

Objectives and Stewardship Working

Group: DRAFT Workplan March 5, 2021

Working group	Objectives and Stewardship
Fiscal year	2021-22

Overview of the current situation

The Objectives Working Group has been tasked with identifying an efficient means of undertaking Action 8 of the Together for Wildlife Strategy:

“Beginning in 2020, we will establish clear, measurable objectives for wildlife stewardship that take into consideration the interactions among species. In 2021, in collaboration with the Minister’s Wildlife Advisory Council and the First Nations–B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum, we will draft a renewed approach for setting objectives and linking wildlife populations and habitat. We will implement this approach after broad engagement, by developing provincial stewardship frameworks and regional stewardship plans for priority species and populations.”

Based on discussions beginning in 2020 and continuing through early 2021, the Working Group has identified a path forward (see Steps, below). Beyond that, the actual process of setting wildlife and habitat objectives is expected to reveal not only weaknesses and limitations in our understanding of wildlife ecology and stewardship (a necessary outcome), but also priorities for stewardship actions (including research and information gathering to fill knowledge gaps) that will bolster chances of success in achieving objectives that have the requisite social, political, and legal support behind them.

The Working Group has come to discover that a considerable amount of groundwork has been done on this matter by or under the direction of provincial staff. The Working Group has been discussing this topic since fall 2020 and is in general alignment with the Provincial staff as it concerns the preferred path forward.

What has the Council set as its goal for this Working Group?

Advise on the development of a provincial framework for setting stewardship objectives for wildlife and habitat in BC.

What is one challenge MWAC is uniquely positioned to solve/provide advice on?

Recognising that there are many challenges, where can the working group start and what is the MWAC uniquely positioned to do (as opposed to other initiatives, advisory bodies, staff, etc.)?

- *Clearly define the challenge – What is wrong with the status quo, how will objective-setting solve this, and what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of such an approach?*
- *Consider asking “why” to dig into the problem more deeply. E.g., A lack of SMART objectives to influence wildlife and habitat stewardship decisions. Why? Because there’s no clear process for wildlife objective-setting. (There are other barriers as well, but the process aspect is one component that the WMAC could address).*
- *What are potential ways to address this problem? Stay high level!!*

To be added

What is ONE tangible outcome that MWAC can realistically deliver within 1-2 years?

Advise the Province on the development of a draft wildlife objective-setting policy for BC.

(There may also be other outcomes that this WG would like to address, but these can come later)

What steps are needed, who should do them, and by when should they be completed?

- *What is realistic given other commitments for Council members and staff?*
- *What resources are needed to prepare a recommendation to Council? (e.g., information, staff time, research)*
- *Who else do you need to consult with? (e.g., Forum, other ministries if proposing a new objective-setting policy).*

Step	Who?	When?
Summarise work done to date and barriers identified through past engagement	Staff	Spring 2021
Determine interest from FN Forum and PHTAT in being involved with Working Group (or through another mechanism)	Working Group (with staff support)	Summer 2021
Identify important components to include in an objective-setting policy	Working Group	Summer 2021
Draft a preliminary policy for Working Group that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The background, goals, objectives of a stewardship objectives-setting framework • Guiding principles (including the need to consider: Indigenous interests, existing regional priorities; SMART objectives, multi-species assemblages; spatial and temporal scales; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats – including potential synergies and conflicts with existing and pending legislation) • Definitions (e.g., habitat) • Process for identifying priority wildlife and habitat values (including the potential role of umbrella species, biodiversity hotspots [e.g., wetlands]) • Process for setting objectives, including linkages between wildlife populations and habitat • Linkages between headquarters and regions • Linkages to Advisory Bodies (e.g., PHTAT) and the general public • Possible enabling legislative changes, • Ongoing roles of the MWAC Other elements of a stewardship objectives-setting framework as deemed necessary.	Staff	Summer/Fall 2021
Review and refine policy	Working Group	Summer/Fall 2021

Check in with full Council	Working Group	Fall 2021
Engage with government staff and related initiatives (e.g., species at risk, caribou herd planning, land use planning)	Staff	Fall 2021
Conduct broad engagement with First Nations	Staff	Fall 2021
Seek public/stakeholder input	Staff	Late 2021
Recommend changes based on engagement	Staff	Early 2022
Review recommendations and update policy	Working Group	Spring 2022
Seek Ministry endorsement	Staff	Spring 2022
Next steps: develop procedures, an objective-setting guidance framework		