

Petition To the Parliament of Ontario

Parliament must fix bear mismanagement crisis:

Ontario's Black bear overpopulation problem desperately needs effective government action

"Whereas indicative of serious overpopulation; growing numbers of black bears in Northern Ontario are invading cottage areas, backyards, school yards, city/town streets, landfill sites are now also full of overcrowded hungry bears. Northern Ontario news media endlessly report stories of problem bears destroying public property, attacking, mauling, injuring and tragically killing humans; and

"Whereas harvest levels are extremely low; other than regulated hunting harvest (recorded estimate 5000 annually), road kills, rail kills, and those killed to protect livestock and humans (unknown number), bears in Ontario have virtually no other natural mortality. Bears sleep (hibernate) throughout the barren winter months and seem immune to the many diseases that control excess numbers of most other wildlife populations; and

"Whereas annual birthrate is extremely high and out-of-control; approx 30,000 sows of cub bearing age with an average birthrate of 2.4 cubs annually with a 50% survival rate, suggests increased population amounts to 36,000 cubs; and

"Whereas MNR bear population data is uncertain, unrecorded mortality unknown; regulated hunting annual recorded mortality is 5000 bears, less the unrecorded mortality (unknown number) and the regulated harvest (5000) Ontario's bear population arguably grows more or less than 25,000 cubs each year; and

"Whereas too many bears are killed/wasted and orphaned cub numbers rise; the 2 year old "Bear Wise program" is ineffective, unscientific wildlife management, addresses the symptoms rather than the problem, costs taxpayers millions, promotes the indiscriminate killing/wasting of nuisance males, females and the subsequent increased numbers of orphaned cubs; and

"Whereas there are too many bears and not enough food; MNR consistently states, " The problems are related to food and that sort of thing," MNR must then recognize that the carrying capacity (food supply) of the northern Ontario bear habitat is grossly exceeded. Bears simply cannot be endlessly stockpiled in Northern Ontario; and

Whereas tons of food supplied by Outfitters in spring helps keep bears in the bush; prior to 1999 licensed bear outfitters with BMAs (Bear Management Areas) provided an important food supply (baiting stations) to thousands of excess bears each spring, when other natural food sources are scarce, reducing the number of bears forced to search urban areas for their food. Also gunshots associated with spring bear harvest reinforced the fear of man in bears, thus reducing incidents of human/bear conflict; and

"Whereas increased hunting harvest provides cost effective population control; Supportive scientific evidence, suggests the government must

consider the cost effective option and utilize the valuable economic incentive provided by increased hunting opportunities (spring hunt) to help fund and control bear overpopulation. Government must assume responsibility and take appropriate action to fix its bear mismanagement crisis in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas protecting bears to be ultimately shot and wasted serves no meaningful purpose; many more bears are killed/wasted as "problem bears" than the regulated harvest. Black bears once a valuable big game resource generating social, wildlife management and economic tourist benefits worth millions bears are now shamefully considered 'nuisance value' and an expensive taxpayer liability. Laws geared to prevent over-harvest are therefore redundant, difficult to enforce, open to abuse and lead to vigil-anti management solutions to bear problems (shoot-shovel-shut-up); and

"Whereas culls will add to current economic waste of once valuable resource; the return of the spring bear hunt alone will not fix this seriously out-of-control problem and the option of organized culls means more indiscriminate killing and wasted bears; and

"Whereas infamous Government bounty eliminated southern Ontario bears; once a common denizen of Southern Ontario the Government of Upper Canada instituted a ten-dollar bounty on black bear in 1793 to 1796. In many areas bears were relentlessly killed (hunted, trapped and poisoned) until none were to be found in the major agricultural settlements of Ontario; and

"Whereas excess bears trying to naturally migrate south are currently killed and wasted; bears trying to return to their former range are either indiscriminately shot by police or MNR or are promptly returned to the overcrowded territory they came from and ultimately shot and wasted by government officials at a later date; and

"Whereas former natural bear habitat is currently wasted; today few bears if any remain to occupy the former southern Ontario natural bear habitat; typical to northern Ontario swampland, bush lots, vacant pasture land and many landfill sites where waste food from: restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes and households currently gets buried. These sites could be used to feed excess bears now fighting for their survival in the north; and

"Whereas relocating bears to former habitat is sound wildlife management practice; an important wildlife management practice exists, to relocate bears to areas of formerly occupied habit, that currently have few to no bears. Proven effective for other wildlife (elk, wild turkeys etc), therefore must also be given due consideration;

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that "I the undersigned" petition the parliament of Ontario as follows petitions the **Parliament, to immediately move to reinstate the spring bear hunt**; and further

"The Parliament move to initiate and enforce laws geared to protect black bears trying to return to their former range in southern Ontario, through the natural migration process; and further

"The Parliament move to develop ways and means to relocate bears from Northern Ontario to areas where the habitat would support them, specifically areas determined to be of suitable habit, formerly occupied by black bears in southern Ontario.

- **Note: As an Ontario resident voter I deserve and expect my elected Parliament to immediately take action on this extremely important and necessary request. Therefore I look forward to your positive confirmation via return correspondence.**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Mail/Fax to: Honorable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources
6630 - 99 Wellesley St W, 6th Flr, Whitney Block Toronto ON M7A 1W3 Tel: 416-314-2301
Fax: 416-314-2216. Email: dramsay.mpp@liberal.ola.org
Copy to: John Tory Conservative leader official opposition party, Rm 381, Main Legislative Building
Toronto ON M7A 1A8. Tel: 416-325-0445, Fax: 416-325-0491 email: john.tory@pc.ola.org
Copy to: Howard Hampton leader NDP party, Rm 114, Main Legislative Building, Toronto ON M7A 1A4 Tel: 416-325-8300 Fax: 416-325-8222, email: hhampton-qp@ndp.on.ca
Copy to: MPP local riding

Additional copies may be downloaded at www.friends-of-fur.org



October 2005 in a front page article the Chronicle Journal (Thunder Bay) featured this photo of more than a dozen hungry bears competing for food at the Red Lake Dump; the article also cited that "26 bears have been killed to date in the municipality by Ministry of Natural Resources staff or provincial police," typical of landfill sites and other municipalities throughout Northern Ontario.

Your View

Government needs to act on black bear problem

Re: Groups continue fight for spring bear hunt, Northern Business Journal

January 2006.

The black bear overpopulation problem desperately needs effective government action. The McGuinty government's ineffective approach dealing with the out of control black bear "overpopulation problem" is truly beyond belief!

Overcrowded hungry bears are everywhere here in Northern Ontario. Landfill sites, now considered essential natural habitat are full of bears. Northern Ontario news media reports seem endless carrying stories of problem bears.

The expensive, ineffective 2 year old Bear Wise program treats the symptoms, rather than the overpopulation problems and does nothing toward reducing the killing/wasting of nuisance males, females and the subsequent increased orphaned cubs. But sadly, this MNR quote from your article confirms our worst fears, the McGuinty government plans to continue wasting millions of our tax dollars with the irrelevant status quo. "Jolanta Kowalski a spokesperson for MNR in Toronto said the cancellation of the spring bear hunt has had no impact on the number of nuisance bear problems. The problems are related to

food and that sort of thing," she said. "And right now, there are no intentions to bring it back."

Never mind that regulated hunting annual mortality is a mere 5000 bears, mostly males. Never mind that approx 30,000 sows (of cub bearing age) each produce an average of 2.4 cubs annually with a 50% survival rate; take out the regulated harvest (5000) Ontario's bear population must grow in excess of 25,000 cubs each year.

According to MNR "The problems are related to food and that sort of thing," then surely MNR must recognize that the carrying capacity (food supply) of the northern Ontario bear habitat is grossly exceeded.

Bears simply can not be endlessly stockpiled in Northern Ontario. Yet contrary to supportive scientific evidence, the government will not utilize the valuable economic incentive provided by increased hunting opportunities (spring hunt) to help fund and control bear overpopulation.

Many northern Ontario municipalities feel that the problem is beyond fixing by the mere return of the spring bear hunt and have considered organized culls (more killing and waste). Last fall Northwestern Ontario Sportsman's Alliance (NOSA) together with Friends of Fur (FoF) presented Minister of

Natural Resources Hon. David Ramsey with a proposal to re-introduce black bears into southern Ontario. Ramsey rejected this proposal in a letter dated April 13 2005 citing the following political nonsense! "The ministry will not relocate bears from Northern Ontario to areas where the habitat would not support them, thus requiring bears to be dependant on "unnatural sources of food" to survive."

Many northern Ontario voters agree "its time government reintroduced black bear to southern Ontario". Full details of our black bear re-introduction proposal are posted at www.friends-of-fur.org,

Everyone is invited to visit our Website, consider the benefits of our proposal and collectively petition the McGuinty government to take action; to reduce the wasting of northern excess black bears, by helping bears return safely home to southern Ontario. Clearly out of control, effective Government action is needed to reduce the overpopulation of black bears in northern Ontario.

Eldon Hawton
President, Friends of Fur

**Our government needs a wake-up call from the grass-roots voters living in bear country.
Please use the petition on the reverse side to have your say.
Don't delay do your small part to help make a big difference today.**