

Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

Meeting #16 Minutes

May 11, 2022 | 12:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Via Zoom

Attendees	
Council Members:	Staff:
<i>Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.) (regrets)</i>	Tara Szkorupa, Manager of Provincial Operations and Implementation, Together for Wildlife
Nancy Wilkin	Maryam Mofidpoor, Project Manager, Together for Wildlife
<i>Andrea Barnett (regrets)</i>	Dennis Paradine, A/Manager of Policy and Legislation, T4W
John Bergenske	Logan Wenham, A/Director Fish & Wildlife
Mike Demarchi	Jen Psyllakis, Executive Director, Wildlife, Habitat and Species at Risk
Luke Doxtator	Consultants:
Adam Ford	Derek Thompson
Caylin Glasser	Judith Cullington
Megan Hanacek	
Doug Heard	Guests:
Shaun Hollingsworth	Jennifer Vigano and Tori Klassen Jeffrey, LWRS, Watershed Security Strategy
David Hooper	Steve Gordon, Christina Waddle, Shannon West: LWRS Conservation Lands Program
Doug Janz	Gail Wallin, Consultant
Jasper Lament	
<i>Richard McLean (regrets)</i>	
Kari Stuart-Smith	
Michael Burwash, A/Director, Wildlife & Habitat	

Purpose of Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide Council with information on the Watershed Security Fund and the Strategic Plan for Conservation Lands. ◆ Provide Council with updates from all Working Groups and on T4W activities. ◆ Provide Council with information on the joint MWAC/Forum/PHTAT workshop to discuss regional committee formation
Handouts provided for the Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Minutes from February 2022 Deep Dive sessions and March 2022 MWAC meeting ◆ Backgrounder on Conservation Lands Program

Action items (from May meeting)	Lead	Status
Provide an update on action on other Auditor General recommendations at a future meeting or via email.	Christina Waddle	Future meeting
Contribute 'good news' wildlife stories via Teams .	All Council members	Complete
Arrange for Nichols to meet with the Funding WG.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Send out Hansard links to the discussions on the Wildlife Act amendments.	Judith Cullington	Complete

Minutes

<p>1. Welcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Co-Chair Nancy Wilkin welcomed members. ♦ Jen Psyllakis noted that Ministry reorganization is almost complete, and that Tara Szkorupa will be leading in bridging the Together for Wildlife (T4W) work between the Ministries of Forests (MoF) and Land, Water and Resource Stewardship (LWRS). ♦ Logan Wenham, A/Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch, MoF was welcomed and introduced.
<p>2. Approval of meeting minutes (February and March, 2022)</p>	<p>DECISIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Minutes from the February 2022 Deep Dive sessions meeting #14: no changes. ♦ <i>Moved by Megan Hanacek, seconded by Shaun Hollingsworth to approve meeting minutes. Approved.</i> ♦ Minutes from the March 2022 MWAC meeting #15: no changes. ♦ <i>Moved by Mike Demarchi, seconded by Shaun Hollingsworth to approve meeting minutes. Approved.</i> ♦ Action items from last meeting completed.
<p>3. Watershed Security Strategy and Fund</p>	<p>PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jennifer Vigano (Director of Watershed Security, LWRS) and Tori Klassen Jeffrey (Manager of Engagement) spoke to the process for developing the Watershed Security Strategy. (PPT on Teams.) ♦ The first phase of public engagement is complete. The team are currently developing strategy options, and will be working with First Nations to co-develop what this means for watershed security. The aim is to have a second round of public engagement this fall, with launch of the Strategy and Fund next spring. ♦ They plan to use a T4W model to create a 'water table' where government and First Nations can talk about provincial level water policies. ♦ Key goals will be increased local governance, protection of human and ecosystem health, and sustainable local economies and shared prosperity. ♦ Most frequent comments from engagement included the need for capacity building and watershed restoration and protection.

	<p>DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The strategy needs to include the synergies and alignment with wildlife and habitat. ♦ Local First Nations water laws and policies need to be incorporated. The WSS team are working with First Nations to develop protocols for this. ♦ The team are looking at the regulatory changes needed to support local decision making, noting that this will happen over a period of time. There is a model project in the Koksilah under development. ♦ It would be helpful to have interim guidelines for regional directors, including for riparian zones and buffers. ♦ The WSS Fund has yet to be established. Some funding has been allocated for Indigenous-led projects, other restoration projects and monitoring. Details will be in Budget 2023.
<p>3. Strategic Plan for Conservation Lands</p>	<p>PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christina Waddle (Conservation Lands Specialist, LWRS) introduced the work to create a Conservation Lands Strategic Plan. (PPT on Teams.) The program has a long history of collaboration and partnerships, including the current Conservation Lands Plan Partnership. ♦ The Auditor General’s 2021 report made 11 recommendations for Conservation Lands, three of which pertain to the development of a Strategic Plan for the program. ♦ Consultants Gail Wallin and Brian Springinotic have been hired to assist with development of the plan. ♦ MWAC, the Forum and the Conservation Land Program Partners will be key partners in shaping the Strategic Plan, together with government staff. These groups will help to frame the plan and approach, with an aim to begin building the plan in fall 2022. MWAC was asked how it wanted to be engaged. <p>DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Several Council members expressed interest in being involved, preferably through individual or small group interviews, perhaps with a follow-up broader meeting as a Council. ♦ Concern was expressed that co-development of the plan should happen at the provincial level as well as at the regional level. ♦ Other comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All new Conservation Lands proposals will need to be Indigenous-driven. ○ Consideration should be given to lowlands and the impact of development, through partnership with private landowners. ○ Need for an analysis of ecosystems that are missing from the current portfolio. ○ There is an opportunity to capture successful WMA case studies, so that this can be shared with all regions.

	<p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Christina Waddle will provide an update on action on other Auditor General recommendations at a future meeting or via email.
<p>4. Working Group Updates</p>	<p>All Working Group (WG) meeting notes and presentations are available on Teams.</p> <p>Mike Demarchi provided an update from the Objectives Working Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Kari Stuart-Smith is now a co-Lead for this group. ◆ “Good news” stories are being gathered to share with Ministers. ◆ The Objectives policy has been drafted and is being reviewed by the Forum. ◆ Principles for new policy development have been created, using T4W principles. ◆ The WG will be considering cumulative effects, protection for wildlife habitat features, biodiversity legislation, road rehabilitation and access management over the coming year. <p>Adam Ford provided an update from the Research Working Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The report from Brian Starzomski “A new vision for wildlife science in British Columbia” is complete and posted on T4W website. ◆ One recommendation was to implement post-secondary scholarships. Funds have been transferred to the Interior Universities Research Coalition (IURC) to fund six research scholarships. ◆ The group is seeking a consultant to develop more detailed information on actioning other recommendations. <p>Jasper Lament provide an update from the Funding Working Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A contract has been issued to Nichols Associates to research the economic benefits of wildlife. ◆ Work to increase fines and surcharges has been delayed by capacity issues. This concern has been raised with decision-makers. ◆ The WG met with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to discuss funding for additional wildlife crossings, and will be following up. ◆ UVic Environmental Law Centre has issued a report on the BC Hydro Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program. This notes that Hydro funding for the Columbia Basin is many orders of magnitude smaller than that from US States. <p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ All Council members to contribute ‘good news’ wildlife stories via Teams. ◆ Judith Cullington to arrange for Nichols to meet with the Funding WG.
<p>5. Regional Wildlife Advisory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A workshop with MWAC, Forum and PHTAT participants will take place on June 8 (hybrid in-person at UBCO and virtual meeting). ◆ Materials, including a backgrounder, will be sent to Council members before the meeting.

Committees workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ There will be a follow up meeting, with an aim to have draft guidelines by early fall.
6. T4W updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Dennis Paradine provided a confidential update on legislation and policy. ♦ Nancy reported on the Co-Chairs meeting with Minister Osborne, and her presentation to the BC Trappers Convention. She noted Ministers Conroy and Osborne meet regularly and support the need for an integrated approach for T4W. ♦ Tara Szkorupa provided an update on T4W activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding has been notionally awarded to regions, Indigenous Funding program decisions will occur in June. ○ Staff are updating the implementation overview for all Actions. ○ Ministry reorganization is almost complete, some adjustments still occurring. <p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Judith Cullington to send out Hansard links to the discussions on the Wildlife Act amendments.
7. Closing & Next Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Next meeting Regional Wildlife Advisory Committees workshop, June 8 ♦ Next regular meeting July 13, 2022