



HABITAT CONSERVATION
TRUST FOUNDATION

Strategic Plan

2022-2027

Investing for the future
of British Columbia's fish and
wildlife, and their habitats.



Introduction



The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) is a non-profit charitable foundation investing in the future of British Columbia's fish, wildlife, and their habitats. We provide funding to our large network of recipients who undertake conservation projects across BC. The HCTF also supports education programs, grants, learning resources, and other initiatives through our in-house education program.

Our Trust Purposes

There are three Trust Purposes that establish the fiduciary duty and purpose of our organization. These are our "North Star" which guide the Society as the foundation's Trustee. Our constitution outlines that a trustee of the Habitat Conservation Trust must use the property for the following purposes and for no other purpose:

- 1 The conservation or enhancement of biological diversity, fish, fish habitat, wildlife, or wildlife habitat.
- 2 The acquisition and management of land for the conservation or enhancement of a population of a species of fish or wildlife and its habitat.
- 3 The furthering, stimulation and encouragement of knowledge and awareness of fish or wildlife and their habitat, or of the existence and purpose of the Society, by way of promotional, educational, or other materials, goods, programs, or services.

Drivers of Change

In addition to our Trust Purposes, HCTF's operations are shaped by economic, societal, and environmental shifts, as well as other factors that influence the organization's future direction.

We recognize the significance these drivers are having and will have on BC's fish and wildlife populations, and their habitats with continuously increasing demands on the land. As a result, we need to be more proactive. This includes taking steps to address the substantial and potentially irreversible long-term impacts of climate change on BC's habitat, native species abundance and distribution, as well as to understand changes to the environment that are caused by the cumulative effects of human activities. As human use intensifies and diversifies, more competition is created, influencing how resources are managed and recreational land is accessed.

The British Columbia government is committed to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation with the First Nations and Indigenous peoples of BC. Habitat conservation and restoration can be a pathway towards this goal. The HCTF will collaborate with Indigenous peoples to create better conservation outcomes for fish, wildlife, and their habitats for future generations.

A growing human population resulting in increasing demands on the land, means there is a mounting need to create new opportunities to improve our stewardship of BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats.



Core Values

HCTF is guided by seven core values that are foundational to our mission and management.

1 Recognizing the Intrinsic Value of Nature

We believe that BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats must be maintained for the benefit of all.

2 Responsible Use

We believe in the responsible and sustainable use of fish, wildlife, and their habitats that does not diminish these natural resources and biological diversity.

3 Evidence-Based Decision Making

We believe in a science-based approach when making funding decisions. The HCTF Board will consider a 'weight of evidence' approach including indigenous knowledge and other knowledge systems.

4 Stewardship

We believe that the future of fish, wildlife, and their habitats depend on people understanding, valuing, caring for and connecting with BC's biological diversity.

5 Collaboration

We believe that working together in a transparent manner can substantially extend our reach and enhance BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

6 Accountability

We believe that our investments reflect the values of our organization and our partners, and we work hard to ensure that investments make a positive conservation impact.

7 Organizational Excellence

We believe that a culture of organizational excellence, continuous improvement and professionalism is essential in maintaining public and partners' trust in HCTF.

A photograph of a moose standing in a lush green field. The moose is facing left, with its head turned slightly towards the camera. In the background, there is a dense forest of tall, thin trees, some of which are bare and grey, suggesting a mix of deciduous and coniferous species. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the trees and the moose.

Mission and Vision

Our vision for the future and how we will differentiate ourselves.

Our Vision

A future where freshwater fish, wildlife, and their habitats are resilient, abundant, and valued by all British Columbians.

Our Mission

To improve sustainability and societal awareness of British Columbia's fish, wildlife, and their habitats through leadership, education, and funding for conservation.

Goals

A reflection of HCTF's Trust Purposes on which our decisions and actions are based.

Increase

conservation outcomes for fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

Promote

British Columbians' participation in conservation, education, stewardship, and responsible use of native fish and wildlife.

Expand

HCTF's role as a leader and trusted partner in managing and administering conservation funding.



Strategic Objectives

The most important activities HCTF will undertake over the next five years. We have identified five strategic objectives that support HCTF's core values and Trust Purposes. Using the strategic direction outlined in this plan, we will continue to refine these objectives and develop detailed operational strategies that will be executed to achieve our goals.

Objective 1

Support projects and programs that propose to address the impacts of climate change and cumulative effects on fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

- Incorporate climate change adaptation, mitigation and cumulative effects in HCTF grant, investment and future partnership decisions and agreements (climate and cumulative effects lens).

Objective 2

Secure funding sources to provide continuity and strengthen conservation of fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

- Work with existing funders and partners to secure and enhance funding for conservation.
- Diversify partnerships and funding sources to generate new funding for conservation.

Objective 3

Ensure the conservation benefits of our projects and programs endure over time.

- Evaluate the benefits and where necessary mitigate the risks to HCTF habitat investments.
- Strengthen the linkage between conservation, stewardship and education programs.

Objective 4

Expand collaborations with organizations, agencies, and Indigenous peoples to build conservation connections and responsible use between people and nature.

- Meaningfully engage and build respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples to achieve better conservation outcomes.
- Broaden and diversify participation in HCTF programs and projects.

Objective 5

Continually improve HCTF's organizational effectiveness and reputation to strengthen conservation outcomes.

- Ensure governance and decision-making practices are inclusive, transparent, efficient, and accountable.
- Demonstrate operational excellence in financial management and grant administration.
- Enhance HCTF's culture, recruitment and retention practices to be an employer of choice.





Our Organization

Initiated under the *Wildlife Act* in 1981, the Habitat Conservation Trust was built by BC hunters, anglers, trappers, guide outfitters and naturalists who shared a common vision and saw the value of creating a dedicated funding source for conservation work above and beyond that expected by government for basic management of wildlife and fish resources.

History

Shortly after the Trust's inception in the early 1980s, the province initiated a complete overhaul of the *Wildlife Act*, creating the perfect opportunity to introduce a new surcharge funding model on all hunting, angling, trapping and guide outfitting licenses for conservation enhancement projects in BC. At this time, the province also contributed funding for the purchase of ecologically sensitive land to protect fish, wildlife, and their habitats. Both events paved the way for a strong fund, as its revenues would now come from two sources, one dedicated to conservation enhancement projects, and the other to be used for land purchases.

To advise the Minister on matters relating to the fund, an advisory board was created led by Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan and other top BC conservationists. In 2007, the provincial government further amended the *Wildlife Act*, ensuring that the Habitat Conservation Trust was a stand-alone entity, operating separately from any government ministry and with a budget independent of any ministry's annual expenditure targets. A new Society was then created, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF), as the Trustee of the Trust.

The HCTF subsequently transitioned its governance in 2008 to an independent not-for-profit society. Funding decisions are now made by the Board of Directors, composed of leaders in science and conservation who represent the BC Wildlife Federation, Guide Outfitters Association of BC, BC Trappers Association, the Province of BC, and up to seven additional individuals appointed by the Board for their conservation expertise. Throughout the years, the Board's directive has remained the same in making strategic assessments and funding decisions on all conservation project and program applications received by the HCTF.

Our Partners

One of our greatest strengths is working with a wide variety of partners to increase both the quality and quantity of conservation work and environmental education happening across BC. This includes partnerships or funding agreements with the Government of Canada, BC Indigenous peoples, several provincial departments including the BC Conservation Office Service, Universities, non-government organizations, community groups, and individuals.



Record of Investment

Directed by our constitution, the HCTF funds on-the-ground conservation work, including projects that conserve, restore, and enhance native freshwater fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. In addition, the HCTF supports projects and programs that provide information, education, and stewardship to enhance users' enjoyment of fish, wildlife, and habitats or to foster positive human attitudes and behaviors towards management and conservation. We also fund the acquisition of land or interests in land to secure the value of these areas for conservation purposes.

Our funding model includes a rigorous process to meet the highest standards for technical reviews, financial metrics, and performance management. All funding applications are evaluated for technical soundness, followed by a thorough review by the Board of Directors to ensure projects will provide long-lasting conservation benefits in BC. Successful grant recipients will enter into accountability agreements with the HCTF to ensure that projects and programs are delivered as specified in their proposals.

Since the HCTF was established, we have made measurable progress in maintaining and restoring

BC's biological diversity of fish, wildlife, and their habitats. This is demonstrated by the 350 education and conservation grants awarded annually, the 2980 conservation projects and over \$190M in grants funded to date, and the more than 25,000 hectares of conservation land purchased. Requests for HCTF funding often far exceed supply, so grant recipients are also encouraged to leverage support from external funding sources to maximize conservation results. To date, we estimate that our investments have leveraged over \$400 million in additional funding to the benefit of BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

Environmental Education

HCTF strongly believes that environmental education is a critical component of conservation. That is why our in-house environmental education program, HCTF Education, provides grants for classes, school programs, educator workshops, and others, along with learning resources to connect individuals and communities to nature. Our goal is to build environmental literacy with educators, youth, and local communities by supporting and engaging them in learning, experiencing, and participating in stewardship of BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats.





Conclusion

For over 40 years, HCTF has been investing in the future of BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats. As our organization has evolved and grown, so have our expectations for organizational excellence and our commitment to do even more to protect BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

This five-year strategic plan builds on the accomplishments of our organization to date and provides a roadmap for HCTF's continued success in funding projects that conserve, restore, or enhance BC's native fish and wildlife populations, and their habitats for future generations.

We have a strong commitment to fund projects that will enhance habitats or enable species to be more resilient to climate change, strengthen BC's conservation community, and foster long-lasting connections between the citizens of BC and the natural world. This plan's increased emphasis on partnerships stems from the recognition that our collective future depends on all of us working together, and that success in delivering our conservation goals cannot be achieved by one organization or community on its own.

Looking ahead, we will proactively engage and collaborate with our partners to build a strong conservation community of practice across BC to enable better conservation outcomes. This specifically includes opportunities to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples to care for and protect BC's fish, wildlife, and their habitats for future generations to come.

Over the next five years, this plan will guide us in developing operational strategies that move the HCTF towards its mission of improving sustainability and societal awareness of BC's biological diversity through leadership, education and funding, and set us on a path towards our vision of a future where freshwater fish, wildlife, and their habitats are resilient, abundant, and valued by all British Columbians.



**HABITAT CONSERVATION
TRUST FOUNDATION**

Phone: 250 940 9780
Toll free: 1 800 387 9853
info@hctf.ca www.hctf.ca

PO Box 9354
Unit 102 - 2957 Jutland Rd
Victoria, BC V8T 5J9