

Ministers Wildlife Advisory Council

Meeting #26 Minutes

November 8, 2023 12:30 – 3:30 pm
Via Zoom

Attendees	
Council Members:	Staff:
<i>Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.) (regrets)</i>	Jen Psyllakis, Executive Director, Wildlife, Habitat & Species at Risk
Nancy Wilkin	Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation
Adam Ford	Jen Walker, Director, Strategic Initiatives
<i>Alyssa Lepka (regrets)</i>	Michael Burwash, Associate Director Wildlife, Fish & Wildlife Brch
Andrea Barnett	Rachyl Lukie, Coast Area Lead, Together for Wildlife
<i>Caylin Glasser (regrets)</i>	Catherine Denny, Wildlife Biologist, Stewardship Planning
Doug Heard	Christina Waddle, Conservation Lands Specialist
Jasper Lament	
Jason Northcott	Consultants:
John Bergenske	Derek Thompson
Kari Stuart-Smith	Judith Cullington
<i>Megan Hanacek (regrets)</i>	
Mike Demarchi	

Naomi Owens-Beek

Shaun Hollingsworth

Purpose of Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Discuss action items from Strategies WG ◆ Discuss T4W funding for 2024-25 ◆ Receive updates from staff 	
Action items (from November meeting)	Lead	Status
Confirm if MWAC is now reporting solely to Minister Cullen.	Avril Nagel	Complete
Invite Minister Cullen to the Wildlife Dialogues.	Avril Nagel	Complete
Send out invitations to the Wildlife Dialogues.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Canvas availability of MWAC members to be facilitators at the Dialogues.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Canvas volunteers to be members of the T4W joint working group. Lead development of recommendations and presentation to Premiers Task Force on Emergencies.	Nancy Wilkin Kari Stuart-Smith, Mike Demarchi, Jasper Lament and Andrea Barnett	Complete In progress

Follow up with Wildfire Secretariat on opportunity to present to the Task Force.	Avril Nagel	Complete
Provide comments on the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework, and Council's statement of endorsement, by November 9 th .	Council	Complete
Invite Brian Bawtinheimer to discuss OECMs at January MWAC meeting.	Avril Nagel	Complete
Circulate the call for members of the BC Parks Foundation Strategic Oversight Committee , and canvas names of Council volunteers that the co-chairs could submit to the committee.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Add consideration of Council's role with the Nature Agreement as a topic for a January meeting.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Determine options for Council to hire communications support; Council to further discuss need for a public profile.	Avril Nagel	On hold
Share a confidential draft of the Strategic Plan with Council.	Christina Waddle	Complete
Work with Co-chairs to consider how best to support Council with access to information.	Jennifer Psyllakis/ Secretariat	Complete – TEAMS to be reviewed.
Inform Council if there is year-end funding available.	Avril Nagel	Ongoing
Prepare a draft set of priorities for funding, and place on Teams for comment.	Avril Nagel	Complete
Develop a process for developing strategic budget recommendations.	Council	Funding WG

Minutes	
1. Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nancy Wilkin welcomed members and staff.
2. Approval of October 2023 meeting minutes	<p>DECISIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action items from last meeting completed or in progress. <p><i>Moved by Andrea Barnett, seconded by Kari Stuart-Smith to approve October 2023 meeting minutes. Approved.</i></p>
3. Co-chairs report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nancy Wilkin reminded members about the importance of the non-disclosure agreements, which enable confidential sharing of information. She welcomed the announcement of the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation. MWAC sent a letter of support and received appreciation from the Premier's Office. Minister Cullen has expressed his appreciation of Council's work, and asked for strategic advice on financing (\$ from licence fees) and predator management. Nancy met with the Wild Sheep Society, who outlined the numerous steps they are taking to move towards reconciliation. The T4W co-chairs have confirmed that Wildlife Act renewal will be the focus of the Wildlife Dialogues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A joint T4W working group is being established, with 2 representatives from each of the 3 advisory bodies. This group will build on the momentum from the October joint meeting, focusing on the Wildlife Act Review. <p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Avril Nagel to confirm if MWAC is now reporting solely to Minister Cullen. ♦ Avril Nagel to invite Minister Cullen to the Wildlife Dialogues. ♦ Judith Cullington to send out invitations to the Wildlife Dialogues. ♦ Judith Cullington to canvas availability of MWAC members to be facilitators at the Dialogues. ♦ Judith Cullington to canvas volunteers to be members of the T4W joint working group.
<p>4. Action items from Strategies WG</p>	<p>Kari Stuart-Smith provided an overview of the discussions and recommendations from the November 1 Strategies WG meeting.</p> <p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Kari Stuart-Smith, Mike Demarchi, Jasper Lament and Andrea Barnett to lead development of recommendations and presentation to Premiers Task Force on Emergencies. ♦ Avril Nagel to follow up with Secretariat on opportunity to present to the Task Force. ♦ Council members to provide comments on the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework, and Council’s statement of endorsement, by November 9th. ♦ Avril Nagel to invite Brian Bawtinheimer to discuss OECMs at January MWAC meeting. ♦ Judith Cullington to circulate the call for members of the BC Parks Foundation Strategic Oversight Committee, and canvas names of Council volunteers that the co-chairs could submit to the committee. ♦ Judith Cullington to add consideration of Council’s role with the Nature Agreement as a topic for a January meeting. ♦ Avril Nagel to determine options for Council to hire communications support; Council to further discuss need for a public profile.
<p>5. Conservation Lands Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Christina Waddle, Conservation Lands Specialist, provided an update on the Conservation Lands Program Strategic Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Strategic Plan is undergoing final review, and reflects considerable input from MWAC during its development. Final adjustments will reflect recent funding announcements. ♦ Noted that considerable funds needed for conservation lands, including for management plans. Mechanisms are still unclear, but will build on the conservation financing and Nature Agreement pathways. ♦ Plan implementation goes to 2030. Noted progress with Lazo Marsh funding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ MWAC input has influenced funding governance principles. WLRS now looking at strategic alignment of the funding streams. Having priorities through strategic plan helps to direct funding. ♦ Council may wish to endorse the Strategic Plan when ready for release. <p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christina Waddle to share a confidential draft of the Strategic Plan with Council. ♦ Jennifer Psyllakis to work with Co-chairs to consider how best to support Council with access to information.
<p>6. T4W Funding 2024/2025 follow-up</p>	<p>Avril Nagel is working on funding guidelines for the 2024-25 T4W budget. This continues the discussion from the last MWAC meeting.</p> <p>DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Critical priorities include Conservation Lands, RWACs ♦ HCTF could play a role in helping to get funding for on-the-ground projects. ♦ Need for a clear process to develop the MWAC recommendations and priorities for funding. Needs both a principle-based approach and response to significant events. Would be helpful to understand funding gaps. ♦ RWACs will have a role both in advising regional staff on priorities, and helping to get project funding from other sources. <p>ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Avril Nagel to inform Council if there is year-end funding available. ♦ Avril Nagel to prepare a draft set of priorities for funding, and place on Teams for comment. ♦ Council to develop a process for developing strategic budget recommendations.
<p>7. T4W Updates</p>	<p>Raychl Lukie and Catherine Denny provided an update on the Draft Interim Collaborative Wildlife & Habitat Stewardship Planning Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The draft policy was developed in advance of the Wildlife Act review being initiated. Once finalized, this draft interim policy will be in place until the anticipated Wildlife Act update, which would then be updated as required to bring the policy into alignment with the updated statute. ♦ Has had extensive input from MWAC and Forum working groups, and advances reconciliation in multiple ways. ♦ Now to March staff will invite input from MWAC and the Forum. Broad engagement with First Nations and internal staff is being planned for 2024. Aim to finalize the policy in 2024. ♦ Staff are currently looking for MWAC endorsement in principle of the draft interim policy, prior to commencing broad engagement with First Nations. Will be seeking full endorsement from the MWAC and the Forum in spring/summer 2024 following any necessary amendments to the policy in response to external and internal feedback.

	<p>DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Provincial Stewardship Frameworks (e.g., Grizzly Bear) are intended to guide development of local-scale plans (i.e., Regional Management Plans) ♦ Regional Stewardship Statements are an interim measure that could provide for immediate action for a species/ecosystem in advance of a Provincial Stewardship Framework or Regional Management Plan being collaboratively developed with First Nations and stakeholders. ♦ Regions can make plans for species that do not have/will not have a provincial framework (e.g., species/ecosystems limited in scope/scale). In this case, a single planning document would be developed as a hybridized version, which would be referred to as a Provincial Stewardship Framework (i.e., no need to develop both a provincial and local-scale planning document as it would include the same content). ♦ Need for strong and clear communications—this is complex, Nations and others may have many questions. Collaborative communication to Nations, including visuals, could be helpful. ♦ Linkage between habitat and population objectives: designed policy for flexibility—sometimes need population-based approach, sometimes more human-focused or ecosystem-based objectives. Wanted to avoid being overly prescriptive in the policy. Will provide guidance on developing objectives in forthcoming procedures. ♦ MWAC wants to be involved in future iterations of the document. This policy will be an important complement to the anticipated new Wildlife Act that will be implemented through existing tools e.g., FLP, Land Act, FRPA (demonstrating success in advance of anticipated Wildlife Act updates). Staff will be learning and refining the policy as they advance work in support of Action 8.
<p>8. Other Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ n/a
<p>9. Closing</p>	<p>Upcoming meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Council meeting January 10, 2024 via Zoom ♦ Wildlife Dialogues December 1st (9 am) and December 5th (6 pm) via Zoom ♦ Student Research Symposium, December 12th (pm)
<p>10. Closed session</p>	<p>Council continued discussions in closed session.</p>