



Minister Cullen and Secretariat Staff  
Round 1 LNRO Consultation

Please see below our written submission re: Organizational Review By Lands Natural Resource Operations Secretariat. We appreciate the opportunity to participate.

1. What is working well today in your interactions with FLNRORD and the natural resource sector ministries?

- The British Columbia Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BCBHA) aligns directly with the Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition.
- Interactions with regional FLNRORD wildlife biologists are generally productive and positive. We find they are receptive to stakeholder concerns and understand that significant top-down change is needed to restore and manage fish and wildlife populations in our province. We work closely with regional wildlife biologists across BC, yet we are constantly reminded that they are handcuffed by the severe lack of funding and a long-standing ‘industry first’ model to progress change. We also commend the government initiative and resources afforded to “Together for Wildlife.” We believe this initiative has immense promise to find shared solutions for people and wildlife in our province.
- Fish, wildlife and habitat populations are at an all-time low across the province. All southern mountain caribou populations are at risk of extirpation, steelhead and salmon populations are endangered and headed for extirpation, moose are at record lows, and our landscape has been marginalized due to a lack of planning, unsustainable resource extraction and fire suppression. The indicator species across the province are telling us we need to change the way we manage the landscape if we want a future which includes fish, wildlife and habitat.
- Occasionally, there are good people who do good things at the individual level. However, the system is set up so they are not able to follow through on the decisions and actions that would create the best balance. From an outcome-based approach, very little is working well for fish, wildlife and habitat.

2. What are the main challenges facing your organization working with the government’s natural resource sector ministries?

- When the best-available science is presented to natural resource sector ministries that clearly show status-quo management practices and policies are insufficient — there is a clear challenge in our government’s ability to digest and operationalize this science into action. There is a long-standing and detrimental allegiance to ‘resource extraction’ practices by our government that puts profit before people and ecosystems. Jurisdictions across Western North America with higher populations and less land have been able to evolve their natural resource management practices to accommodate change, BC has not.



Industry is a dominant decision-maker surrounding forestry and fisheries under current laws and policies. There is currently no value or priority placed on biodiversity, habitat, and wildlife. A lack of capacity, expertise, and urgency within government to protect wildlife and ecosystems is contributing to this trend. British Columbia has greater biodiversity than all of its neighbors yet is the most poorly funded fish, wildlife and habitat agency in North America. BC spends less per species, per square kilometer, and per person than Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alberta. When funding is available, on-the-ground stewardship is nearly impossible due to legislation which targets resource extraction. Cumulatively, these declines result in social conflict which is the antithesis to reconciliation.

- Fish, wildlife and habitat is valued by First Nations and non-First Nations in BC for subsistence, and the option for future generations to see, use and know fish, wildlife and habitat exists. Fish, wildlife and habitat provides jobs, revenue, viewing opportunities and sustenance. Our interests and passions rely on healthy and abundant fish, wildlife and habitat. Given the current trajectory, our way of life will follow the mountain caribou and steelhead into extinction, costing British Columbia jobs, revenue and its identity.

3. If you could change one thing, what would it be and why?

- A ministry of *sustainable* resource management where specific objectives are set by scientists and coalitions to restore and increase fish and wildlife populations. These objectives must be guided by the best available science and should be proactive, not reactionary. This *sustainable* resource ministry would prioritize one ultimate objective: a ‘bottom-up’ or ‘habitat first’ approach to wildlife management. What would this look like? Government resources and efforts would be funneled into restoring habitat (i.e., road reclamation, motorized-use closures) and establishing baseline policies for forestry and resource extraction practices. This ministry would be guided by science with a principal goal of restoring and better-managing BC’s crown land. A dedicated funding model and the introduction of novel revenue generating sources such as a ‘backpack’ tax or voluntary license plate sales would support this effort.
- Why? Because the past 40 years of status quo management practices have been disastrous to BC’s once thriving fish and wildlife populations. BC needs to prioritize a long-term yet *sustainable* approach to how fish, wildlife, and habitat are managed. Objectives derived from coalitions like this must be set and a plan must be in place to sustain those objectives for the next 10, 20, and 50 years into the future. The future of BC’s cultural and ecological integrity depends on action or in-action from our elected officials.

Yours in conservation,

Alan Duffy  
Chair - BC Chapter  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

