

Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

Meeting #35 Minutes

May 14, 2025, 12:30 – 3:00 pm

Via Teams

Attendees		
Council Members:		Staff:
Simoojit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.)		Jen Psyllakis, A/ADM, Resource Stewardship Division, WLRS
Nancy Wilkin		Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation, WLRS
John Bergenske		Michael Burwash, Assoc Director Wildlife, Wildlife Branch, WLRS
Alyssa Lepka (regrets)		Diana McNeill, Bus. Operations and Engagement Coordinator, WLRS
Andrea Barnett (regrets)		Marla Bojarski, South Area Team Lead, WLRS
Cailyn Glasser (regrets)		Guests:
Jason Northcott (regrets)		Christina Waddle, Conservation Lands Specialist, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, WLRS
Kari Stuart-Smith		Kim Richardson, Director, Terrestrial Habitat Section, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, WLRS
Naomi Owens-Beek		Celine Davis, Executive Director, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, WLRS
Shaun Hollingsworth		Garry Merkel, Provincial Forest Advisory Council
Megan Hanacek		Consultants:
		Derek Thompson
Purpose of Meeting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Receive an update on the Ministry budget ♦ Presentation of the Conservation Lands Program Strategic Plan ♦ Update on the Strategies Working Group
Action items (May meeting)		Lead
Revise minutes and recirculate to Council		Avril Nagel
Change meetings from Teams to Zoom.		Diana McNeill
Circulate the agenda for the Joint Meeting scheduled on June 26, 2025, to Council once finalized		Avril Nagel and Diana McNeill
Circulate the following links to Council – “Cutting Green Tape” and “West Vancouver’s Natural Assets		Avril Nagel
Follow up with an answer for Council regarding how many hectares are being targeted in B.C. for 30 x 30		Avril Nagel
Amend the May 21 st , 2025, Strategies Working Group Meeting agenda and circulate the Minister’s Mandate letter, Table of Recommendations and Funding Priorities in the meeting package		Diana McNeill
Provide a final version of the updated Terms of Reference.		Avril Nagel
		For July meeting

Provide Council with the next draft of the progress report for their input.

Avril Nagel

Deferred to July meeting

Minutes	
1. Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Chief Harry Nyce welcomed members. ♦ There were no additions to the agenda.
2. Approval of March 2025 meeting minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Council members questioned the use of the word unharvestable in the meeting minutes from March 5, 2025. This was in reference to Heather Wiebe's presentation on B.C.'s commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030. ♦ Approval of the minutes were deferred until requested edits can be made. Secretariate to re-circulate revised minutes. ♦ Council requested that Team meetings be shifted to a Zoom platform. <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avril Nagel to work with Heather Wiebe to revise minutes and re-circulate to Council. ➤ Diana McNeill to change meetings from Teams to Zoom.
3. Co-chair update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Co-chair report (Nancy Wilkin) ♦ There will be a Joint Meeting on the afternoon of June 26, 2025, with the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council, the Provincial Hunting and Trapping Advisory Team and the First Nations – B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum. ♦ The Joint Meeting will be facilitated by the Fraser Basin Council. ♦ The agenda for the Joint Meeting is currently under development by co-chairs. <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avril Nagel and Diana McNeill to circulate the agenda for the Joint Meeting scheduled on June 26, 2025, to Council once finalized.
4. Ministry updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ministry Update – ADM Psyllakis ♦ The Minister consistently speaks favorably of MWAC, emphasizing its value and importance across various forums. ♦ Together for Wildlife is still a priority and a core deliverable for vision mission and goals. ♦ Government member discussed a website on cutting green tape and asked for the link to be circulated amongst The Council. ♦ Council member requested a link to a website regarding West Vancouver's Natural Assets to be circulated amongst the council.

	<p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avril Nagel to circulate the following links to Council – “Cutting Green Tape” and “West Vancouver’s Natural Assets.”
5. Ministry updates	<p>Provincial Forestry Advisory Council (Celine Davis and Gary Merkel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The NDP and the Green Party have jointly announced a new Provincial Forestry Council who will be responsible for a review of forestry practices to advance stewardship outcomes and key actions for the sustainable management of forest biodiversity. ♦ This dedicated short-term Council will focus on the forest sector with a look at associated ecosystems. ♦ Anticipate working with Minister’s Wildlife Advisory Council in the coming months.
6. Presentation on Conservation Lands Strategic Plan	<p>PRESENTATION: Conservation Lands Program Strategic Plan by Christina Waddle, Conservation Lands Specialist, Resource Stewardship Division</p> <p>Link to plan: Conservation Lands Program Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Conservation Lands Strategic Plan follows key recommendations from the Auditor General. ♦ There are four goals within the plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Goal 1: Expand and grow the footprint the Conservation Lands Program as a key part of the solution for protecting B.C.’s rich biodiversity with a focus on fish and wildlife habitat. 2.) Goal 2: Increase collaboration with First Nations to identify and steward conservation lands for fish and wildlife habitat and biodiversity. 3.) Goal 3: Restore, enhance, and maintain fish and wildlife habitat and biodiversity within administered conservation lands. 4.) Goal 4: Increase public accountability and confidence in the role of conservation lands in contributing to collaboration, stewardship, and biodiversity. ♦ This will help us to leverage opportunities and capacity to deliver on the Strategic Plan through multiple pathways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing programs (Joint Ventures, Land Use Planning, IPCAs) ○ Emerging initiatives / Policy (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework) ○ Strengthened alignment and partnerships ○ Funding proposals ♦ Next steps will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To re-engage work with existing and new partners ○ Align work via Tripartite Framework Agreement (and completion of the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework) ○ Release of guidance material, e.g., WMA Designation Guide, Prioritizing WMAs,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin work on systems needed to track indicators <p>DISCUSSION</p> <p>Council Member (CM) Government Employee (GE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <u>Question CM:</u> Working with First Nations, there isn't a true legal mechanism for co-governance. Can you shed any light for this around co-governance? <p><u>Answer GE:</u> We have entered into an agreement to cooperatively manage a Wildlife Management Agreement (WMA) with the Tsilhqot'in Nation and while we can't make a shared decision under the Wildlife Act (WA) the agreement includes commitments to seeking consent and joint recommendations to the statutory decision maker under the <i>Wildlife Act</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <u>Question: CM:</u> Is there a plan in the WA review to change it to a WMA? Specifically for regional manager decisions in WMAs? <p><u>Answer GE:</u> Regional manager decisions in WMAs could be one of the decisions as per Section 7 of the Declaration Act of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, if enabled with Wildlife Act changes. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act - Province of British Columbia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <u>Question GE:</u> How will this fit into Land Use Plans (LUP's)? <p><u>Answer GE:</u> There are going to be areas of priority for land use. Government is working closely with those groups; we are also developing guidance pieces to identify areas and support designations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <u>Question CM:</u> 30x30 which is a national target, what does the province have to contribute to that? <p><u>Answer GE:</u> B.C. has committed to 30% within BC and the feds have committed to 30% nationally. The Conservation Lands Program aims to support 1% of the overall 30% within B.C.</p> <p><u>Question CM:</u> If that is 1%, then the provincial target is what hectares?</p> <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avril Nagel to follow up with an answer for Council regarding how many hectares are being targeted in B.C. for 30 x 30.
7. Working Group Updates	<p>Strategies Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ There are no updates as there was no meeting last month. Next meeting is May 21st. <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diana McNeill to amend the May 21st, 2025, Strategies Working Group Meeting agenda and circulate the Minister's Mandate letter, Table of Recommendations and Funding Priorities in the meeting package.
8. Council only time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Council continued discussions in closed session.

9. Closing	<p>Upcoming meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Strategies Working Group meeting – May 21, 2025♦ Virtual Joint Meeting with MWAC, PHTAT, Forum – June 26, 2025♦ Next MWAC meeting - July 16, 2025
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