



HABITAT  
CONSERVATION TRUST  
FOUNDATION

# **HCTF Project Evaluation Workshop 2014**

## **Wildlife**

October 2014  
Kelowna, BC

## **Summary Report**

## Introduction

HCTF is committed to evaluating the outcomes of investments in its conservation projects. HCTF Evaluation workshops are one method used, providing a format for project leaders to present their results for peer review.

To date, HCTF has held six project evaluation workshops; the most recent is the HCTF Wildlife Evaluation Workshop, held in Kelowna, at the El Dorado Hotel, October 16-17, 2014. This report summarizes the workshop. (For further detail on the workshop design and objectives, please see [Workshop Methods](#) report on [www.hctf.hctf.ca](http://www.hctf.hctf.ca))

## Wildlife Evaluation Workshop (2014) Participants

HCTF staff selected 15 projects and invited their project leaders to make presentations on their projects at a 2-day workshop. Of the 15 presentations, 7 were from the provincial government, and 8 were from non-government organizations (Table 1).

Table1. Presentations at the October 2014 Wildlife Evaluation Workshop

| Organization                      | Presenter    | Project Name and Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council | Kevin Duncan | <b>Lytton elk (<i>Cervus canadensis</i>) population enumeration and habitat enhancement.(3-334)</b><br>The goals of this project include completing habitat enhancements and prescribed burns, and to develop a long-term strategy and management for the recovery of this herd. In addition, population increases due to our enhancement efforts are a critical accomplishment.                                                 |
|                                   | Larry Davis  | <b>Inventory of fisher populations and dens in the Bridge River watershed (3-310)</b><br>This project addresses critical habitat information on reproductive den sites for the conservation of fishers and provides key population size information valuable for local area conservation and invaluable for improving the science foundation for population management and conservation of this species throughout the province. |

|                                    |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FLNRO                              | Alicia Woods      | <b>Peace-Liard Burns (7-12)</b><br>A prescribed burning program to maintain and enhance early seral habitats to support winter range for a multitude of ungulate species in the northeast British Columbia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Organization</b>                | <b>Presenter</b>  | <b>Project Name and Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Seepanee Ecological Consulting     | Doris Hausleitner | <b>Western Screech-owl Habitat Stewardship and Home Range Analysis in the West Kootenay (4-457)</b><br>This proposal is to capture, radio-tag and monitor individual Western Screech-owls from two additional territories with the end goal of documenting dispersal, home ranges and demographics at ten territories. This data will be used in private land stewardship and conservation of critical riparian habitat in the West Kootenay region.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| John Prince Research Centre        | Dexter Hodder     | <b>North American Mink Population Densities, Habitat Selection &amp; Diet in Central BC (7-379)</b><br>This project will provide an in-depth assessment of the winter ecology of American Mink in the central interior of British Columbia. This will include information on habitat selection, home ranges, movement patterns, landscape occupancy and diets. This will constitute the first detailed work on mink in the interior of British Columbia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Uvic                               | Dennis Jelinski   | <b>Assessing predation risk from wolves and cougars for caribou in the Purcell Mountains (4-485)</b><br>As part of the Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Program, the Purcell-South herd, which is facing probable extirpation, was augmented in March 2012 by the translocation of 19 northern caribou. We are providing critical information on risk of predation by wolves and cougars to gauge success of this translocation, as well as inform future herd augmentations. Most significantly, in year one we have established that the northern caribou move (travel) much more than resident caribou, and hence are at greater predation risk, especially to cougars. |
| FLNRO                              | Daniel Lirette    | <b>Efficacy of UWR"s and survey optimization for bighorn sheep in MU 7-19 (7-400)</b><br>Seasonal range delineation and modification of current UWR"s to provide secure winter habitat for the most northerly herd of bighorn sheep in North America. Will include a joint BC/AB population monitoring and calculation of sightability correction factor that can be applied to other northern bighorn sheep populations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team | Kathryn Martell   | <b>Georgia Depression Western Bluebird Reintroduction (1-538)</b><br>This project will re-establish a breeding population of Western Bluebirds to their historic range in the Georgia Depression, contributing to building a self-sustaining regional population in the Salish Sea. Through extensive community engagement, it will enhance integrity and protection of endangered Garry Oak ecosystems and build a core of citizen scientists and stewards for long-term habitat conservation                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| FLNRO                             | Bruce McLellan  | <p><b>Population trend, vital rates, and habitat condition of the endangered Stein/Nahatlatch grizzly bear population (3-283)</b></p> <p>Determine survival rates, reproduction, population trend, inter-population movements, habitat selection, and changes in the abundance of major food items for the endangered Stein/Nahatlatch and portions of the Threatened South Chilcotin grizzly bear populations to identify major limiting factors to prescribe appropriate recovery actions.</p> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organization                      | Presenter       | Project Name and Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF) | Erin Rutherford | <p><b>South Coast Bat Conservation (2-458)</b></p> <p>This project will improve bat conservation and stewardship on the south coast through identifying bat roosts and key bat habitat areas, monitoring bat populations on both private and protected land, providing education about bats, and working with land managers to improve stewardship and enhancement of bat habitat.</p>                                                                                                           |
| Applied Mammal Research Institute | Thomas Sullivan | <p><b>Enhancing Marten and Weasel Habitat on Clear-cuts (4-496)</b></p> <p>Investigate the use of windrows of post-harvest woody debris as habitat for marten and weasels on new clear-cuts. In particular, the connectivity across clear-cut openings, from adjacent forest to adjacent forest, will be assessed for prey species and use by these mustelids.</p>                                                                                                                               |
| FLNRO                             | Tara Szkorupa   | <p><b>Kootenay Moose General Open Season Monitoring (4-431)</b></p> <p>This project will determine if the new Kootenay moose hunting season is biologically sustainable and socially acceptable, by monitoring key moose population parameters and changes in hunting opportunity over 3 years.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| FLNRO                             | Tara Szkorupa   | <p><b>Mule Deer Population Composition Surveys (4-437)</b></p> <p>We will monitor post-hunt mule deer buck to doe ratios to determine whether new any-buck hunting seasons are sustainable and comply with provincial procedures. New seasons were introduced in 2010, and populations were monitored that year. Additional years of monitoring are required to adequately assess potential impacts.</p>                                                                                         |
| FLNRO                             | Lisa Tedesco    | <p><b>Boundary Ecosystem Restoration (4-461)</b></p> <p>This project will improve habitat quality, resiliency and forage availability for ungulates and other native species by restoring degraded habitats in low elevation ecosystems of the Boundary. This project also aims to build community stewardship and technical capacity through the use of partnerships.</p>                                                                                                                       |

|       |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FLNRO | Melissa<br>Todd | <p><b>Terrestrial Habitat Requirements of Coastal Tailed Frogs in Northwest BC (6-224)</b></p> <p>This project will use radio-telemetry, in conjunction with more traditional survey methods, to describe the seasonal terrestrial habitat requirements and movement patterns of post-metamorphic tailed frogs at multiple spatial scales. Results will improve headwater, riparian management for forestry, urban, and run-of-river hydro developments.</p> |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

\*FLNRO – Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Additional Participants:

**HCTF Board Members:**

Harvey Andrusak  
Wini Kessler  
Ian McGregor

Mike Green

**HCTF staff:**

Brian Springinotic  
Lynne Bonner

Jane Algard

Shannon West

**Other:**

Don Eastman

## Methods

### Projects

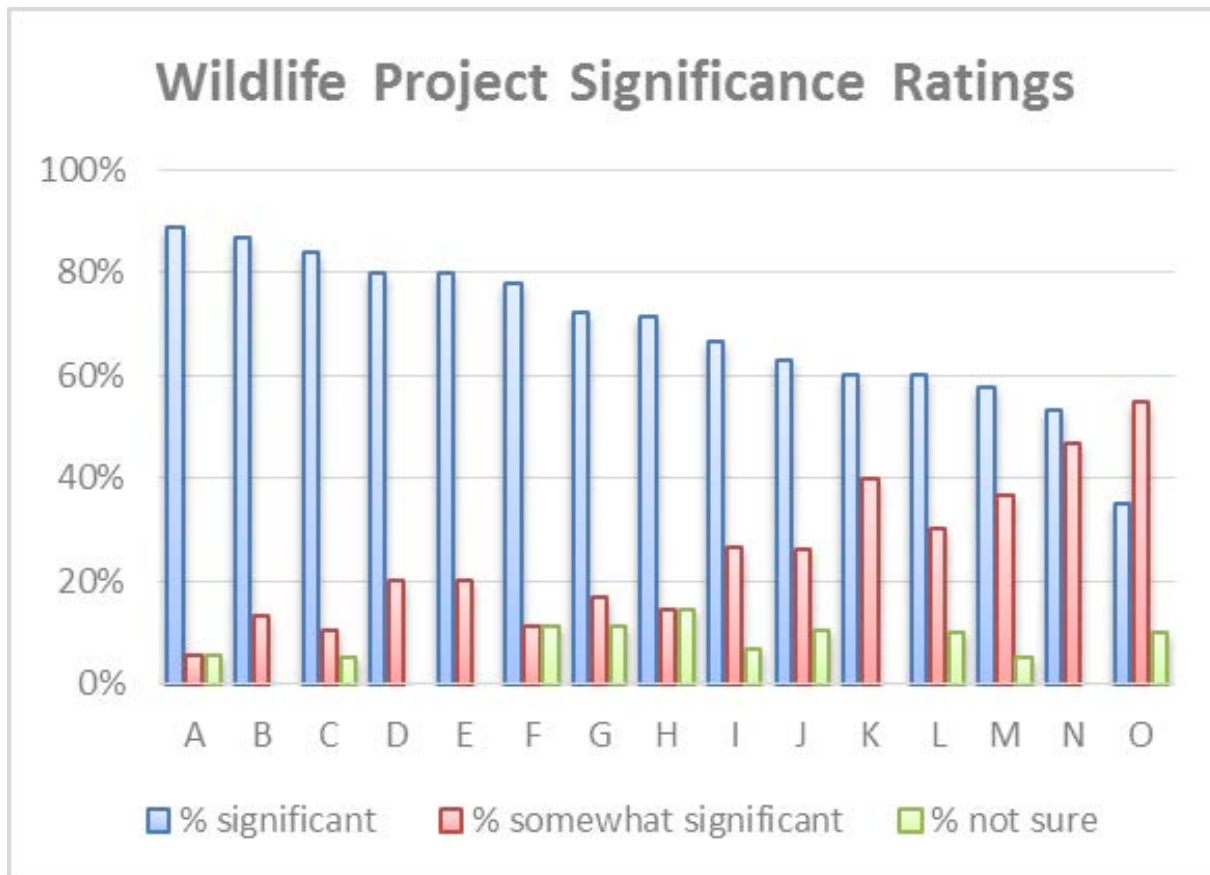
Participants were required to make a 20-minute presentation on their projects, with emphasis on “What difference did this project make to wildlife conservation in BC?” After the presentation and discussion, all participants had a chance to make written comments on an evaluation form, and rate the conservation outcomes as “significant”, somewhat significant” or “not sure”. From these responses, a conservation significance rating was developed for each project.

## Results

### Projects

Figure 1 shows the conservation significance rating for each of the projects presented at the October 2014 Workshop. The projects that were rated as “significantly” contributing were then grouped into high (80 - 100%), moderate (50 -79%) or low (0 - 49%) to provide an overall picture of how well these HCTF projects contributed to wildlife conservation according to the expertise in this workshop.

Figure 1. Conservation significance rating of each of the 15 projects presented at the October 2014 HCTF Wildlife Evaluation Workshop



Data for Figure 1.

| Project | significant | somewhat | not sure | Overall rating |
|---------|-------------|----------|----------|----------------|
|         | %           | %        | %        |                |
| A       | 89%         | 6%       | 6%       | high           |
| B       | 87%         | 13%      | 0%       | high           |
| C       | 84%         | 11%      | 5%       | high           |
| D       | 80%         | 20%      | 0%       | high           |
| E       | 80%         | 20%      | 0%       | high           |
| F       | 78%         | 11%      | 11%      | moderate       |
| G       | 72%         | 17%      | 11%      | moderate       |

|   |     |     |     |          |
|---|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| H | 71% | 14% | 14% | moderate |
| I | 67% | 27% | 7%  | moderate |
| J | 63% | 26% | 11% | moderate |
| K | 60% | 40% | 0%  | moderate |
| L | 60% | 30% | 10% | moderate |
| M | 58% | 37% | 5%  | moderate |
| N | 53% | 47% | 0%  | moderate |
| O | 35% | 55% | 10% | low      |

Five of the 15 projects were rated as high, nine rated as moderate, and 1 was rated low. The evaluation comments collected for each project were collated. Comments on individual projects were later provided to the project leader only. The HCTF Board received comments for all projects.

Several attributes of outstanding projects include:

- Practical application. Highly rated projects typically provide results that have direct and clear management implications that could lead to a change in practices and policies.
- Research results that fill a basic information gap.
- Baseline information that informs continued work.
- Excellent outreach and public awareness components.
- Lessons learned from project methodology will improve future projects.

For lower-rated projects there were some impediments to making a difference:

- Management applications – what are the next steps? – not always clear.
- Small sample size (i.e., working with small populations) reduces ability to make conclusions or recommendations for management.
- Limited time/scope to really get a sense of what difference it will make (generally one piece of the puzzle).
- Little baseline information to start with, so not able to show much progress.

## Workshop

Feedback from the participants about the workshop was very positive. Benefits of the workshop include:

- The workshop provides an opportunity to meet with peers and board members in an informal and supportive environment.
- A great chance to see a range of technology and data collection methods, inspiring for the other projects.
- Excellent to get a sense of conservation challenges across the region.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Projects

A number of themes emerged during discussions following each project presentation:

- Participants noted that stewardship considerations are now incorporated into most projects. Outreach activities to engage the public are often important for conservation success. This could include social media, information hotlines, opinion surveys, and education directed specifically to industry, and landowners.
- There is a tendency for “scope creep” in some projects in response to the rapid rate of development and change in the landscape.
- Proponents value that HCTF is receptive to hearing about problems, and supporting work to reach adaptive and productive solutions.

### Workshop

This is the sixth HCTF Evaluation workshop. The workshop followed the same successful format established in the HCTF 2012 Fisheries Evaluation Workshop; both presenters and reviewers focused on the conservation benefits of the projects. Generally, this workshop shows that HCTF continues to fund projects with high conservation benefits.



## **Recommendations from proponents**

The workshop participants made a number of suggestions to HCTF:

- Communicate in more detail about HCTF priorities regarding species/ecosystems.
- Consider sending automatic reminders for reports due. Links to the appropriate report form would be helpful to avoid confusion.
- HCTF reviewers must take into consideration that projects using similar techniques may not be directly comparable. The methods, issues, objectives and logistics of every proposal may vary, especially in different areas across the province.

## **Comments and Recommendations from HCTF staff**

Proponents whose projects were not yet completed or where not able to be completed often initially question why they would be asked to make a presentation at these workshops. Those proponents who were unable to complete the project due to unforeseen difficulties are particularly (and understandably) reluctant. We encourage their participation to emphasize lessons learned that may be valuable to other project leaders, and occasionally to get helpful feedback that allows them to make adjustments for the next time they embark on a project. The open and collegial atmosphere that we encourage at the evaluation workshops has therefore proven to facilitate involvement of all proponents.

We recommend continuing to include, as appropriate, a few projects that may not be outstanding examples of successful HCTF projects, but that still have something to tell us about the on-the-ground realities that project leaders face.

## **Conclusion**

HCTF project leaders were asked “What difference did this project make to wildlife conservation in BC?” This workshop showed that the majority of HCTF funded wildlife projects do indeed make a significant difference to conservation in the province. It was clear from the participants’ comments that the evaluation workshops also provide a valuable forum for learning and networking. Thus, in addition to providing accountability for HCTF investments, these annual evaluation workshops may also be preparing the ground for improving the quality of future projects.