

Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

Meeting #37 Minutes

September 10, 2025, 12:30 – 3:00 pm

Via Zoom

Attendees		
<i>Council Members:</i>		<i>Staff:</i>
Simoojit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.)		Jen Psyllakis, ADM, Resource Stewardship Division, WLRS
Nancy Wilkin		Celine Davis, Executive Director, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, WLRS
Shaun Hollingsworth (regrets)		Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation, WLRS (regrets)
John Bergenske		Michael Burwash, Assoc Director Wildlife, Wildlife Branch, WLRS
Alyssa Lepka (regrets)		Diana McNeill, Bus. Operations and Engagement Coordinator, WLRS
Naomi Owens-Beek (regrets)		Marla Bojarski, South Area Team Lead, WLRS
Cailyn Glasser		Logan Wenham, Executive Director, Wildlife Branch (regrets)
Jason Northcott		Dennis Paradine, A/Director, WLRS
Kari Stuart-Smith		Jeanne Robert, Director, Office of the Chief Forester
<i>Consultants:</i>		
Megan Hanacek		Derek Thompson
Andrea Barnett		
<i>Guests</i>		
		Garry Merkel, Co-chair, Director of the Centre of Indigenous Land Stewardship, Faculty of Forestry, University of British Columbia, PFAC Council
		Laurie Kremsater, Professional forester, biologist, researcher, and educator, PFAC Council
		Al Gorley, Retired professional forester and former president, Professional Foresters Association, PFAC Council
		Jason Fisher, Executive director, Forest Enhancement Society of BC, PFAC Council
		Dan Buffett, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Chief Executive Office
Purpose of Meeting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Update from Provincial Forest Advisory Committee (PFAC) ♦ Update from Dan Buffet (HCTF) regarding scholarships and communications ♦ Presentation on Modernizing the Wildlife Guidelines for Recreation 		
Action items (July meeting)		Lead
Schedule biannual meetings with the Minister and MWAC, with one meeting to occur prior to the Wildlife Dialogues		Diana McNeill and Avril Nagel
Distribute a list of potential MWAC members to Council		Avril Nagel
		Status
		In progress
		Completed

		(potential candidates were sent link to posting)
Connect with those from the Northwest Strategy and provide info about the Sunshine Coast Strategy	Diana McNeill/Avril Nagel	In Progress
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	
New Actions Items (September meeting)		
Update the September 17, 2025, Strategies Working Group meeting to start one hour later.	Diana McNeill	Completed
PFAC to meet with MWAC one or two more times once a direction is determined.	All	

Minutes	
1. Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Chief Harry Nyce welcomed members. ♦ There were no additions to the agenda.
2. Approval of July 16, 2025, meeting minutes	<p>Actions from last meeting completed or in progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Moved by Megan Hanacek, seconded by Andrea Barnett, to approve the July 2025 meeting minutes. Approved.
3. Co-chair update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Hunter Lampreau discussed a principled level approach to Best Management Practices. He is editing a version that will be brought to the next Strategies Working Group. ♦ A reminder that the Dialogue Sessions are upcoming.
4. Provincial Forest Advisory Committee (PFAC)	<p>Provincial Forest Advisory Discussion (All)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFAC and MWAC introduced themselves. • PFAC has been asked to look at the forest sector, which is in a state of major transition, and provide recommendations on the future of forestry in BC. • The council is exploring information around a shift towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ land co-governance between the provincial and First Nations governments, ○ a more substantive regional role in land planning and decision making, ○ whole-land planning focused on maintaining ecosystem integrity, and ○ a diverse provincial wood products industry. ♦ Regionally grounded planning and decision-making are a consideration, while ensuring good land stewardship and care. Any changes in planning and governance must include consideration of more stable and predictable resource-based economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFAC is currently engaging with targeted audiences and seeking ideas on what the future should look like, what the barriers are, and how relationships will need to be strengthened to support the necessary shifts. • To help guide PFAC's work, the MWAC provided input on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are some government barriers? ○ Significant changes (like wildfire and insect disturbances) are impacting forests and ministries need to work together to ensure a forest-based economy that is grounded in biodiversity values. ○ Co-governance strategy is challenging within current legislation. ○ If we are working towards ecological or social resilience, we need an all-of-government approach and organizational cohesion that allows for decision making to be balanced, within and between ministries. ○ Which relationships do we need to be build, and which are working well? ○ Good examples are Regional Wildlife Advisory Council's (RWACs), forest landscape planning (FLPs), and watershed security planning. Some good relationships are being built in these contexts, but how do we create connective tissue between these different tables and groups in a co-governance group and context? ○ Working relationships between the Ministry of Forests (MoF) and the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) needs to be strong. ○ The forest sector and industry need to be brought to the table. It is important to have a full range of people ○ What does the future look like? ○ Bring together First Nations and Stakeholders to make decisions. ○ Forest management needs to be economic and forest products reflect the full use. ○ A large amount of the provincial budget is spent on wildfires suppression; there must be a way to help with larger-scale proactive work that meets multiple needs in forests. ○ Mills need to stay open, and we need to work through a transition of forest management, the economics, and respect communities. ♦ Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PFAC to meet with MWAC one or two more times once a direction is determined. ○ MWAC has invited PFAC to their Strategies Working Group if they are interested. <p>ACTION:</p> <p>PFAC to meet with MWAC one or two more times once a direction is determined.</p>
5. HCTF – Communications	<p>HCTF – Communications - Presentation (Dan Buffet, HCTF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ HCTF is a non-profit charitable Foundation. Founded in 1981 by anglers, hunters, trappers, and guide outfitters willing to pay a surcharge on licences to improve conservation outcomes in B.C.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ HFTC awards approximately \$10M in grants annually. ♦ There are five objectives in HCTF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan ♦ Ten \$20K academic awards each year for master's and PhD candidates attending B.C. Universities. ♦ Since 2023, HCTF has administered the T4W scholarships. ♦ Students identify what focus areas they are addressing. ♦ The process starts in September and goes until May. Web updates and blog articles are updated as needed.
6. Modernizing the Wildlife Guidelines for Recreation	<p>Presentation on Modernizing the Wildlife Guidelines for Recreation (Kim Richardson)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Originally drafted by the province in 2002 -Interim Wildlife Guidelines for Commercial Backcountry Recreation in BC. ♦ Engagement with sector to produce the 2006 revised document -Wildlife Guidelines for Backcountry Tourism/Commercial Recreation in BC. ♦ These guidelines stressed a results-based approach and provided options for 'alternative' operational strategies. ♦ The guidelines were developed to ensure that backcountry recreation activities are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the current distribution of wildlife, the sustainability of their populations, or the integrity of their habitats. ♦ Intended to inform decisions under the <i>Land Act</i>, and in some cases, permits under the <i>Park Act</i>. ♦ Why we are doing this work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporate updated research and data. ○ Address growth in recreation and tech changes. ○ Meet provincial wildlife management obligations. ○ Promote shared stewardship and collaboration. ♦ Ecosystem health through shared stewardship: Objectives, Informed Decisions, Stewardship Strategies, Public and Sector Stewardship, Indigenous Knowledge ♦ Updated species-specific management practices for: Caribou, Mountain goat, bear, wild sheep, wolverine, badger and fisher. ♦ Next Steps: Ongoing engagement with sector, Indigenous technical advisors, Continued alignment with internal groups, Endorsement and Implementation.
7. Strategies Working Group Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Will be revisiting the roads and access management. ♦ Will continue working on the Grizzly Bear Strategy. <p>ACTION:</p> <p>Diana McNeill to update the September 17 Strategies Working Group to start one hour later.</p>

8. Council only time	The Council continued discussions in closed session.
9. Closing	<p>Upcoming meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Next Strategies Working Group Meeting – September 17, 2025♦ Next Secretariat meeting – September 25, 2025♦ Next T4W Co-chair meeting – October 7, 2025♦ Next MWAC meeting – November 12, 2025