



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dec. 17, 2005

The Editor
Times Colonist

Editor:

I would like to reply to your recent editorial (Investing in nature, Dec. 14).

It is important to note that in British Columbia decisions about the management of species, such as grizzly bears, are based on science.

It is estimated that there are approximately 17,000 grizzly bears in B.C. – the largest and healthiest grizzly population in Canada. By using informed science to sustain a viable population, we can provide for a range of outdoor activities, including hunting and viewing.

Hunting for grizzly bears will continue to be closed in areas where populations are at risk.

B.C. is committed to protecting all species at risk. That is why we have brought in new species at risk protection under the Wildlife Act, implemented the species at risk provisions in the Forest and Range Practices Act, and established the Species at Risk Coordination Office to support species at risk recovery.

I should also point out that the Province is investing over \$12 million in 2005/2006 to upgrade campsites, trails, water systems and other BC Parks facilities, which is the largest parks capital budget in 15 years.

This fiscal year we're investing more than \$100,000 to upgrade the roof and toilet facilities for the picnic shelter at Goldstream Provincial Park, and approximately \$100,000 to ensure that there is a safe supply of drinking water at Ruckle Provincial Park on Salt Spring Island. Those are just two examples of the many park infrastructure upgrades that are either completed, or underway on Vancouver Island.

Our government is committed to protecting B.C.'s wildlife, and to leading the world in sustainable environmental management.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment