

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
MEETING INFORMATION NOTE**

November 21, 2017
CLIFF/tracking #: 311276

PREPARED FOR: Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

DATE AND TIME OF MEETING: Friday, December 6, 2017 from 12:30-1:00pm

ATTENDEES:

Mark Zacharias, Deputy Minister, Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Jim Standen, Assistant Deputy Minister, BC Parks and Conservation Officer Service
Ken Morrison, Manager Planning and Land Administration, BC Parks
Bruce Passmore, Exec. Dir, BC Chapt, Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS)

ISSUE(S): CPAWS wishes to discuss the South Okanagan National Park Reserve; Pathway to Canada Target 1; improving BC Parks; grizzly bear and caribou recovery; and establishing a wildlife connectivity corridor in the Flathead Valley.

BACKGROUND:

1) Proposed National Park Reserve (NPR) in the South Okanagan-Similkameen

On October 27, 2017, the governments of British Columbia and Canada, along with three of the Okanagan Nation communities, announced the renewal of discussions to establish a national park reserve in the South Okanagan. CPAWS was very encouraged by this announcement and issued a supportive news release.

2) Pathway to Canada Target 1:

A Strategic Plan for Biodiversity was adopted in 2010 at the Conference of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity. The plan includes 20 biodiversity targets (known as Aichi Targets) to be achieved by 2020 in order to reverse the decline of biodiversity. In 2015, Canada adopted the “2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada.” Canada Target 1, which aligns with the numeric component and focus of Aichi Target 11, states:

By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of marine and coastal areas of Canada are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based measures.

The Pathway to Canada Target 1 is a national initiative aimed at achieving the targets for the protection of terrestrial and inland water areas by 2020. A separate process led by DFO is addressing the marine conservation targets. The framework for Pathway includes a National Steering Committee, National Advisory Panel, an Indigenous Circle of Experts and seven Expert Task Teams all working together to provide advice, guidance and criteria to Ministers to inform the outcomes of the Pathway initiative.

3) Ideas for improving BC Parks, grizzly bear and caribou recovery, and a wildlife connectivity corridor in the Flathead Valley

CPAWS has publicly advocated for increased resources to BC Parks, pushed for the development of species recovery and habitat protection plans and engaged in past discussions on increased wildlife protection and connectivity in the Flathead Valley.

DISCUSSION:

1) Proposed National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan-Similkameen

Working with the federal government and the Okanagan Nation communities to establish a national park reserve is a provincial priority. The three governments will meet shortly to develop a work plan for realizing the establishment of a national park reserve, including identifying boundaries. Public engagement will play a key role in concluding the feasibility assessment and informing management direction going forward. These discussions will also take into consideration the many different interests in the area including the continuation of ranching and recreational activities.

2) Pathway to Canada Target 1

10.6% of Canada is considered protected. 15.3% of BC's land base is protected (including federal designations, provincial Wildlife Management Areas and OECMs). A minimum standards approach will likely be adopted along with the recognition and development of other effective conservation measures (OECMs) and Indigenous Conservation and Protected Areas (IPCAs). The Province is awaiting national guidance on these concepts to inform its work plan to meet the 17% target, which may include expanding the protected areas system through a modernized land use program or upgrading protections afforded to conservation areas that will likely not meet the national criteria.

3) Other ideas for improving BC Parks, grizzly bear and caribou recovery, and a wildlife connectivity corridor in the southern Rockies in the Flathead Valley

Grizzly bear and caribou recovery are provincial priorities, and government is currently investing in a series of habitat and non-habitat recovery measures and developing science-based protection plans. The ministry is also committed to the development of a Species at Risk Act and harmonization of laws to support the protection and recovery of these species.

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SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

As our new government charts the path forward for protecting our environment, advancing reconciliation and creating new and sustainable jobs for British Columbians, CPAWS can be assured that the Province is committed to working with the federal government, First Nations and key stakeholders like CPAWS to achieve these goals. Major initiatives like the establishment of a national park reserve in the South Okanagan, expanding the protected areas system and ensuring that it is properly funded, and developing other wildlife habitat protection and species recovery options will be essential for us to achieve the Pathway to Canada Target 1 goals and increase protection for wildlife habitat and species at risk across the province.

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Reviewed by	Initials	Date
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Author	HD	Oct. 25