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## Trophy animals get protection

### B.C. anti-hunting group buys rights of guide-outfitting

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VANCOUVER - An anti-hunting group has paid \$1.35-million to buy the guide-outfitting rights to a prime piece of B.C.'s wilderness with a view to ending permanently the commercial killing of all animals in the area.

The Raincoast Conservation Foundation has acquired the guide-outfitting rights to five contiguous hunting regions along the central coast, stretching from the northern tip of Vancouver Island in the south to Princess Royal Island in the north, representing a land mass of more than 20,000 square kilometres.

The regions are home to hundreds of native species, including such popular commercial game as grizzlies, black bears, the so-called spirit bear (a genetic anomaly of the black bear that manifests itself in a white coat), wolves, cougars, mountain goats, moose and deer.

But Raincoast, in conjunction with the six First Nations who occupy the territory -- the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo, Xai' xais, Wuikinuxv, Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw and Nuxalk -- intend to put an immediate end to all commercial hunting in the area. That means from now on no one from outside British Columbia will be permitted to kill any animals in the region for sport. B.C. residents, who operate under different regulations, may continue to hunt and kill wildlife in the area, but members of the First Nations hope to see an end to that early next year.

The deal will be announced at a press conference in Vancouver later today.

According to provincial regulations, licensed guide-outfitters must continue to facilitate some hunting in areas for which they are responsible. Raincoast conservation director Ian McAllister, who helped broker the deal, said Raincoast will live up to those obligations by allowing hunting of some ungulates for food. But henceforth commercial trophy hunting will be a thing of the past.

"There is no other example in North America where conservation interests have bought out such a large commercial hunting area before," Mr. McAllister said.

Raincoast bought the licence from former guide-outfitter Leonard Ellis. It raised the money over a six-month period mainly from private donations.

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