



Honourable Harjit Singh Sajjan

Minister of National Defence
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
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Honourable Shannon Phillips

Minister of Environment and Parks
208 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 St.
Edmonton, AB
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July 18, 2016

Dear Ministers Harjit Singh Sajjan and Shannon Phillips:

RE: Managing Elk at Canadian Forces Base Suffield

I am writing on behalf of the **Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS)**, a 300 member organization representing wildlife professionals in the province, to express support for the Governments of Canada and Alberta to jointly develop and implement an elk management plan for CFB Suffield and the surrounding areas.

It is understood that management of CFB Suffield rests with the Government of Canada. Consequently, ACTWS is encouraged by the recent efforts of the Base Commander to work with Alberta's wildlife managers in better addressing the management of elk on CFB Suffield and surrounding lands. However, the lack of an elk management plan that adapts to changing ecological and social pressures facing the Suffield elk herd and the ecosystem where they live undermines the sound ecological rationale for the 1997 repatriation of elk to CFB Suffield.

With the best of intentions, elk were introduced to restore the ecological functionality of the Suffield lands. Despite much discussion and hyperbole about the value of this introduction, the absence of an adaptive elk management plan that addresses at what level the Suffield elk herd should be managed to achieve a defensible position in support of both ecological and social rationale will only weaken support to retain the elk. While there is no question an elk management plan is needed, it is important that it be done under the purposes of retaining the natural flora and fauna associated with this unique grassland landscape.

ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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ACTWS has previously served on advisory tasks at the request of CFB Suffield, e.g., Suffield Feral Horse Citizens Advisory Committee. ACTWS has the expertise within its membership to work with provincial and federal interests in finalizing an elk management plan for Suffield that incorporates the use of hunting to achieve elk management objectives. ACTWS offers its assistance in developing, and adaptively reviewing, an elk management plan that guides stewardship, management action and monitoring of the Suffield elk herd.

Clearly there is a shared intent that the elk are managed at a level that incorporates both ecological and social values in this part of the southern Canadian prairie grasslands. As such, this offer underscores the need to partner with adjacent landowners in the use of hunters to aid in the management of the elk populations that use this native range and adjacent domestic agricultural producer's lands.

ACTWS strongly urges our governments to find a way to incorporate the very positive intents of the wildlife conservation community in the development of policy and operational management plans. These plans should recognize the important role of elk populations to sustain the ecological integrity of Suffield as much as providing a range of community benefits on this working landscape. ACTWS's membership is prepared to help achieve these outcomes and looks forward to your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laurence Roy

President

Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society



Cc.

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