

# Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

## Meeting #36 Minutes

July 16, 2025, 12:30 – 3:00 pm

Via Zoom

| Attendees   |   |  |
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| <i>Council Members:</i>   |   | <i>Staff:</i>  |
| Simoojit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.)                                       |   | Lori Halls, Deputy Minister, WLRS  |
| Nancy Wilkin  |   | Jen Psyllakis, ADM, Resource Stewardship Division, WLRS  |
| Shaun Hollingsworth   |   | Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation, WLRS                                 |
| John Bergenske  |   | Michael Burwash, Assoc Director Wildlife, Wildlife Branch, WLRS                                  |
| Alyssa Lepka  |   | Diana McNeill, Bus. Operations and Engagement Coordinator, WLRS                                  |
| Naomi Owens-Beek  |   | Marla Bojarski, South Area Team Lead, WLRS   |
| Cailyn Glasser  |   | Purnima Govindarajulu, Unit Head, Species Conservation, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, WLRS |
| Jason Northcott   |   | Pam Doerksen, Director, Strategic Initiatives - Wildlife Act Review, WLRS                        |
| Kari Stuart-Smith   |   | Logan, Executive Director, Wildlife Branch   |
| Megan Hanacek (regrets)   |   | Celine Davis, Executive Director, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, WLRS                       |
| Andrea Barnett (regrets)  |   |  |
|   |   | <i>Consultants:</i>  |
|   |   | Derek Thompson   |
|   |   | <i>Guests</i>  |
|   |   | Minister Randene Neill, Minister, WLRS   |
|   |   | Marshall Scott-Bigsby, Executive Assistant, Minister's Office, WLRS                              |
|   |   | Hunter Lampreau, Co-chair, First Nations – B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum          |
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| Purpose of Meeting  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Discuss Best Management Practices</li> <li>♦ Ecological Corridors Presentation</li> <li>♦ Minister Randene Neill Discussion</li> <li>♦ Grizzly Bear Update Presentation</li> <li>♦ De-brief of June 26th, Joint Meeting</li> </ul> |  |
| Action items (May meeting)  | Lead  | Status   |
| Provide a draft of the updated Terms of Reference.                          | Avril Nagel   | Completed  |
| Provide Council with the next draft of the progress report for their input. | Avril Nagel   | Completed  |
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| New Actions Items (July Meeting)   |                               |           |
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| Coordinate a meeting with MWAC and the Provincial Forest Advisory Council (PFAC).  | Jennifer Psyllakis            | Completed |
| Schedule biannual meetings with the Minister and MWAC, with one meeting to occur prior to the Wildlife Dialogues                                     | Avril Nagel and Diana McNeill |           |
| Coordinate communication with Treasury Board in increasing surcharge fees and seek validation from other groups                                      | Council                       | Completed |
| Distribute a list of potential MWAC members to Council   | Avril Nagel                   |           |
| Connect with those from the Northwest Strategy and provide info about the Sunshine Coast Strategy  | Avril Nagel                   |           |
| Coordinate an invitation for MWAC members to be participants in presenting to the Expert Panel on Human Wildlife Conflict (WLRS/COS/GBF partnership) | Logan Wenham                  |           |
| Send Grizzly Bear presentation to Diana McNeill for distribution to Council  | Logan Wenham/Diana McNeill    | Completed |
| Send comments on the Terms of Reference to Marla Bojarski no later than August 15, 2025  | Council                       | Completed |

| Minutes   |  |
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| <b>1. Welcome</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Harry Nyce welcomed members.</li> <li>There were no additions to the agenda.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2. Approval of May 14, 2025, meeting minutes</b> | <p>Actions from last meeting completed or in progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moved by Kari Stuart-Smith, seconded by John Bergenske, to approve the May 2025 meeting minutes. Approved.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3. Co-chair update</b>                           | <p>Co-Chair report – Best Management Practices - BMP (Nancy Wilkin)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was a BMP discussion at the June 26 Joint Meeting.</li> <li>There are some Nations that have BMP's when working with industry and this helps both parties as it de-risks opportunities.</li> <li>This can improve practices, help us reach 30x30 at a low cost.</li> <li>Due to capacity restraints within some Nations, a document could be helpful.</li> </ul>            |
| <b>4. Ecological Corridors</b>                      | <p><b>PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION</b></p> <p>Ecological Corridors (James Quayle, Strategic Lead, Ecosystem Connectivity &amp; Corridors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species need to move, with current threats, species need to move more than ever, and wildlife and humans need to coexist.</li> <li>As per MWAC: <i>We recommend that B.C. develop a cross-ministry strategy to systematically review high risk locations and to make recommendations for wildlife</i></li> </ul> |

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|                                      | <p><i>corridors and crossing needs and opportunities that will reduce harm to people and wildlife.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ There is a BC-Canada Agreement for Stewardship of Ecological Corridors. The value is a 5.3 million Federal contribution over three years.</li> <li>♦ The process that is trying to be supported for corridors is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Landscape planning guidance</li> <li>○ Corridor planning</li> <li>○ Provincial priority mapping</li> <li>○ Information and knowledge development</li> <li>○ Early corridor implementation</li> <li>○ Corridor recognition policy and guidance</li> <li>○ Outreach and communication</li> </ul> </li> <li>♦ Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wrap up project work by January 2026</li> <li>○ Ensure policy work, information, and guidance easily accessible</li> <li>○ Report out on successes</li> <li>○ Maintain continuity, progress in future</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>5. Minister<br/>Randene Neill</b> | <p>Minister Randene Neill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Thanked the Council for being invited to the wildlife dialogues and that she relies on Council to as to where she should focus.</li> <li>♦ Looked at key interests in Together for Wildlife (T4W), critical importance is the Wildlife Act review.</li> <li>♦ Currently there is focus on issues with tariffs and high cost of living.</li> <li>♦ Council has laid a strong foundation for policy intentions that will complement building a strong economy. It is a combination of reconciliation, economic and ecological issues.</li> <li>♦ Need to find common ground for the success of the work we are doing. We need a broad agreement that the things we propose are high reward.</li> <li>♦ Provincial Forestry Advisory Council (PFAC): It is important that Council and PFAC connect so they can benefit from MWAC's knowledge. A future meeting will be coordinated by Assistant Deputy Minister, Jennifer Psyllakis. Would be good to discuss Community Forests as a topic.</li> <li>♦ The Premier has discussed economic and industrial interests and how it balances with environment and reconciliation. We can and must do both. He directed all ministries to work with Ministry of Finance to make sure they are efficient and help grow the economy and protect lands and waters.</li> </ul> |

- ♦ All ministries are under stringent management controls that impact all areas of work including T4W, so we must pursue high priority work and reduce participation in grants and scholarships and attendance in meetings.
  - ♦ Conscious of the advice to protect Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation scholarships.
  - ♦ Budget is still uncertain but still working on it. Will include leveraging other opportunities and Assistant Deputy Minister, Jennifer Psyllakis will brief council on results.
  - ♦ The 30 by 30 inclusive planning processes will help identify places to protect. Expect land use planning to be a key process used to achieve conservation goals as well as T4W.
  - ♦ Minister and MWAC need to meet once or twice a year. Schedule a meeting in advance of the dialogues (a month ahead) to ensure public transparency.
  - ♦ Advice from MWAC appreciated on a “as needed basis”.
  - ♦ The June 26, 2025, Joint Advisory Meeting went very well.
  - ♦ Council to look at increasing surcharge fees and seek validation from other groups.
  - ♦ Hoping to have an update on the Wildlife Act Review soon.
  - ♦ Government is focused on the economy, and we are open to new ideas.  
An example of this is the Northwest Strategy
  - ♦ Update from Jennifer Psyllakis – We are working with the Crown Agencies Board Resourcing Office on a call out for new MWAC members.
- ACTION:**
- Jennifer Psyllakis to coordinate a meeting with MWAC and the Provincial Forest Advisory Council (PFAC).
- ACTION:**
- Schedule biannual meetings with the Minister and MWAC, with one meeting to occur prior to the Wildlife Dialogues.
- ACTION:**
- Council to coordinate communication with Treasury Board in increasing surcharge fees and seek validation from other groups.
- ACTION:**
- Avril Nagel to distribute a list of potential MWAC members to Council.
- ACTION:**
- Avril Nagel to connect with those from the Northwest Strategy and provide info about the Sunshine Coast Strategy.

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| <b>6. Grizzly Bear Update</b> | <p><b>PRESENTATION/ DISCUSSION</b></p> <p>Grizzly Bear Update (Logan Wenham)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ There are two concurrent initiatives taking place. 1.) Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework and Commercial Bear Viewing Strategy and 2.) A new approach to bear encounters.</li> <li>♦ Overarching objective to ensure grizzly bears do not become threatened or endangered and provide guidance for the consideration of grizzly bear values for proponents, decision makers, and participants on initiatives related to land and resource planning</li> <li>♦ Recognize the diversity in public interests, values, habitats and populations of bears within BC and place emphasis on local, regional, territorial, or population unit planning to achieve stewardship objectives</li> <li>♦ 2020-2021, the Wildlife Branch held early engagement sessions on the draft Framework. Approximately 85 different First Nations participated and provided diverse feedback in varying degrees of detail.</li> <li>♦ The draft Framework was also reviewed by the First Nations-B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum (the First Nations Forum).</li> <li>♦ 2023 – extensive public and additional targeted stakeholder engagement, resulted in further refinements.</li> <li>♦ Signed in 2024, the MoU represents an innovative step that supports inclusive and collaborative engagement efforts grounded in principles of reconciliation and respect for Indigenous rights and knowledge, contributing to effective stewardship and co-management.</li> <li>♦ A value-added component to the province's concurrent consultation process with First Nations throughout B.C.</li> <li>♦ June 2025: Indigenous roundtable held in Richmond.</li> <li>♦ Grizzly Bear Foundation and the Indigenous Roundtable will provide any feedback on the main Stewardship Framework.</li> <li>♦ An additional document related to First Nations perspectives as an additional resource (likely to support regional planning).</li> <li>♦ Concurrently, Province is completing formal consultation with First Nations governments.</li> <li>♦ 2024 MOU between WLRS, COS and the Grizzly Bear Foundation.</li> <li>♦ Creation of an Expert Review Panel.</li> <li>♦ Deliver report of lessons learned/recommendations.</li> <li>♦ Establish an Independent Review Body.</li> <li>♦ The framework resulted in need to respect all the different views from different nations.</li> </ul> |
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|   | <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <p>Logan Wenham to coordinate an invitation for MWAC members to be participants at the Indigenous Roundtable.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <p>Logan Wenham to send his Grizzly Bear presentation to Diana McNeill for distribution to Council.</p>                          |
| <b>7. De-brief of June 26<sup>th</sup>, Joint Meeting</b> | <p>De-brief of June 26<sup>th</sup>, Joint Meeting (Chief Harry Nyce)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ The Joint Meeting was successful.</li> <li>♦ There was breakout rooms and various topics were discussed, such as wildfire and regional processes.</li> </ul>                |
| <b>8. Discussion</b>                                      | <p>Open Discussion (All)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ New Terms of Reference was distributed to MWAC members for review/comment.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <p>Send comments on the Terms of Reference to Marla Bojarski no later than August 15, 2025.</p>              |
| <b>9. Council only time</b>                               | <p>The Council continued discussions in closed session</p>   |
| <b>10. Closing</b>  | <p>Upcoming meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Next Strategies Working Group Meeting – July 23, 2025</li> <li>♦ Next Secretariat meeting – July 24, 2025</li> <li>♦ Next T4W Co-chair meeting – August 5, 2025</li> <li>♦ Next MWAC meeting – September 10, 2025</li> </ul> |