



**BACKCOUNTRY**  
**HUNTERS & ANGLERS**  
**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Honorable Doug Donaldson,  
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development  
PO Box 9049 Station Provincial Government  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

December 16, 2019

Dear Minister Donaldson,

The British Columbia Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BCBHA) is a grassroots organization dedicated to the conservation of wilderness throughout the province for the benefit of ecosystems and wildlife, and for the enjoyment of hunters, anglers and other quiet recreationists. Hunters and anglers have long been at the forefront of conservation and BCBHA carries on this tradition as the voice of the hunter-conservationist. Our membership is passionate, diverse, and growing rapidly.

We entered into the Improving Wildlife Management and Habitat Conservation stakeholder consultation process having identified four key areas where we would like to see improvement in provincial wildlife stewardship:

1. Development of legislation that puts habitat conservation and wildlife management on the same footing as economic growth, development, and social issues.
2. Clear policies and objectives for wildlife management and habitat conservation that are grounded in the best available science and the development of management plans that are guided by the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.
3. Protection of provincial wildlife stewardship objectives from political cycles, trends, and social issues.
4. Dedicated funding for wildlife management, habitat protection and data collection.

BCBHA has participated in stakeholder meetings, either in-person or online, during the multiple phases of stakeholder engagement. Throughout the consultation process, it was clear that the key areas prioritized by our organization were also priorities for many of the other participating stakeholders.

The path forward outlined in the 'Together for Wildlife' strategy indicates that FLNORD also recognizes the importance of the above key areas. In particular, we were pleased to see the commitment to making transparent, evidence-based decisions on wildlife stewardship through consultation with provincial and regional committees comprised of key stakeholder groups.

In order to ensure the local knowledge and societal expectations that inform wildlife stewardship policy are not biased toward special interest groups or political affiliation, criteria for



involvement on the Provincial Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council and Regional Wildlife Committees must be carefully developed through consultation with the existing stakeholder groups. In particular, those sitting on the Council and Committees should be familiar with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and recognize that the most effective wildlife stewardship policies and objectives are grounded in the best available science. Moreover, both the Provincial Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council and Regional Wildlife Committees will need rigorous Terms of Reference to ensure that participating stakeholders are committed to wildlife stewardship and not prejudiced by trend social issues or special interests.

The Together for Wildlife Strategy commits to stewarding our provincial wildlife populations through the protection, conservation, restoration and recovery of wildlife and habitat and the enforced regulation of human activities. This admirable goal will only be achieved through the development of legislation that puts habitat conservation and wildlife management on the same footing as economic growth, development, and social issues. We are concerned that a review of the *Wildlife Act* will be insufficient to elevate wildlife stewardship as a provincial priority and strongly urge the government to reconsider the development of specific legislation for this purpose.

Finally, the current document does not adequately describe the funding models that will be employed to achieve provincial wildlife stewardship goals. The Together for Wildlife strategy, and the policies and objectives that will be developed to fulfill this strategy, must be backed by appropriate funding that is both robust and secure. Funds from user groups (including hunting and angling licenses, but also from consumptive and non-consumptive users of our public lands and wildlife) should be dedicated to wildlife stewardship and inaccessible to the provincial revenue pool. Moreover, the Provincial Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council should be mandated to explore additional sources of funds and funding models that can be leveraged to maximize resources available for wildlife stewardship.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Together for Wildlife Strategy and we look forward to continuing our involvement in the collaborative development of British Columbia's wildlife stewardship strategy.

Yours in conservation,

Alan Duffy  
Chair – BC Chapter  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

cc. Jennifer Psyllakis

Chris Hamilton

Tara Szkorupa

