX
Cc: Manwaring, Richard G FLNR:EX; Rasmussen, Paul FLNR:EX
Subject: Estimates notes Grizzly and
Importance: High

Hi Ian,

Rodger mentioned you were going to prepare an estimates note on grizzly – regarding the opening of the hunt in Kootenay Boundary, Cariboo Regions, perhaps some numbers to justify the decision etc.

Can you please provide Rick and I and Paul Rasmussen with that grizzly note? (cc'd above on this request).

Our regions will provide localized supplementary info to Rick as required.
(Rick – Rodger will assemble basic info for you anyway)
Thank you,

Gerry MacDougall

Executive Assistant Krista Beadman 250-398-4327

Direct 250-398-4355

Regional Executive Director, Cariboo Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural
Resource Operations
Update: Jan 30, 2014 Date: Dec. 5, 2013
Minister Responsible: Steve Thomson

Grizzly Bear LEH openings

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The decision to open these hunts is based on the best available science, as are all grizzly bear hunt decisions.
- Because we recognize inherent uncertainty in our population and harvest rate estimates, conservative mortality targets are used, as well as other important sources of information.
- In addition, hunt authorizations have been held deliberately low for 2014 while ministry biologists confirm hunter success rates, further ensuring an over-harvest will not occur.
- The areas where hunting is being resumed have stable to increasing grizzly populations that can sustain a conservative hunt.
- If hunting or other grizzly mortality exceeds acceptable mortality limits, the hunt can be reduced or even completely closed, as has been done previously.

General messaging on the grizzly hunt:

- Historically, hunters have taken around 300 grizzly bears a year out of an estimated provincial population of 15,000, or a two per cent harvest rate, which is well below sustainable levels.
- The province fully supports ensuring the long term sustainability of Grizzly bear populations, and the protection of seasonally critical habitats is a significant part of conservation efforts.
- Approximately 35% of British Columbia is closed to Grizzly hunting.
- This government manages grizzly bear populations in the province for conservation, First Nation food, social, and ceremonial uses, through the Limited Entry Hunt for licensed hunters, through quota for guide outfitters, for wildlife viewing and for recovery where populations are considered threatened.
- The grizzly bear harvest is managed on a five-year allowable harvest limit. The annual harvest, however, fluctuates from year to year, depending on environmental factors that are difficult to predict (such as weather conditions for hunting). Adjustments are made annually as necessary to ensure the harvest limit does not exceed harvest targets; i.e. we lower harvest levels and even close hunting in some units following years when mortality targets are exceeded.

KEY FACTS REGARDING THE ISSUE:

On January 24, proposals to resume the Limited Entry Hunt for grizzly bears in four management units in the Kootenays and Cariboo were approved. Opportunities for the Limited Entry Hunt for the spring Grizzly Bear Hunt are posted the third week of January. Interested hunters have until Feb. 7th to submit their first and second choices. Of the approximate 3,500 hunters that apply, about half will receive authorizations. The Angling, Hunting, Trapping and Engagement website will also be updated on Feb. 4, advising that the regulation proposals have

been approved.

On November 21, the Province posted a number of proposed regulation changes for public comment, as part of the process to finalize the 2014-16 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis. Public comment closed December 20.

In the Kootenays, the areas proposed are MU 4-20 (in the Kimberley area) and MU 4-23 (in the Elkford/Fernie area). Both these MUs were closed to hunting in 2011 due to total mortality and female mortality exceeding allowable mortality under the ministry's Grizzly Bear Harvest Management Procedure. An updated DNA-based inventory for the South Rockies Grizzly Bear Population Unit was completed in 2013 and results suggest the population is stable to increasing. An analysis of grizzly bear kill data was conducted for both MU 4-20 and 4-23 that suggests a conservative hunt is sustainable and a harvest of fourteen bears over the next three years, or roughly five per year is recommended. This can be altered if hunting mortality or other mortality through conflict rail/road kill etc. exceeds estimates.

Normally, average hunter success rates over the previous five years are used to calculate the number of authorizations that can be offered to achieve the allowable harvest. Under existing guidelines a harvest of five bears per year would be sustainable but by providing six authorizations for these three areas combined for 2014 wildlife managers are ensuring that harvest does not exceed the allowable limits while hunter success rate data is obtained. Over the coming years wildlife managers will be monitoring success rates for these areas and adjusting the number of authorizations accordingly.

In the Cariboo, the hunts proposed are MUs 5-05 and 5-06, in the Anahim Lake area. This area was closed in 2000 due to a combination of hunter harvest and conflict kills on the northern and eastern fringes of the area where ranching is prevalent. New population estimates put the population at approximately 184 bears, and indicate a harvest of five bears per year would be sustainable under the guidelines of the Grizzly Bear Harvest Management Procedure. As with the Kootenays, this can be altered if hunting mortality or other mortality through conflict rail/road kill etc. exceeds estimates.

Normally, average hunter success rates over the previous five years are used to calculate the number of authorizations that can be offered to achieve the allowable harvest level. Under existing guidelines a harvest of five bears per year would be sustainable, but by providing three authorizations for the hunt in the Klinaklini-Homathko Grizzly Bear Population Unit in 2014 wildlife managers are ensuring that the harvest will not exceed the allowable limits while hunter success rate data is collected. Over the coming years wildlife managers will be monitoring success rates for these areas and adjusting the number of authorizations accordingly.

On November 6, the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University released a study that claims grizzly bears are being over hunted in British Columbia. Grizzly hunting in British Columbia has been a controversial recreation for many years. Each year, environmental groups raise the issue of the grizzly bear "trophy hunt" during the fall and spring hunts, especially on the Coast.

The 2012 estimate of grizzly bear population is 15,000 bears. About 300 are hunted each year, or roughly two per cent of the population and about another 60 die as a result of human conflict or poaching.

The province continues to manage the grizzly bear hunt in a sound and sustainable manner, focusing on population estimates, conservative harvest rates, and careful attention on monitoring all human caused mortalities. Other sources of information are also considered (e.g. the sex and age harvest structure; and distribution of the harvest) and these are being formalized in our Grizzly Bear Harvest Management Procedure so that the process for setting the number of authorizations remains transparent.

It is important to note that the annual harvest is closely monitored, and the number of authorizations issued takes each year's information into account, as well as the success rate in a specific area over the previous five years in order to ensure grizzly bears are not overharvested.

MFNLRO supports population recovery in threatened population units, human-bear conflict reduction (in part, through motorized access management), and the protecting of seasonally critical habitats.

Grizzly bears are sensitive to excessive human-caused mortality and disturbance resulting from human activities, and have consequently been extirpated from approximately one-half of their historic range in North America.

Grizzly bears are blue-listed (vulnerable) in B.C. and have been designated as special concern nationally by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Grizzly bears are listed as "threatened" under the U.S. Federal *Endangered Species Act* and four of the six listed population units are shared with B.C.

Additional statistical background on the hunt:

Changes to MU 4-20 and MU 4-23 (Kootenays)

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Management Unit	Pop. Estimate (2007-2012)	Pop. Estimate (2013)
4-20 – near Kimberley	68	68
4-23A – near Elkford/Fernie	66	72*
4-23B – near Elkford/Fernie	32	36*

*Additional snag/hair DNA research was undertaken in 2013 that provided much more solid numbers. It was also determined that female mortality was down, and overall age of the bear population was older.

Changes to MU 5-05 and MU 5-06 (Cariboo – Anahim Lake)

Management Unit	Pop. Estimate (2010)	Pop. Estimate (2011)*
5-05	45	79
5-06	47	104

*Estimate revised based on new modelling information from a study by Garth Mowat et al. (study to be published in PLOS ONE academic journal in the next week or two).

Year	Hunter Kills (both MUs)*	Non-Hunter Kills (both MUs)
1997-2003	7	7
2004-2012	0	3**

*Area was closed to hunting in 2000, so all hunter kills are prior to that.

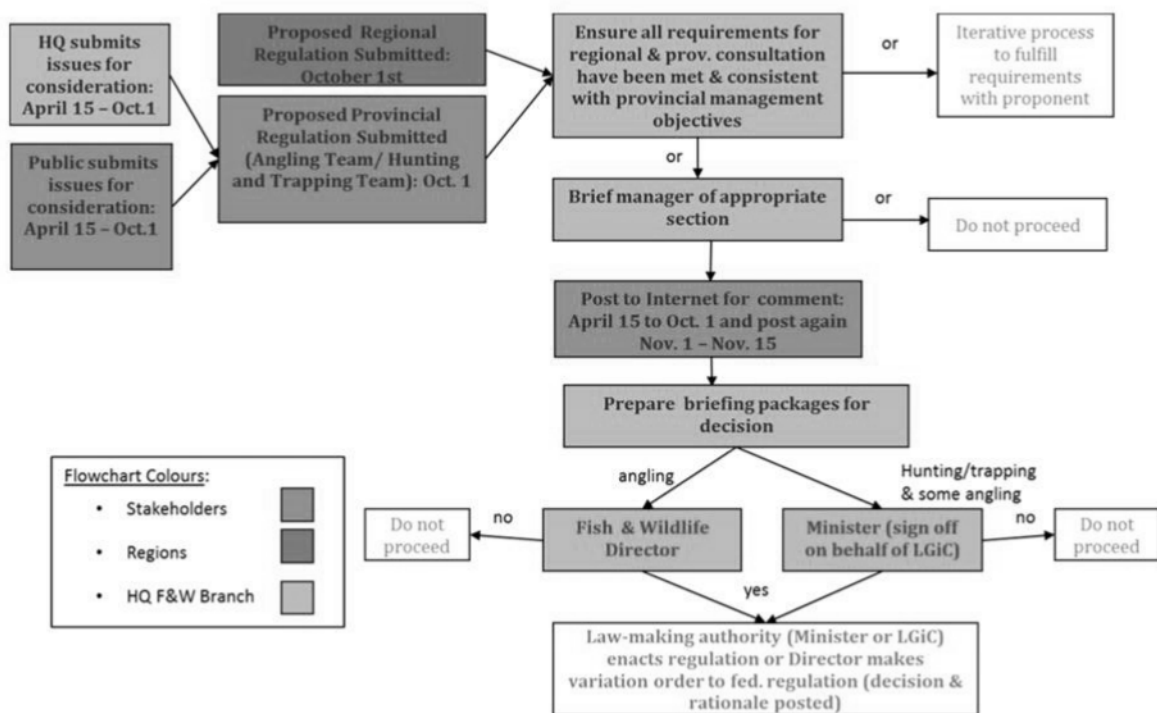
**Two of these kills were conflict bear kills, both occurring in 2009 in MU 5-05. The third was a bear found in a landfill in 2012, cause of death undetermined.

The Hunting, Trapping and Angling Regulation Setting and Stakeholder Engagement Process:

The process begins with public engagement through regional advisory teams which consist of stakeholder organizations that are chosen by the regional Fish and Wildlife Section Head which have a direct interest in the core values of fish and wildlife stewardship and conservation. First Nations must also be consulted, either through the advisory team process, or a separate process (varies).

These regional advisory teams then provide recommendations to regional wildlife staff, which are reviewed and sent to the Fish and Wildlife Branch. The Branch meets each year with the Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team (PHTAT), and those regulations of broader provincially significance are discussed. PHTAT includes representatives from the BC Wildlife Federation, Guide Outfitters Association of BC and the BC Trappers Association. PHTAT also includes ministry representatives, including a BC Conservation Officer, a staff member involved with First Nations issues, the Provincial Wildlife Manager and other key staff involved with hunting and regulations.

A flowchart follows; the process is currently at the "Post to internet for comment" phase" (final blue box).



Communications Contact: Logan Wenham
Program Area Contact: Steve MacIver

953.3675
387.9767

2014/15 Estimates Debate

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

.....

Issue: Lynch Creek Kettle-Granby Grizzly Bear

Key Facts Regarding Issue:

- The Friends and Residents of the North Fork (FRNF), a citizens' group based in Grand Forks, is opposed to BCTS logging development in the Granby (Lynch Ck) area, citing concerns with Habitat Connectivity for a Grizzly Bear population that is currently listed as "threatened". They would like a 6000 Ha provincial park established.
- FRNF has raised this issue with media and has garnered some support from the public. They have also been active in engaging provincial and local elected officials.
- FLNRO has met with the FRNF several times: Exec, BCTS, HQ and Regional Ops staff. FRNF have been asked to deal with the Kootenay Boundary Region on the issue.
- KB Region's position (in terms of Grizzly habitat quality, importance of the area, current protective measures, etc) has been discussed with the group and the group's concerns have been adequately heard.
- FRNF have also approached FLNRO Deputy Chief Forester (Diane Nicholls) to express their belief that AAC for the area is not sustainable and should be reduced to protect Grizzly Bears.
- s.21

Advice and Recommended Response:

s.13

Date Prepared/Revised: March 5, 2014

Ministry Executive Sponsor:

Name: ADM Rick Manwaring

Phone: 250-828-4292

Alternate Contact for Issue:

Name: Paul Rasmussen

Phone: 250-608-1077