

Forestry and Parks Minister addresses Alberta Trappers Association



[Barry Kerton](#)

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Alberta Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen wearing a beaver fur hat given to him by Alberta Trappers Association president Bill Abercrombie addresses the attendees of the ATA gala dinner on July 13. | Barry Kerton/BL

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BARRHEAD - Hundreds of outdoor enthusiasts and trappers from all over the province and Western Canada descended on Barrhead on July 12 and 13 to participate in the Alberta Trappers Association's (ATA) annual Rendezvous & Outdoorsmen Show.

Among them was Alberta Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen, who was the event's guest speaker at the July 13 gala dinner at the Barrhead Agrena.

The ATA represents over 2,200 trappers, various corporate entities, and related businesses within the province. It is also the only government-recognized association for trapping in Alberta.

"The history and culture of trapping is so important to Alberta, Canada and especially in our rural areas of the province," he said, adding his connection with trapping began when he was a young boy. "I remember holding the first beaver I trapped above my head when I was a cub scout at eight years old."

Loewen also recounted how he raised half the \$4,000 he needed to buy his first truck through trapping.

Loewen said regrettably, he couldn't maintain his traplines while serving in government, but said he had passed them down to his sons to keep the family tradition going.

Loewen said his ministry is working with the ATA on possibly changing quota systems for minx, fishers and otters.

"Wolverines is another one we may look at," he said, adding the province relies on ATA members to provide them with accurate information.

"You are our eyes and ears on the landscape, and a lot of what we can justify in what we do as government comes from the observations of [ATA members] who help us monitor what is going on in the wild," he said.

Another issue Loewen said the province is looking into is disposition operational approvals or DOAs.

"We are looking at all the different aspects of that to see if we can make that happen. If we can, it would be a really good move forward for the Alberta Trappers Association," he said.

Grizzlies

Loewen said there is a lot of misunderstanding about the province's plan to permit selective grizzly bear hunts should they meet specific criteria. He made the change as a ministerial order in mid-June.

"Some people are calling it a hunt, others a slaughter, or a bunch of other terms," Loewen said.

He said the province has a three-pronged plan, starting with increasing education and public awareness of human-wildlife interactions and problems.

"Make sure we reduce those negative interactions between humans and wildlife," Loewen said.

The second prong, he said, is to increase the amount and quality of grizzly bear habitat away from inhabited areas to reduce the chances of negative or otherwise negative interactions between the bears and humans.

The last part of the plan, Loewen said, involves the euthanizing of problem grizzly bears.

"When a problem grizzly bear is identified, and a fish and wildlife officer or manager on the scene decides the bear should be euthanized," he said. "There will be a list of qualified Alberta residents that will allow the number one person on that list to be called out to take care of the problem bear."

Loewen added that the province would use the same plan to deal with problem elk, and depending on its success, it could be used for additional species of wildlife.

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