

Wildlife Management and Habitat Conservation in British Columbia

I am encouraged by this recent initiative and hope that the process will lead to some real and meaningful changes to the system in British Columbia.

The increasing impact from industrial and recreational pressure is degrading the habitat needed to support our wildlife and preserve what is precious to us as British Columbians. I feel that we are at a juncture in British Columbia and need to put wildlife management as a priority so that we do not lose the important resource that we have.

Wildlife and habitat management is a government responsibility. I am not here to tell you what needs to be done, as there are professionals in the system that can take on that role. However, the current system is not working and change is definitely needed. I do believe that individuals and organizations can offer insight and ideas through the process.

Here are a few messages that I would like to emphasize:

- Government needs to prioritize wildlife and habitat management and bring it forward in all landscape decisions
- Adequate and dedicated funding needs to be allocated in order to properly study and manage our wildlife and habitat
- Management objectives need to be implemented. They need to be clear, sustainable, and enforceable and also need to be prioritized.
- Science based Wildlife management plans that follow the North American Conservation Model need to be created and followed
- We cannot manage wildlife and habitat in isolation. It needs to be a factor in all landscape management decisions – from resource extraction, industrial use, and recreation use.
- One plan cannot work for the entire province. We need to develop regional plans and even sub-regional plans to address the diverse landscapes and varying issues around the province.
- An overall provincial access management plan and various regional plans need to be developed as part of any wildlife and habitat management system. We have road densities that are well above recommended sustainable levels and that is before we count the many illegal trails that are being built into the backcountry.
- The new model needs to recognize that hunting is a part of conservation and the heritage should continue.

There are many previous reports that have been presented to government in the past that address this very topic. The Gorley Report - A Strategy to Help Restore Moose Populations in British Columbia is one such example. Even the discussion paper accompanying this initiative lays out most of the strategies that should be implemented. I encourage government to take the message already presented and start making changes to legislation soon that will improve the conservation of our wildlife and habitat. There is no need to go through a lengthy review process; many ideas can be implemented now.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
I look forward to constructive collaboration and to seeing some real changes.

Regards,

Alan