



HABITAT
CONSERVATION TRUST
FOUNDATION

HCTF Project Evaluation Workshop 2011

WILDLIFE PROJECTS

October 27-28, 2011
Manteo Resort, Kelowna



HCTF Wildlife Project Evaluation Workshop:

Oct 27-28, 2011

Background:

In an ongoing effort to evaluate the outcomes of investments, HCTF uses several vehicles:

1. Technical committee review: annual technical evaluation of continuing projects.
2. Grant reports evaluation: review of project reports by HCTF staff.
3. On site visit: HCTF staff and Board of Directors on-the-ground evaluations of individual projects.
4. Detailed project evaluations: evaluations of specific projects including on-the-ground and financial audits.
5. Project evaluation workshops: project leaders present their results for peer review.

This report summarizes the first HCTF wildlife evaluation workshop held in Kelowna, October 2011.

Workshop Objectives:

The goal of this workshop was to allow project leaders to discuss their projects in a mutually respectful atmosphere, so that HCTF representatives and other project leaders could learn from each other's experiences.

Specific workshop objectives were to:

1. Review and evaluate the results of HCTF investments in wildlife projects,
2. Discuss how projects help HCTF achieve its strategic goal #3: "HCTF is recognized as a leader in BC conservation efforts", and
3. Provide a forum for organizations, resource managers and scientists to share information and ideas on how to improve wildlife management projects, programs and activities in BC.

Project Selection:

A blend of the following criteria was used to select projects to be presented:

- Multi-year projects that are at or near the end of their project life;
- High dollar projects;
- Mix of small, site-specific and larger, wider ranging projects;
- Mix of 1-year and multi-year projects;
- Geographic spread throughout BC;

- Blend of proponent types by organization (i.e. government and non-government organizations).

Based on the criteria above, HCTF selected 17 projects and invited project leaders to make presentations on their projects at a 2 day workshop. 16 presentations were made: 9 from the provincial government and 7 from non-government organizations (Table 1).

Table 1. Wildlife Project Presentations at Oct. 2011 HCTF Workshop.

Organization	Project	Years Funded	HCTF Amount
Myke Chutter FLNRO	Peregrine Falcon Monitoring Survey (0-280) Conduct and assess results from Peregrine Falcon eerie occupancy surveys around Queen Charlotte Islands, Vancouver/Gulf Islands, Lower Mainland and interior sites, to maintain long-term monitoring, enable conservation of breeding habitat, and justify harvest.	2005&2012 2 years	\$77,000
Clayton Apps Aspen Wildlife Research Inc.	Grizzly Bear Population Density and Distribution in the Southern Coast Ranges (0-315) Survey of grizzly bear occurrence using DNA hair-snag methods, and subsequent analyses to predict grizzly bear population density and distribution relative to habitat and human activity.	2003 – 2010 6 years	\$321,000
Dave Zehnder Wild Domestic Sheep Separation Project	Wild/ Domestic Sheep & Goat Separation (0-318) Unique contractor/MOE staff/NGO/agriculture producer/FN collaborations are formed to mitigate the risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep/goats to wild sheep using proven and novel site-specific mitigation methods in high risk areas.	2006-2011 5 years	\$133,000
Darryl Reynolds FLNRO	Lower Mainland Roosevelt Elk Recovery (2-127) Working with a variety of partners the project will re-establish viable elk populations in wilderness areas of the Lower Mainland Region through the trapping and translocation of elk from the urban interface, along the Sunshine Coast.	1998-2012 12 years	\$557,155
Michelle Evelyn Ruby Lake Lagoon Nature Reserve Society	Biodiversity Surveys to Identify Critical Sites for Wildlife Conservation on the Sunshine Coast (2-388) Comprehensive faunal surveys, with a focus on listed species and indicators of environmental health, will be used to identify key sites for conservation of wildlife on the Sunshine Coast.	2007-2012 4 years	\$121,700
Mike Gall & Sue Crowley FLNRO	East Kootenay Grassland Ecosystem Restoration (4-299) Conduct prescribed burning, harvesting, slashing, and/or piling activities in fire-maintained and priority ecosystems to restore and conserve habitats for wildlife dependent on these environments.	2002–2011 9 years	\$1,113,500
Michael Proctor Birchdale Ecological Ltd.	Trans-Border Grizzly Bear Project (4-409) The trans-border grizzly project is an international cooperative effort between BC and the US Fish and Wildlife Service that will facilitate the recovery of the threatened south Purcell/Yahk and south Selkirk grizzly bear populations.	2006-2011 5 years	\$99,000

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Organization	Project	Years Funded	HCTF Amount
Tara Szkorupa FLNRO	East Kootenay Elk Monitoring Project (4-422) Radio collar and monitor elk in the East Kootenay to gather information on migratory behaviour and habitat use. We will also conduct a major elk inventory. Information will be used to improve management of elk and their habitats.	2007- 2011 4 years	\$98,000
Sue Crowley FLNRO*	Production, Utilization & Condition of East Kootenay Ungulate Winter Range Ecosystems (4-430) Assess and document the current rangeland condition and forage availability throughout the Rocky Mountain Trench to enable science-based decision making in regards to wildlife and livestock management.	2009- 2012 3 years	\$101,750
Richard Klafki & Steven Symes Thompson Rivers University	Badger Movements & Habitat Use in the Cariboo (5-215) Long-term benefits of this project are to contribute to the recovery of self-sustaining populations of badgers in BC. Results will be incorporated into prioritizing grassland restoration plans, which will benefit a range of game species.	2008- 2011 3 years	\$55,750
Jocelyn Garner Thompson Rivers University	Great Basin Spadefoot Ecology & Habitat Conservation Project (5-232) MOE with TRU, UBC, BCCC, FSP, and BCCC will conduct 2 years of field and lab studies to determine habitat use and genetic variability of spadefoots. This info will be used to identify and conserve important wetland and upland habitats.	2009- 2011 2 years	\$45,000
Deborah Chicowski - Bulkley Valley Centre for Natural Resources Research & Management	Effects of a Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic on Tweedsmuir-Entiako Caribou Habitat Use (6-174) Response of caribou to the mountain pine beetle epidemic will be assessed by monitoring radio-collared caribou and conducting ground investigations of habitat use.	2005- 2010 4 years	\$140,000
Alicia Goddard (Rob Woods) FLNRO	Peace River Prescribed Burns (7-12) Year 5 of a five year burning program to slow the loss of early seral plant communities in the northeast part of the province.	1996- 2012 15 years	\$1,001,750
Alicia Goddard (Rob Woods) FLNRO	Status of Sharp-tailed Grouse in the Peace Region (7-266) Develop a long-term research and monitoring program investigating the influence of habitats on reproductive success, in an attempt to prevent population decline and further habitat loss in the Peace Region.	2003- 2010 7 years	\$168,550
Eric Lofroth FLNRO	Fisher Habitat Ecology in the Peace River Region (7-329) The objective of this project is to conduct scientific research on fishers in the Peace River to determine natal and maternal denning requirements and to identify other aspects of habitat ecology for incorporation into sustainable forest management.	2006- 2011	\$105,000

Organization	Project	Years Funded	HCTF Amount
Krista Sittler Univ. of Northern BC	Wildlife Response to Prescribed Burns in Peace (7-354) The project will examine the effectiveness of the Peace prescribed burning program by analyzing use of burns by ungulates and predators.	2008-2011 3 years	\$152,442
Dale Seip FLNRO	Wolf Movements in Relation to Roads & Corridors on Caribou Range (7-370) Comprehensive faunal surveys, with a focus on listed species and indicators of environmental health, will be used to identify key sites for conservation of wildlife on the Sunshine Coast.	2009-2011	\$39,000

*FLNRO – Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations

Additional participants:

HCTF Board members:

Winifred Kessler (Chair)
Harvey Andrusak
Anna Fontana

Other:

Karl Larsen, Thompson Rivers University

HCTF staff:

Brian Springinotic
Lynne Bonner
Jane Algard

Methods

Projects

Participants were required to make a 15- to 20-minute presentation with the following mandatory elements:

- Project summary including location, issue, methodology and activities.
- Project objectives met or not met: results and issues arising.
- Methodologies and activities (including communication and outreach).
- Outcomes achieved to date and linkage to the HCTF strategic plan, with specific attention to how the project supports strategic goal #3 – “HCTF is recognized as a conservation leader”.
- Budget summary.
- Lessons learned (e.g., meeting timelines, identifying and reaching target audiences, measuring the effectiveness of the methods used and whether outcomes have been reached).

After each presentation, 5 minutes were allocated to complete a feedback form for each project (see Appendix A – workshop feedback form). Participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 – 5 (where 5 is high), and comment on each project. Using these ratings as a guide, participants provided an overall rating for project success as High, Medium, or Low.

HCTF Board members and HCTF staff in attendance also participated in the review, discussion, and evaluation of each of the projects.

20 participants submitted project feedback forms for each presentation. Not all circled a score for each section but for those that did, a range of scores and the mean score for each section were calculated. For all forms submitted, the comments provided were recorded. The scores and all comments on their project were sent only to the individual presenter.

Workshop

The workshop was planned for 1 ½ days. In the evening of the first day, HCTF hosted a dinner at the hotel to provide networking opportunities for participants, the Board, and staff in an informal environment.

In addition to individual project evaluations, participants were also asked to fill out a general feedback form for HCTF. An open discussion addressed how projects might help HCTF to be recognized as a leader in BC conservation efforts.

Results

Projects

Comments provided on the feedback forms were compiled for each presentation and sent to the respective presenters. In many cases the comments were detailed and allowed information to be shared between peers.

A summary of the evaluation ratings addressing the cost/benefit ratio (“Bang for your Buck”) is presented below (Figure 1). The majority of wildlife projects evaluated were rated as providing high conservation value for the expenditures.

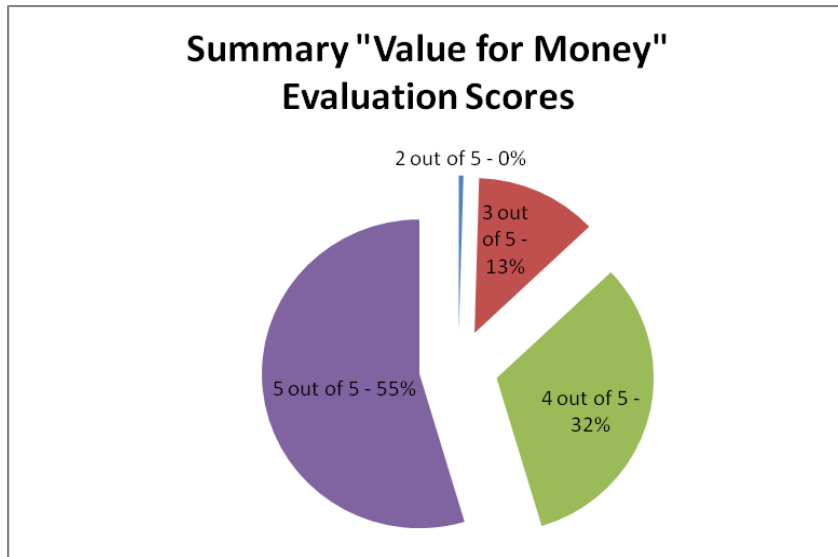


Figure 1: Summary of scores indicating cost /benefits aspect of all wildlife projects reviewed at this workshop. Scores were assigned on a sliding scale (1 = low;, 5 = high).

In general, analysis of the feedback forms suggested that extracting measureable data from the questions posed was problematic. Participants commented that to do a credible review, they would require more background information, including project proposals and reports.

Subsequent workshops will strive to formulate review questions addressing a specific indicator for monitoring workshop evaluation results.

Participant comments on Wildlife Projects

- Participants noted the diversity of wildlife projects and applauded HCTF for funding a variety of non-game projects, and projects that involved young people gaining an appreciation for the outdoors.
- In most cases, ecosystem-based projects are preferable to those focused on a single species. Projects should be required to address biodiversity issues in any proposed work.
- It is important to link project results to management actions.
- A number of projects were carried out by grad students. Workshop participants felt they brought tremendous value to the projects, and recognized the importance of providing opportunities for the next generation of wildlife managers and conservationists.

Workshop

General comments about the workshop were very positive: participants valued the opportunity to learn about projects and challenges in other regions and network with peers, HCTF Board members and staff.

Participant comments about the Wildlife workshop

Evaluating process:

- The level of technical evaluation requested on the feedback requires a closer examination of the project proposal and any reports that have been produced. Given the information available, it was very difficult to provide a meaningful score on most of the subject areas.

Workshop suggestions:

- Consider inviting members of the HCTF Technical Review Committee to the workshop. This could be especially useful in reviewing continuing projects.
- Although the presenters themselves were not being evaluated, it would be useful to get some feedback on the presentation itself. This could be a comment on the feedback form.
- Consider holding a full HCTF symposium or conference to look at more projects and involve more people. The conference theme could be “How is your project making a difference?”

Participant comments and questions about HCTF in general

- Participants generally liked the more simplified HCTF proposal process introduced in 2011.
- What type projects would HCTF like to see done? Is it possible to get some indication prior to spending a lot of time developing a proposal?
- HCTF is one of the few funders who allow money to be carried over, which compensates for funding windows being out of sync with biological windows and funding notifications sent too late for many spring projects.

Participant comments on HCTF Strategic Goal #3: Participants discussed how organizations funded by HCTF might help HCTF better achieve increased recognition as a conservation leader. A number of suggestions and comments follow:

- Consider providing a small portion of funding to encourage proponents publish a paper or attend a conference after the project is completed. HCTF would be acknowledged in either of these cases.
- Update the HCTF website to become more interactive using social media such as face book, or a blog highlighting HCTF work.
- It would be useful if project reports were posted on the HCTF website to show what projects actually accomplished.
- HCTF could provide a media database for proponents to use when preparing presentations in their communities. Alternatively an HCTF speaker's bureau might be useful to ensure the word gets out.
- Note that the government proponents are tied to certain rules around communications.
- Partner with "Nature Festivals" when possible to raise profile.

Conclusions and Recommendations

HCTF had three objectives for this workshop:

1. Review and evaluate the results of HCTF investments in Wildlife projects,
2. Discuss how projects help HCTF achieve its strategic goal #3: "HCTF is recognized as a leader in BC conservation efforts", and
3. Provide a forum for organizations, resource managers and scientists to share information and ideas on how to improve wildlife management projects, programs and activities in BC.

Objective1. Sixteen wildlife projects were reviewed at this workshop. While definitive, measureable evaluation results were not obtained using the Project Feedback Form rating scale as provided, comments on individual projects indicate that participants judged all projects as worthwhile investments in wildlife conservation. Based on the experience of this workshop, HCTF staff will reassess the criteria used for evaluating projects through this type of workshop.

Objective 2. The group engaged in a lively discussion about HCTF's Strategic Goal to be recognized as a conservation leader. One theme emerged suggesting that HCTF needs to communicate the details of this goal to proponents: in essence, answer the question "What is the purpose of increasing the profile of HCTF?" This would help proponents incorporate appropriate activities into their projects.

Objective3. The workshop was clearly an enjoyable and useful experience for proponents and other participants. Comments indicated enthusiastic support for continuing this type of forum. HCTF intends to continue holding one evaluation workshop per year, alternating between Fisheries, Wildlife and Stewardship projects.

APPENDIX 1: WILDLIFE EVALUATION WORKSHOP FEEDBACK FORM:

1.0 Instructions for Project Feedback Forms

The object of this workshop is to provide successful HCTF applicants an opportunity to present the results of their HCTF-funded project in a professional and collegial atmosphere, and to learn from each other's experiences, including successes and failures.

Note: The presenters are not being evaluated on the quality of their communication style.

1. Please listen to each presentation and fill in the review forms provided. *Make sure to record the HCTF Project Number in the upper right corner of the form.*
2. Rate/comment on each project on the basis of achievements for the following:
 - Objectives
 - Activities/Methodology
 - Outcomes achieved to date
 - Measures of Success (results)
 - Communication
 - Budget
 - Lessons learned
 - Links to HCTF Goal 3.
3. Consider your rating for each section on a scale of 1-5, then rate the project success over all as High, Medium, or Low. See Page 4 of form.

You may choose to identify yourself on the review form or to remain anonymous.

1.1 Project Feedback Form: _____ HCTF Project # _____

Project Name:

OBJECTIVES: Are there other objectives that you think could, or should be stated?

METHODS/ACTIVITIES: Would you suggest additional or different methods/activities to achieve the objectives?

OUTCOMES: Comments

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Can you suggest other measures or indicators to evaluate the accomplishment of project objectives?

COMMUNICATIONS: If appropriate to this project, were there additional communication efforts that could have been effective in communicating the project achievements or involving the community?

BENEFIT/COST: Comments

LESSONS LEARNED: Were the results useful? Were the results as expected based on your experience and knowledge? Did you learn any new information that will be useful?

ACHIEVING HCTF GOAL #3: HCTF is recognized as a leader in BC conservation efforts:

Are there aspects or components of this project that would help HCTF attain this strategic goal?

OVERALL AVEREAGED RATING: High /Med/Lo

COMMENTS ON RATING:

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS TO PROPONENT:

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS TO HCTF: