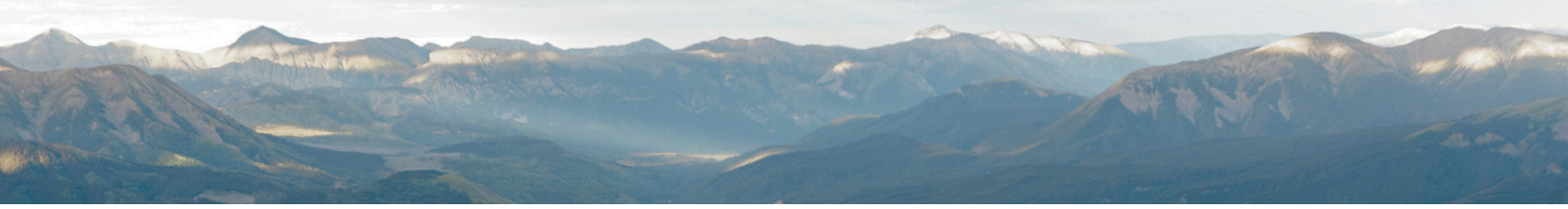




FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT COALITION

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT RELATED TO LAND USE DECISIONS

Guiding meaningful engagement with our Coalition on issues affecting fish, wildlife, and their habitats in British Columbia.



Introduction

The recent announcement of land use planning in NW BC highlights the need for ENGOs (and a wide range of other stakeholders) to have meaningful engagement for the conservation and restoration of fish, wildlife and their habitats in BC for all British Columbians.

While ENGO land use priorities often align with local and provincial and Indigenous conservation goals, ENGOs also bring additional values. Examples include habitat protection for species (such as caribou) that move across multiple jurisdictions; added fish and wildlife conservation priorities that may not be emphasized by governments; complementary conservation analyses and perspectives; a focus on broader landscape connectivity across boundaries; and recognition of wilderness and backcountry recreation values. ENGOs also represent over 500,000 British Columbians who are extremely committed to conservation.

Many First Nations are engaged in forms of government-to-government dialogue with the provincial government. ENGO support for those relationships and for Indigenous-led conservation is well-established. There is also a need for ENGOs to be able to articulate their perspectives early in these processes to ensure that a broad range of conservation values are considered.

The interests of mining, oil and gas, and forestry are routinely considered and prioritized early in land use deliberations. That can leave the interests of ENGOs and other stakeholders compromised, raising significant concerns on whether the “cake is already baked” and whether any meaningful engagement remains.





Principles of Engagement

The principles below should apply alongside the governments' G2G dialogues with First Nations on land use planning and other land use deliberations. The Province should be engaging the public early and often in these processes in order to maintain ENGO and public trust.

R ECEPTIVITY: Land use planning processes need to be open to stakeholder inputs and those inputs need to be legitimately considered and reflected in the development of draft land use plans. Additionally, seeing the results of our engagement clearly reflected in the draft and final plans is important.

O PEN DIALOGUE: Opportunities for stakeholder engagement must begin early in the land use planning process. This includes both direct engagement within stakeholder groupings, and in forums that involve a diversity of stakeholders. The intent is to enhance understanding of the perspectives of other stakeholders' sectors. Virtual meetings should be complemented with limited but timely face-to-face meeting(s) with the full slate of stakeholders present. We would welcome and seek engagement with First Nations governments.

S TRUCTURE: Provincial government staff in each land use plan or process should, after having solicited stakeholder feedback, identify timelines and mechanisms for stakeholder submissions and recommendations, engagement and dialogue sessions, and updates and feedback to stakeholders.

E QUITY: Engagement with all stakeholders needs to be done in an equitable manner so the frequency and timing of engagement, and access to government staff and decision makers, is equal for all stakeholders.

The FWHC anticipates successful engagement processes characterized by early, sincere and meaningful engagement, with stakeholder recommendations clearly reflected in the land use planning outcomes.

Who We Are

The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition represents groups with diverse interests from environmental non-government organizations, hunting and angling guides, conservation organizations, wildlife viewing, ecotourism, naturalists, hunters, anglers and trappers with over 273,000 members with support from more than 900 sustainable businesses across the Province of British Columbia.



We look forward to hearing from you.



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