



Joint Media Release

September 5, 2018

Tsilhqot'in Nation and Southern Däkelh Announce Ban on Moose Hunt

Williams Lake, BC: The Tsilhqot'in Nation and Southern Däkelh Nation Alliance (SDNA) are joining together to ban all Limited Entry Hunts (LEH) for moose within their respective territories in the interior of British Columbia. This collaboration comes in response to the dire state of declining moose populations in our territories and the lack of effective action by the Province of BC.

Despite the unprecedented 2017 wildfires, which have made struggling moose populations in the region even more vulnerable to hunters and predation, the BC Government continues to issue Limited Entry Hunt (LEH) permits for moose in our territories, contravening recommendations on wildlife management and without the consent of our Nations. As a result of the wildfires, thousands of access routes for hunters and predators have been created while high value habitat for moose has been drastically reduced.

The situation is so dire that many Tsilhqot'in and Däkelh citizens are deciding not to exercise their Aboriginal rights to hunt moose and going without this main source of food for the winter.

Building off a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tsilhqot'in Nation and SDNA, both Nations agree that this is about protecting our resources and Indigenous ways of life, not about boundaries.

As a necessary step for moose stewardship, the SDNA has decided to extend its moratorium on LEH moose hunt for the 2018 season.

At an Emergency Leadership Summit held on July 10, 2018, the Tsilhqot'in leadership passed a motion by consensus to enact an interim moose protection law as an emergency measure. The Tsilhqot'in law prohibits LEH hunting within the Tsilhqot'in Territory. The Tsilhqot'in law also confirms a ban on hunting cow moose by Tsilhqot'in citizens or any other person.

The Tsilhqot'in and SDNA will continue to work together and welcome other First Nations to join these efforts in the months to come. The Nations also ask all hunters to respect this ban on LEH hunting, allowing the moose populations the opportunity to thrive as they did decades ago.

Quotes:

Nits'ipin (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chairman, T̄silhqot'in National Government:

"The traditional knowledge of our Elders tells us of a thriving moose population just a few decades ago. Doing nothing is not an option. In the wake of the most devastating wildfires in our history, we must take a precautionary approach to wildlife management. Much of our Nation and communities on a volunteer basis have banned moose hunting already. The majority of the T̄silhqot'in Nation population has relied on store bought meat and hunting of mule deer. It's not right that our members have to make this sacrifice with the Province continuing with business as usual."

"We are conducting a review of our legal options and looking at a possible legal challenge against the provincial decision to continue the LEH hunt. In the end, it's going to be the Nation picking up the pieces from the fallout of BC's mismanagement of moose. We welcome all other First Nations to join us in this effort."

Nits'ipin Russell Ross, Vice-Chair, T̄silhqot'in National Government:

"We recognize that the BC Government has made some efforts to work with us on moose protection and moose recovery, but they are not taking the action that is urgently needed to prevent the decline of moose populations. Moose is an important food source and food security is becoming more significant in the T̄silhqot'in due to the extreme changes in climate and environment. With an uncertain future, we look towards a precautionary approach. We have no option but to take the steps needed to protect the moose populations and our way of life. We need to prioritize conservation in this situation to bring the moose population back to a healthy and sustainable level."

Chief Stuart Alec, Southern D̄akelh Nation Alliance:

"As stewards of our lands, we must take appropriate action to preserve and protect our vulnerable moose populations. Our community members speak of fewer moose, unhealthy moose, and the impacts on their way of life. Conditions are worsening each year. We have the responsibility to do whatever we can to reverse this trend and put moose recovery strategies into place. At this crucial time, we cannot afford to have the pressure on our moose populations increase. We look to the Province and hunters to respect this closure and to aid in our recovery efforts."

Chief Betty Cahoose, Southern D̄akelh Nation Alliance:

"We have been left with no alternative but to close our territory to the moose hunt. Moose are integral to our people - we have relied on our moose for generations. When our moose suffer, our people suffer. We are pleased to work with our neighbours on this vital issue. This isn't about boundaries. This is about preserving and revitalizing a species that is crucial to all of our communities."

More Information:

Southern D̄akelh Nation Alliance: www.dakelh.ca

T̄silhqot'in National Government: www.tsilhqotin.ca

T̄silhqot'in Interim Moose Protection Law (Dechen Ts'ededilhtan): <http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/Lands-Resources/Stewardship>

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