

# Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

## Meeting #31 Minutes

August 14, 2024 12:30 – 3:00 pm

Via Zoom

Attendees	
<b>Council Members:</b>	<b>Staff:</b>
Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.)	Jen Walker, Director, Strategies and Partnerships Branch, WLRS
Nancy Wilkin	Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation, WLRS
Adam Ford (regrets)	Diana McNeill, Business Operations & Engagement Coordinator, WLRS
Alyssa Lepka (regrets)	Michael Burwash, Associate Director Wildlife, Wildlife Branch, WLRS
Andrea Barnett (regrets)	Catherine Denny, Wildlife Biologist and Stewardship Planning, WLRS
Cailyn Glasser	Mariana Nagy-Reis, North Area Lead, Together for Wildlife
Doug Heard	
Jasper Lament	<b>Guests:</b>
Jason Northcott (regrets)	Corey Erwin, Integrated Data and Analysis Services, WLRS
John Bergenske (regrets)	
Kari Stuart-Smith	<b>Consultants:</b>
Megan Hanacek	Derek Thompson
Mike Demarchi	Sairah Tyler
Naomi Owens-Beek	
Shaun Hollingsworth (regrets)	

<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review T4W action on data and transparency</li> <li>Discuss transition to new Minister</li> <li>Hear updates from working groups</li> </ul>	
<b>Action items</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Status</b>
Review discussions re the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework and Office and provide advice for Council on steps for the government team to consider during interregnum and transition	Strategies Working Group	Autumn meeting
Seek early face-to-face meetings with the current and new Ministry Executives	Co-Chairs, staff	In progress
Seek an in-person meeting with the new Minister early in the mandate	Council, staff	In progress
Prepare a detailed report on T4W funds spent to date	Staff	In progress
Redistribute summary information on investments in BioHub	Sairah Tyler	Complete
Present draft Species and Ecosystem Data and Information Security Policy to Council for input	Staff	
Decide if they would like to present Mike Demarchi's memo, and if so, to whom	Council	Include in Minister's briefing package

Minutes	
1. Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.) provided a welcome prayer.</li> </ul>
2. Approval of June 2024 meeting minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Minor amendments made to minutes.</li> <li>♦ Action items from last meeting completed or in progress.</li> </ul> <p><i>Moved by Kari Stuart-Smith, seconded by Cailyn Glasser, to approve the June 2024 meeting minutes. Approved.</i></p>
3. Co-chairs report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ MWAC replied to the Harmony Foundation’s letter regarding Caribou, and invited them to the November Council meeting</li> <li>♦ Planned meeting with DM Halls is pending</li> </ul>
4. Data	<p><b>PRESENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Corey Erwin, from Integrated Data and Analysis Services, WLRS, provided an <a href="#">update</a> on BiodiversityHub BC (BioHub) and the Species Information Management System (SIMS).</li> <li>♦ These systems are intended to make data submission streamlined, result in more complete and trusted data, ensure it is collaborative secured, published and managed; aggregate data from multiple sources so it is accessible via single portal; and ensure it is easy to summarize and visualize at multiple scales.</li> </ul> <p><b>DISCUSSION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Members asked questions about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Extent of First Nations responses during the testing period:</i> users can load their own data, and retain control of their data with selective access, and determine if/when to publish it to make it publicly available</li> <li>○ <i>If they are working with the Environmental Assessment Office to ensure a more consistent flow of the wealth of data that comes in through Environmental Assessments on both baseline and monitoring data:</i> conversations are in progress to strengthen language around data submission and publication</li> <li>○ <i>Whether Artificial Intelligence is being explored to assist with processing and summarizing datasets:</i> to some degree, but these systems are meant to provide raw data rather than providing analyzed or summarized information</li> <li>○ <i>The relationship between BioHub and Conservation Data Centre (CDC):</i> CDC data is a subset of BioHub, but the public would get data on red and blue species for example directly from CDC</li> <li>○ <i>Accessing the data systems via BCEID is currently creating issues for many people:</i> they are looking at alternatives but this is the only option for now</li> <li>○ <i>Ensuring that proper disclaimers on data are carried over into BioHub and SIMS:</i> they will look into this further</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Whether MWAC’s 2022 recommendation regarding an additional \$5.5M in funding for BioHub contributed to additional funding: staff will redistribute information on investments in BioHub</li> <li>◆ Doug Heard initiated a conversation about how data is deeply about reconciliation, and the tendency for the Province, First Nations, and industry to keep information private leads to challenging issues for everyone. Sharing data shows trust and cooperation and results in both greater reconciliation and more effective co-management, yet the resistance to this is evident. A shift is needed to allow people to admit there can be uncertainty in data, to allow dialogue about what the data may be saying, and to separate values and objectives from the data so that the focus is on the values and objectives more than the data.</li> <li>◆ Council requested to review and provide recommendations related to the <a href="#">Species and Ecosystem Data and Information Security Policy</a> – in part to help encourage changes so it is less restrictive to the Indigenous Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) process.</li> <li>◆ Community-based agreement on what data is or is not shared is important.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ACTION: Staff to redistribute summary information on investments in BioHub</li> <li>➤ ACTION: Ministry staff working on the Species and Ecosystem Data and Information Security Policy to present draft to Council for input</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Approach to New Minister</b></p>	<p><b>PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION</b></p> <p>Jen Walker provided several <a href="#">updates</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Draft MWAC Terms of Reference (TOR) capture reflections of the current Council. The TOR are of great importance as they inform next steps with the next Minister after the election. There are still outstanding questions about mandate and priority setting processes. A meeting request is in progress with the Deputy Minister to determine strategic need, intent and expectation with regards to the incoming Council, and a meeting will also be requested with the new Minister to secure mandate for an incoming Council. Council noted one revision to the TOR so that it explicitly states that Council is non-representational.</li> <li>◆ A cross-sector internal Funding and Reporting Coordination Committee has been established to support implementation of the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation. The Committee will support the coordination of funds delivery, streamline and align funding with program priorities, improve reporting, and provide recommendations to executive leadership. This is directly linked to T4W funding and performance reporting and will be informed by T4W goals, actions and MWAC priorities.</li> <li>◆ Council reviewed a presented list of MWAC top priorities of funding and confirmed their accuracy:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conservation lands including securing key parcels of private land with notable wildlife habitat value.</li> <li>○ On-the-ground projects with focus on rehabilitating resource roads, and lands subject to severe wildfire in order to recover and protect productive wildlife habitat.</li> <li>○ Addressing road and rail impacts on wildlife and passenger safety.</li> <li>○ Projects that are in partnership with First Nations or Indigenous-led</li> <li>○ Projects that leverage funds and support partnerships with other agencies.</li> <li>○ Projects that address knowledge gaps (biological, social, and economic) and data gaps to ensure wildlife populations can be appropriately managed.</li> <li>○ Regional wildlife advisory committees.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff are preparing transition materials, which are important to relay the value of Council contributions.</li> <li>◆ The pending meeting with the Deputy Minister this autumn is another opportunity to influence a future phase of Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Working Group Updates</b></p>	<p><b>STRATEGIES WORKING GROUP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Mike Demarchi spoke about the very positive meeting they had had with Norah White and Gary Merkel to discuss the vision for forests and biodiversity. Mike provided an updated memo on why a new model of land governance is needed, in the hopes that it can help build confidence in politicians to make the necessary decisions. Council to decide if they would like to present it, and if so, to whom.</li> <li>◆ Nancy Wilkin suggested that the timing will be right politically to present this due to being at the beginning of a new mandate.</li> </ul> <p><b>JOINT WILDLIFE ACT REVIEW WORKING GROUP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Nancy Wilkin provided an update on the Joint Working Group discussions.</li> <li>◆ Discussion summaries on changes to the topics of Objectives; Wildlife Habitat, Conservation Lands and Stewardship; and Reconciliation are complete.</li> <li>◆ Staff will be working on a draft policy intentions paper, and seek the opportunity to share this with the Working Group and Council post-election.</li> <li>◆ The last Joint Working Group meeting before interregnum is scheduled for August 20 and will focus on Species at Risk.</li> </ul> <p><b>CONTROL OF SPECIES POLICY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Nancy Wilkin provided an update on the August meeting related to updating the Control of Species Policy (predator management). MWAC believes that the policy is out of date, and does not acknowledge the role of First Nations, nor the issue of food security. A very fulsome discussion was had. Members of Council will continue this discussion further.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ACTION: Council to decide if they would like to present Mike Demarchi's memo, and if so, to whom.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Other Business</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff and T4W updates (Avril Nagel)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Avril Nagel provided staffing updates related to the South Area lead competition, the Forum Co-Chair opening, and the Engagements and Coordinator position.</li> <li>○ The Together for Wildlife website has been updated to make the information current, and will be updated further to make it more user friendly and accessible.</li> <li>○ Work is continuing on the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 reporting.</li> <li>○ Selection and acceptance of new Council members is anticipated for January at earliest; returning members received information from CABRO on training related to serving on a public board.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Council Only Time</b></p>	<p>Council continued discussions in closed session.</p>
<p><b>9. Closing</b></p>	<p>Upcoming meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Limited meetings during interregnum, any that take place will be without staff support</li> <li>◆ Strategies Working Group August meeting cancelled; September or October meeting date TBD</li> <li>◆ Next MWAC meeting is scheduled for November 13</li> <li>◆ Naomi Owens-Beek suggested inviting Jessica Wood to present on updates related to the <i>Declaration Act</i>.</li> </ul>