



Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

Minister Katrine Conroy
Forests

Minister Josie Osborne
Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

April 8th, 2022

Dear Minister Conroy and Minister Osborne,

The Together for Wildlife strategy was designed to model a new way of wildlife co-management and to re-build trust with the citizens of British Columbia about wildlife stewardship. Principles of the strategy include trust, collaboration, respect, transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decisions. Goal 4 of the T4W Strategy speaks to "accountability and transparency building trust and confidence". Action 16 under Goal 4 states that "we will document and share with all British Columbians the rationale for significant decisions related to wildlife stewardship and how evidence was used to inform decisions."

We recognize that the proposed changes to hunting regulations in the Northeast has been very challenging for the Province, with a need to respond quickly and appropriately to court decisions and to maintain the confidentiality of the ongoing government-to-government process with local First Nations. We also recognize that these challenges have been further complicated by premature release of information from some of those consulted, and subsequent information flow. Nonetheless, the proposal and the process in determining the regulations did not follow the T4W principles. The rationale and evidence behind the proposal has not been transparent, and the objective the proposal was designed to achieve has not been understood.

How can we help? This is the time to find a positive path forward. It is not our role, nor is it our intent to comment directly on the regulations proposal, but rather share some advice about the process. This comes from discussions within the Council and discussions Council members have had with their peers. We encourage you to consider the following approaches for this region and future processes.

1. Publicly recognize how important wildlife and habitat are to British Columbians and there are lessons to be learned from the Northeast. The level of interest and concern

around this issue, not just in the Northeast but throughout the province, has been a clear demonstration of the importance of wildlife to British Columbians and that it is one of the key ingredients to reconciliation. This would also be an opportunity to profile the importance of the cumulative effects work and that one of the Province's key paradigm shifts is to place priority on ecosystem health when making land use decisions.

2. Demonstrate to the citizens involved in the engagement process that their concerns have been heard. Recognize the suggestions coming from those citizens and reflect them in any refinements that are made to government's initial regulations proposal.

One of our priority actions this year is to provide our advice and support for the successful implementation of Regional Wildlife Advisory Committees in regions. These committees may complement the government-to-government relationships and support a new way of collaborative management in BC based on open dialogue and a shared approach. We are recommending both ministries commit to accelerating the steps to implement these Committees and dedicate additional resources to enable their success. Our hope is that these regional committees will be a stepping stone to build trust within communities and become the "go to" bodies for advice to both the BC government and Indigenous governments on wildlife stewardship in BC.

We are here to help. We can prioritize the Northeast region and assist in government's proposed Phase 2 - Designing the Pathway to Together for Wildlife and Measure 3 - Establish and Resource Regional Wildlife Working Group. Please let us know how we can support this important work.

Sincerely,

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

CC: Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council
Rick Manwaring, Deputy Minister, Forests
Lori Halls, Deputy Minister, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Secretariat
David Muter, Assistant Deputy Minister, Land Use Policy & Planning, and Terrestrial Ecosystems