

Together for Wildlife & Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council Q&As

Together for Wildlife (T4W) Strategy

1. What issues will the *Together for Wildlife* strategy solve?

In recent years, conflict among Government, First Nations, and stakeholders over wildlife management and habitat conservation has increased. A lack of data and information available to the public, and declining or overabundant wildlife populations has diminished trust and confidence in the stewardship of B.C.'s wildlife. Climate change is increasingly putting pressure on our wildlife and their habitat.

The T4W strategy establishes structures to bring diverse perspectives together, harness our collective knowledge and gather new information to prioritise work and make wise decisions. The strategy commits resources for on-the-ground projects, and increases transparency and accountability to ensure we are making real differences for wildlife and the habitat that they need.

2. Will the *Together for Wildlife* strategy really change wildlife stewardship in B.C.?

Success will take time to determine. We will regularly review and report the outcomes of implementing the T4W strategy so that we continuously make progress toward our vision of thriving and resilient wildlife.

3. How will the Province be accountable to deliver this *Together for Wildlife* strategy?

Accountability is a key principle identified in the T4W strategy and we have committed to implement a robust performance management framework with goals, actions, and performance measures to monitor and report publicly on the success of this strategy to all British Columbians (Action 14). The collaborative development of the T4W strategy - with Indigenous peoples, rural communities, academic institutions and a wide-range of stakeholder organizations - also means that many British Columbians are deeply connected to the T4W strategy and will be there to help us implement it effectively.

4. Why didn't the Province dedicate funding generated from hunting and trapping license fees to wildlife and habitat stewardship?

In 2018, government provided \$1 million to support engagement to develop the strategy. In 2019, \$3 million supported continued engagement and early implementation of actions. Now, \$10 million per year is being provided to support ongoing implementation of the *Together for Wildlife* Strategy. This is roughly equivalent to permit and license revenues from hunting and trapping and complements the

existing wildlife and habitat program funds. This model results in a budget that collectively exceeds the revenue from permits and licenses issued under the *Wildlife Act* and acknowledges that wildlife in British Columbia are the responsibility of all citizens.

New and innovative funding models, to ensure long-term, sufficient and dedicated funding, is also a priority action identified in the T4W strategy (Action 13). First Nations, stakeholders and the public brought forward many excellent recommendations for funding models during our previous engagement phases, and these will be used as a starting point for future discussions. Dedicating revenue from hunting and trapping licenses remains an option for future consideration, as part of a wholistic review of wildlife funding in B.C.

5. The *Together for Wildlife* strategy mentions reviewing the *Wildlife Act*, but what about other legislation that has significant impacts on wildlife and their habitat such as the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, and the *Oil and Gas Activities Act*?

It is important to consider wildlife values across Provincial legislation. The Province will be asking the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council to provide support and advice on new and existing legislation that relate to wildlife and habitat stewardship.

6. Why are many of the actions being delivered years down the road? This work is urgent and needs action now.

We recognize the urgency of this work and have already begun to implement many of the actions in the strategy. Staff are developing implementation plans for each action to identify the tasks that need to start now and sustain progress toward our long-term goals. We plan to share a more detailed implementation plan with British Columbians. This will ensure continued transparency and accountability.

7. How were different Ministries in government involved in developing the T4W strategy, and how will they be involved in implementing the strategy?

Staff from across government Ministries were involved in all stages developing the *Together for Wildlife* strategy including providing expertise, advice and input into draft materials; participation in policy workshops; and participation in external engagement. Staff have worked collaboratively to ensure that the strategy actions will benefit a wide range of wildlife species and their habitat across B.C.

The T4W strategy will be collaboratively delivered by all ministries that intersect with wildlife and habitat stewardship, as well as with Indigenous peoples and stakeholders across the province. There will be collaboration on policy work; engagement with partners; collection of data, information and knowledge management; enforcement; and on-the-ground stewardship.

8. How does this strategy align with other government initiatives, such as land use planning, Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI)/ Collaborative Stewardship Framework (CSF) and the Cumulative Effects Framework?

To deliver the T4W strategy, we will work together across initiatives, levels of government, and with internal and external partners to identify shared objectives and align work to fill gaps and avoid duplication.

Specifically, land-use planning initiatives will guide objective and priorities for local actions to implement the T4W strategy. Where ESI and CSF initiatives are underway, we can bolster our investments to help advance the T4W goals. Cumulative effects assessments for wildlife values will inform wildlife plans and management actions.

9. How does *Together for Wildlife* relate to the conservation and recovery of species at risk, including Southern Mountain Caribou?

The T4W strategy has a mandate to focus on terrestrial wildlife that are not “at risk”. This is because other government program areas and jurisdictions focus species at risk, with specific and targeted conservation and recovery tools. Although different programs focus on different species and ecosystems, we recognize that all wildlife and habitats are connected. Hence, many of the actions in this strategy, especially those related to habitat stewardship, will benefit species at risk, including Southern Mountain Caribou.

10. How does *Together for Wildlife* relate to old growth forest management?

Wildlife depend on a variety of forest ecosystems and age classes. Any changes in old growth forest management will take into consideration the work of the T4W strategy and vice versa. Provincial government programs are working closely to ensure alignment and co-ordination to deliver the best social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Minister’s Wildlife Advisory Council

1. Will the Province establish the Council in legislation?

We are establishing this Council for the very first time in BC history, and a non-legislated model provides flexibility to ensure we are making it work. A legislative model will again be reviewed with the review of the *Wildlife Act*.

2. What is the basis of Council membership?

The Council is focused on wildlife and the membership reflects and respects the diversity of British Columbia, with Indigenous perspectives, genders, backgrounds and

experiences from all parts of the province. Council members were selected based on their demonstrated history of working creatively and collaboratively for the advancement of wildlife and habitat. Council members will not represent specific positions or interests since that can lead to conflict not consensus.

The selection process was by application and rigorous. There were many excellent candidates that were not selected this time around; however, there will be additional opportunities for these people to be involved on the Council in future years, and on regional wildlife advisory committees when those are established.

3. Will Council advise the government on specific issues like setting population objectives for species?

We anticipate that the Council will focus on high-level, strategic areas like how to improve the use of science, how to use Indigenous knowledge, and on the process of how to set strategic objectives, but not specific issues like setting population objectives for a species.

4. What are the Council priorities and what results are expected?

Within one year, we expect Council to have demonstrated that it is working effectively and achieving tangible, improved outcomes for wildlife stewardship. To ensure success, the Council will need to focus on a few issues. When priorities are confirmed, those priorities will be communicated.

5. What is the First Nations-B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum and what is their connection to the *Together for Wildlife* strategy?

The First Nations-B.C. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Forum was formed in December 2018 in response to the Province's Improving Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Initiative. The forum is an innovative way to incorporate indigenous perspectives on wildlife stewardship from First Nations across British Columbia. The forum is comprised of participants from 40-plus B.C. First Nations. Their work is not consultation or place-based and members do not represent their Nation or employer.

6. Will the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council advise other Ministries on wildlife and habitat stewardship?

The Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council will provide advice on provincial initiatives related to wildlife and habitat stewardship. Some initiatives are delivered by ministries other than Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, including the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy. Council members may invite other ministries to meetings and to make presentations on related issues.