

MEETING BULLETS

DATE: November 19, 2021

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

REGARDING: Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council Wildlife Dialogues with stakeholders

SUMMARY:

- In August 2020, the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council (MWAC) was established, with a mandate to oversee implementation of the Together for Wildlife (T4W) strategy.
- In December 2020, Ministers Conroy and Cullen met with MWAC to share the government's priorities for the newly formed council.
- To focus on priority areas, MWAC formed five working groups: foundations of working together; objective-setting; research and knowledge; funding; and governance and reconciliation.
- In November 2021, MWAC finalized a suite of recommendations in a letter to Minister Conroy (Appendix 1), which will be posted on the MWAC's [website](#) after a November 23, 2021 meeting with Minister Conroy.
- To support collaboration and alignment, the MWAC has:
 - Met with other government teams to learn about and advise on linkages with wildlife and habitat stewardship, including *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), Old Growth Strategic Review, Federal Nature Agreement, and Species and Ecosystem Information Management System (last two are led by the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy).
 - Formed working relationships with other groups to collaborate on common interests, including the First Nations-BC Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum, the Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation.
- The MWAC has planned Wildlife Dialogue sessions with Indigenous governments and stakeholders. These sessions are intended to promote transparency by sharing information on the MWAC's activities to date and to seek input on future priorities.
- Minister Conroy will attend at least the first half of the stakeholder Wildlife Dialogue session (see Appendix 2 for list of registered attendees) on December 1, 2021 and is provided time on the agenda to offer a welcome (Appendix 3).

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION AND MESSAGES:

- Good Evening. I am joining you today from the [insert territorial acknowledgement based on where MKC will be on December 1] and it is my honour to offer a brief welcome to everyone attending today's Wildlife Dialogues with the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council.
- I deeply appreciate your time this evening to come together and share perspectives and ideas for improving wildlife stewardship and habitat conservation through implementation of the Together for Wildlife strategy.
- As you know, the Together for Wildlife strategy was released in August 2020, and the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council was appointed at that time to oversee implementation of the strategy.
- Reflecting on the last 12 months, the challenges we have collectively faced have been enormous – the pandemic continues, it was another year of devastating wildfires, and now floods and landslides have disrupted our lives in significant ways.
- During this time, the Council has been working hard, exclusively in virtual meeting environments, to tackle high priority topics and reach consensus on a suite of recommendations to the provincial government.

- The Council is demonstrating a commitment to wildlife stewardship and reconciliation by ensuring that their work is collaborative, inclusive of diverse perspectives, and supportive of advancing a path to co-management in alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- The Council has also formed working relationships with other groups to collaborate on common interests, including the First Nations-BC Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum, and the Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team.
- This evening is your opportunity to hear from the Council in more detail about their work. It is also the Council's opportunity to learn about the work your organizations are leading, and for you to share your own perspectives and ideas for advancing reconciliation and improving wildlife stewardship and habitat conservation.
- Lastly, we all have a role to play to make the changes that are necessary to maintain and restore resilience in ecosystems, support local communities, and realize benefits from a strong economy. To that end, I also welcome your perspectives on how we can bring Indigenous governments, communities and stakeholders along together through our shared vision of healthy, thriving wildlife populations to build creative solutions to the complex issues we are facing today. You all have inspiring stories to share.
- With that, I wish you a productive and respectful session today. I am grateful for your passion and care for wildlife.

ATTACHMENTS: Appendix 1 – MWAC letter for Minister Conroy November 15 2021
Appendix 2 – Stakeholder Wildlife Dialogues participants
Appendix 3 – Stakeholder Wildlife Dialogues agenda

PREPARED BY:

Tara Szkorupa
Manager, Provincial Operations and
Implementation
Together for Wildlife, Wildlife and
Habitat Branch
(250) 489-8963

REVIEWED BY:

	Initials	Date
DM		
Associate DM		
ADM		
ED	LP	Nov 22, 2021
Program Dir/Mgr.	JP	Nov 21, 2021



Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

"Wildlife and their habitats thrive, are resilient, and support and enrich the lives of all British Columbians"

Minister Katrine Conroy
Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

November 15th, 2021

Dear Minister Conroy

Thank you for your letter dated June 28th, 2021, supporting our recommendations and enabling Chief Harry and myself as Co-Chairs to communicate with your office directly. Council has been working diligently in smaller Working Groups to advance the goals and actions of Together for Wildlife (T4W). That work has included participation by members of the First Nations-B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum (Forum). We have also met with the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) and Old Growth Teams, the Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team (PHTAT), and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF), and will continue to engage with these and other partners to further advance the T4W Strategy.

Your Council wishes to acknowledge the major changes you are leading in British Columbia with respect to Forest and Range policy, Landscape Level Planning, and furthering reconciliation with Indigenous Nations in B.C. Congratulations! Please know that we will continue to collaborate and bring forward our knowledge and expertise to assist you and improve the emphasis on, and outcomes for, wildlife and wildlife habitat.

This letter presents recommendations requiring your immediate attention as well as some with a longer timeline. Full reports from three of our Working Groups are attached and will be posted on your newly launched Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council (MWAC) website. The recommendations in this letter have all been endorsed by your full Council.

Objectives Working Group: T4W Actions 8, 2, and 16. (Attachment #1)

Reports, audits, and court decisions have confirmed that wildlife stewardship planning in B.C. is *ad hoc* and where it does occur, differs among plans, species, and regions. As well, the absence of a legislative framework enabling a vision of wildlife stewardship and objective setting is a barrier to overcoming this problematic situation. We appreciate that you are fully aware of this situation, having tabled the *Sustainable Wildlife Management Act* in 2016. Accordingly, **Council recommends the following:**

1. By June 2022, complete a Wildlife Stewardship Planning and Objective-Setting Policy, jointly with the Forum. See Attachment #1 for the Council's recommended policy foundation.

2. By Fall 2023, enact legislation that legally establishes objectives for wildlife and habitat stewardship and key ecosystems (e.g., wetlands, grasslands, riparian areas, old growth forest) as a priority that applies to all sectors (forestry, mining, oil & gas, tourism, transportation, agriculture, urban development, etc.).
3. Establish diverse and collaborative Regional Wildlife Advisory Committees to support the development of local wildlife stewardship plans. Significant progress must be made towards establishing these committees by Spring 2022.
4. Develop local wildlife stewardship plans collaboratively with Indigenous governments, and with stakeholder engagement through Regional Wildlife Advisory Committees, in all regions of the province.
5. Develop and implement monitoring programs and performance measures to determine if objectives are being met for key ecosystems on all public and private lands, including Conservation Lands.
6. By June 2022, increase transparency by establishing a public registry for wildlife stewardship planning.

Funding Working Group: T4W Action 13. (Attachment #2)

To help implement T4W, the Wildlife and Habitat budget was increased by almost 10 million dollars. However, overall wildlife and habitat stewardship in B.C. remains significantly underfunded – hence the need for a new dedicated funding model and innovative partnerships to leverage money. To achieve Action 13, T4W consultants will be preparing an evidence-based assessment of options for sufficient and dedicated wildlife and habitat funding. To further support this Action, **Council recommends the following:**

7. Support the following principles with respect to new long-term, stable and dedicated funding for wildlife and habitat. The background on each of these principles is in Attachment #2.
 - A. Everyone pays: dedicated funding will come from all residents and visitors, as well as direct users.
 - B. The funding agent will be impartial and will leverage and match provincial and federal funding.
 - C. The decision-making process will be clear and transparent, will respect the needs of Indigenous communities to be part of the decision making, and will follow best practices for governance.
 - D. Annual expenditures on wildlife and habitat will be publicly reported, with regular audits by the Auditor General.

Implementing T4W will require a new dedicated funding model built on these principles and informed by the ongoing work of the Council. Incremental changes to existing funding models would complement this new model. Here are the first incremental changes that **Council has recognized and endorsed:**

8. Enact regulatory changes to double the surcharge on hunting and species licenses for resident and non-resident hunters, effective immediately and with regular cost of living updates to the surcharge (the last increase was in 2004 and inflation has substantially eroded the purchasing power of these dollars). Council supports the BC Wildlife Federation 2021 resolution on this matter.
9. Together with your colleague Minister George Heyman, undertake a review, rationalization, and increase of the fines levied under the *Wildlife Act*. Council supports the Conservation Officer Service in recommending this action, and furthermore adds that these fines should be dedicated to the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF), which likely will require a regulation change under the *Financial Administration Act*.

Research Working Group: T4W Actions 4, 5, and 7 (Attachment #3)

There are key knowledge gaps in the scientific understanding of what limits wildlife populations and the steps needed to manage these populations to meet objectives. Uncoordinated efforts across government scientists, regional staff, academics, and private sector consultants limit our ability to rapidly and cost-effectively respond to scientific demands. Designing the 'next study' to help guide management decision making requires better coordination among these sectors as well as better access to the data that have already been collected. These efforts complement both the Funding and Objectives Working Groups' recommendations to fund monitoring of stewardship activities. Accordingly, **Council recommends the following:**

10. Work with your Environment and Land Use Committee colleagues to establish the funding needed to complete the BioHUB Initiative, which has the potential to transform the management and accessibility of wildlife data in B.C. (estimated at \$5.5 million). "Open access" principles must become the norm, with independent oversight on data security.
11. Work with your colleague, Minister George Heyman, and his team from the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) to formulate an improved policy that better incentivizes data sharing with FLNRORD. As an example, include a requirement for data uploads through BioHUB as part of the EAO permitting process.
12. Integrate management targets with rigorous monitoring to track progress towards these goals. Funding for stewardship efforts must include support for monitoring and account for cumulative impacts of human activity on wildlife, not just project-specific impacts.
13. Support the work underway by the Research Working Group to develop options for the creation of a scientific advisory team (or similar body) to support information needs of provincial advisory bodies (PHTAT, Forum, MWAC), support the prioritization and coordination of wildlife science needs across regions, and facilitate interactions among governments (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and non-government scientists.

Additional Recommendations

BC experienced another extraordinary wildfire season in 2021. While many wildlife species benefit from wildfire, the scale and intensity of fires in recent years requires more thoughtful management to ensure post-fire land use activities result in conditions that meet species and ecosystem objectives. Accordingly, **Council recommends the following:**

14. That government establish an interdisciplinary, collaborative team to ensure that wildfire recovery management actions (e.g., salvage, retention, reforestation) are developed with Indigenous Nations, informed by the best available information (Indigenous knowledge, science, professional assessments), inclusive of stakeholder input, and implemented with enforceable tools.
15. That post-fire decisions clearly balance the priority for wildlife and wildlife habitat, together with ecosystem health and resilience, with other values and economic drivers.
16. That government prioritize the implementation of cultural and prescribed fire to proactively reduce the severity of future wildfires and improve wildlife habitats.

In our January 21st, 2021 letter to you, Council gave support to the work between your ministry staff and the forest industry, regarding policy changes on forest roads rehabilitation. It is disappointing that after ten months Council has not seen any encouraging signs of improvement – particularly given the significant negative impact that access is having on wildlife throughout much of BC. Therefore, **Council recommends the following:**

17. The implementation of a stumpage appraisal mechanism that enables the holder of a cutting authority to fairly and equitably recover the costs incurred of carrying out beneficial forestry roads rehabilitation work.

As Co-Chairs of your Council, both Harry and I have been impressed by the work undertaken by the Working Groups, and the collaboration with the Forum, PHTAT, HCTF, and the FRPA and Old Growth Teams. We feel positive these recommendations will advance T4W in a robust manner. We are also very pleased that you will be welcoming participants at the Stakeholder Wildlife Dialogue on December 1st, 6-8 pm and that Minister Nathan Cullen will be welcoming participants at the Indigenous Wildlife Dialogue on November 26, 9-11 am.

Your Council looks forward to meeting with you on November 23rd, and hope that this letter provides the basis of an enduring, positive, and important discussion.

Sincerely,

Nancy Wilkin and Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.)
Co-Chairs, Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

CC: Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development

Rick Manwaring, Deputy Minister, Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Lori Halls, Deputy Minister, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Secretariat

David Muter, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Stewardship Division

Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

First Nations – BC Wildlife Advisory Forum

Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team

Name	Organization
Jonathan Buchanan	Association for Mineral Exploration (AME)
Brad Harrison	Backcountry Lodges of BC Association
Loree Dokimenko	Battle Abbey Back Country Lodge
Kevin Boon	BC Cattlemen's Association
Alan Duffy	BC Chapter Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Trina Radford	BC Conservation Foundation
Vanessa Isnardy	BC Conservation Foundation-WildSafeBC Program
Sabrina Spencer	BC Council of Forest Industries
Michael Armstrong	BC Council of Forest Industries
Danielle Melchior	BC Council of Forest Industries
Ben van Drimmelen	BC Nature
Peter Ballin	BC Nature
Donegal Wilson	BC Snowmobile Federation
Andrea Wallace	BC SPCA
Sara Dubois	BC SPCA
Tim Killey	BC Trappers
Chuck Zuckerman	BC Wildlife Federation
David Oliver	BC Wildlife Federation
Gerry Paille	BC Wildlife Federation
Rob Chipman	BC Wildlife Federation
Doug Kitts	BC Wildlife Federation
dave Carleton	BC Wildlife Federation vice President
Stewart Fraser	Caribou Chilcotin Guide Outfitters Association
Melissa Saarinen	Carlyle Lodge
Kathy MacRae	Commercial Bear Viewing Association
Jessie Corey	CPAWS-BC
Mike Bourns	Diana Lake lodge
Glenn Flynn	East Kootenay Wildlife Association
Kevin Podrasky	East Kootenay Wildlife Association
Darrell Shiels	East Kootenay Wildlife Association
Sarah Korpan	Ecojustice
Scott Ellis	GOABC
Joyce	GOABC
Katelynn Schriener	Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
Dan Buffett	Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
Corrina Stafford	HeliCat Canada Association
Evan Saugstad	Hunters for BC - SCI
Russell Hulbert	Ice Creek Lodge
Dan Battistella	Interior Lumber Manufacturers' Association
Richard Hoar	Lake Windermere District Rod & Gun Club
Ben van Drimmelen	LTABC/BC Nature
David Birnie	Mistaya Lodge
Hillary Page	Nature Conservancy Canada
Louise Pedersen	Outdoor Recreation Council of BC
Megan	Outdoor Recreation Council of BC

Mark Robichaud	Pemberton Wildlife Association
Mike Gillingham	PHATAT (UNBC)
Cara McGlashan	Sorcerer Lodge
Jason Emery	The Nature Trust of BC
Thomas Reid	The Nature Trust of BC
Carl McNaughton	The Nature Trust of BC
Walt Judas	Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia
Dale Douglas	Tyax Adventures
Jim Turner	UBBC - United Bowhunters of BC
Cole Burton	University of British Columbia
Rachel Bailey	Whitecap Alpine Adventures
Kyle Stelter	Wild Sheep Society of BC
Michael Surbey	Wild Sheep Society of BC
Christopher Barker	Wild Sheep Society of BC
Charlotte Dawe	Wilderness Committee
Cori Lausen	Wildlife Conservation Society Canada
Justina C. Ray	Wildlife Conservation Society Canada
Bill Harrower	Wildlife Society - BC Chapter
Rod Davis	Wildlife Society - BC Chapter
Eddie Petryshen	Wildsight
Tim Burkhart	Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative



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Wildlife Dialogues for Stakeholder Organizations

We are pleased you are able to join the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council (MWAC) for our online discussion called "Wildlife Dialogues". This is an opportunity to learn more about MWAC's activities in the first year and for MWAC to seek your input as we move collaboratively towards new ways of managing wildlife in B.C.

The meeting link and agenda are below. Please note that we will only be admitting registered participants to the meeting. If your plans have changed and you are no longer able to participate (or are sending an alternate), please contact Judith Cullington at judith@cullington.ca

Date:, Wednesday, December 1st 2021 6:00 to 8:00 pm – **please log in 5-10 minutes early to allow us to begin on time.**

Zoom link: ^{s.15; s.17}

Phone

Meeting ID:

Passcode: }

Agenda:

- ✚ Welcome prayer
- ✚ Welcome from Minister Katrine Conroy or Minister Nathan Cullen
- ✚ Updates
 - Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council (MWAC)
 - First Nations – BC Wildlife and Habitat Forum (Forum)
 - Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team (PHTAT)
- ✚ Breakout session 1: How are stakeholder organizations raising the profile of wildlife to become a primary consideration in all land use in BC (including resource extraction, urban and rural development, and recreational use)? What else should we be doing?
- ✚ Breakout session 2: How can the Province, Indigenous organizations and stakeholders work together to deliver great wildlife stewardship in BC?
- ✚ Closing comments

We look forward to meeting with you virtually!

Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry F. Nyce Sr.) Co-Chair, Nancy L. Wilkin, Co-Chair