



# NEWS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release

October 24, 2017

### **Ministries' management of grizzly bears did not meet expectations**

VICTORIA – The Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia has released a new report: *An Independent Audit of Grizzly Bear Management*.

B.C. is one of the last areas of North America where grizzly bears live in their natural habitat. The health of B.C.'s 15,000 grizzly bears is important because, as an umbrella species, they are an indicator of how well other species and ecosystems are doing.

“Grizzly bear populations in some areas of B.C. are increasing, but this is likely happening independently from an adequate management framework,” said Auditor General Carol Bellringer.

The Ministry of Environment\* and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations\* have long-standing, public commitments for managing grizzly bears. Bellringer and her team found that the ministries haven't fulfilled many of their commitments, including a grizzly bear management plan and the implementation of a recovery plan in the North Cascades. Also absent was an inventory and monitoring strategy of grizzly bears in B.C. and clear policies for bear viewing.

Bellringer's office did find that the greatest risk to grizzly bears isn't the hunt, it's the degradation of grizzly bear habitat. “The expansion of development in oil and gas, forestry and human settlement makes it more difficult for grizzly bears to mate, and results in food source loss, as well as more human-bear conflict,” said Bellringer. An increase in resource roads—600,000 kms existing and more added every year—also leads to more human-bear conflict, and ultimately, grizzly bear deaths.

The Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations have undertaken activities to reduce grizzly bear habitat degradation, but have not evaluated whether their efforts are effective.

Bellringer made 10 recommendations, including a recommendation for government to review legislation to clarify roles and responsibilities between the two ministries. This is because the ministries have overlapping responsibilities.

\* After the audit was complete, the Ministry of Environment became the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations became the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

News Conference Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2017



OFFICE OF THE  
**Auditor General**  
of British Columbia

Time: 12:30 p.m. (Pacific time)

Dial-in Information:

From Vancouver: 604 681-0260

From elsewhere in Canada and the USA: 1 877 353-9184

Participant Pass Code: 44848#

During question and answer period, to ask a question: Press 01

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**About the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia**

The Auditor General is a non-partisan, independent Officer of the Legislature who reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the Auditor General and staff to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

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