



OUTDOORS CAUCUS PLEIN AIR

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Ottawa
November 21, 2006

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment
Room 163, East Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Ambrose:

RE: Updating the 1996 Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians

On behalf of the seventy-seven members of the Outdoors Caucus, representing both Houses of Parliament, all four political parties, ten provinces and two territories, we respectfully request your assistance to re-institute the periodic government surveys with respect to *The Importance of Nature to Canadians*.

Since 1996 new surveys have been indefinitely postponed. The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Task Force on the Importance of Nature to Canadians used to sponsor these surveys. The Task Force was made up of agencies responsible for both the environment and tourism. Statistics Canada conducted surveys for the Task Force in 1981, 1987, 1991 and 1996. The 1996 survey covered 87,000 respondents nationwide. It was mailed out in conjunction with the Labour Force Survey and there was a telephone follow-up, which ensured a response rate of over 70%. In 1996 they determined that 10.3 million Canadians aged 15 and over took part in outdoor activities, with 4.2 million fishing and 1.2 million hunting. According to the survey, men and women enjoy the Canadian outdoors equally. The survey estimated that over \$7.2 billion was spent on outdoor activities in natural areas in 1996, including \$1.3 billion on wildlife viewing as both a primary and secondary activity. Canadians spent \$1.9 billion on fishing and \$823.8 million on recreational hunting.

Considering the essential role these millions of men and women play in preserving the environment, wildlife management and habitat conservation and rehabilitation, it is vital that we renew this survey so we can better understand the policy implications, costs and benefits for all levels of government and the economy.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. If you have any questions or need any assistance from the Outdoors Caucus, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Co-Chair Garry Breitkreuz, M.P.

Co-Chair Larry Bagnell, M.P.