

**Ministry of Natural Resources and  
Forestry**

Northwest Region

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Ms. Laurie Marcil  
Executive Director  
NOTO  
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Thank you for your ongoing engagement in natural resource-based tourism activities in Ontario, especially in these challenging times. I am writing this letter to provide you and your members with some information on the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) efforts to support black bear hunting service providers (i.e., outfitters) as they prepare for the 2020 bear hunt.

The health and well-being of Ontarians is our top priority. Since first learning of COVID-19, Ontario has taken decisive action to contain the spread of this virus.

At this time, fishing and hunting remain open in Ontario with all rules and regulations in effect. Please note that Conservation Officers continue to patrol and protect our natural resources during the COVID-19 outbreak.

In order to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for our staff, and in keeping with the recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, most staff from our district offices are working remotely. As a result, some modifications have been made to the delivery of services including the issuance of licences to provide black bear hunting services and the provision of black bear hunting validation certificates (BBHVC).

Operators requiring these services are asked to contact the district office they typically deal with.

If there are impacts to the spring hunt for outfitters MNRF will seek to provide outfitters with the full 2020 BBHVC quota identified in their respective quota notification letters (i.e., received in Fall 2019) for the Fall 2020 hunt subject to future public health considerations and guidelines in place at the time.

I am aware that requests have been received by Ontario to waive or defer fees associated with providing black bear hunting services. These requests are being explored.

As the outbreak evolves, we must all follow the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and act responsibly. Before stepping outside, we are reminding all hunters to:

- check for local restrictions on outdoor areas,
- practice physical distancing - stay 2 metres from other people, and
- do not gather in groups while fishing, hunting, and hiking.

The government will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate if further actions are required. Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province is supporting people, businesses and families during COVID-19.

Thank you for your organizational support towards MNRF efforts to assist outfitters in conducting spring and fall black bear hunts across the province, especially in this unprecedented time. If you have questions or concerns about this matter, please don't hesitate to contact Londa Mortson ([Londa.mortson@ontario.ca](mailto:Londa.mortson@ontario.ca)).

Regards,



Rik Aikman  
A/Regional Director  
Northwest Region  
MNRF