

Together for Wildlife
Partnership with HCTF

Accomplishments Report



HABITAT CONSERVATION
TRUST FOUNDATION

Background

In August 2020, the Together for Wildlife (T4W) Strategy was released, outlining a long-term vision to collaboratively improve wildlife and habitat stewardship in B.C. Many of the actions identified in the T4W Strategy were consistent with the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF)'s trust purposes and strategic initiatives.

To assist with implementing the goals and objectives of the T4W Strategy, multiple contributions were made to HCTF, as follows:

1. \$1.7M in March 2021
 - To support on-the-ground stewardship, including habitat restoration and management, data and knowledge collection, research, conservation land management, and habitat acquisition.
2. \$740,000 in March 2022
 - Similar to the goals of the first contribution, but with an increased focus on Indigenous-led projects and building First Nations' capacity, and large-scale habitat restoration to enhance moose populations in northern-central B.C.
3. Three contributions of \$230,000 each in 2023, 2024, and 2025
 - To deliver the T4W scholarship program, enabling research on wildlife and habitat stewardship priorities.

HCTF began allocating funds to on-the-ground projects in the years the contributions were received. Often, project implementation spanned multiple years. As of March 31, 2025, the first two restricted contributions have been fully spent and projects completed, and we are in year 3 of the ongoing T4W Scholarship program.

This report is intended to demonstrate the outstanding work that was accomplished with these funds and the significant impact it had on wildlife and habitat stewardship in B.C. HCTF had the privilege of working with numerous skilled, passionate people and organizations to deliver these projects. We are grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this worthwhile initiative.

\$2.9M

in funding
allocated

50

conservation projects
supported

30

scholarships
awarded



Advancing the Goals of the T4W Strategy

Deliver on-the-ground stewardship (Goal 3, Action 9)

The T4W Strategy's Goal 3 is that "stewardship actions achieve tangible benefits for wildlife and their habitats." HCTF has directed T4W funding to improve wildlife habitats and stewardship across B.C.

Highlights include:

- HCTF directed funding to 49 projects under this Action for a total of \$1,905,813
- \$400,000 supported land acquisitions in partnership with the Nature Trust of BC: \$200,000 to Skaha Lake Eastside - Lot 1 in the Okanagan, and \$200,000 to the Wycliffe Prairie Wildlife Corridor in the Kootenays
- Over \$130,000 was invested into conservation projects in the Thompson Nicola region, including *Fraser River Bighorns: Fraser West Disease Assessment and Herd Recovery* and *Monitoring the Stein/Nahatlatch Grizzly Bear Population During Recovery*
- Over \$190,000 was invested into projects on Vancouver Island addressing habitat protection, enhancement, and connectivity for a variety of species in collaboration with local Indigenous and conservation groups

Project Profiles

Using Large-Scale Functional Habitat Restoration Tools to Enhance Moose Populations in North-Central B.C.

Province of B.C.

This habitat restoration project was designed in response to declining moose populations in the Saik'uz Traditional Territory. This landscape has largely been converted to lodgepole pine plantations due to the history of logging, particularly during salvage logging operations following the mountain pine beetle outbreak. This simplification of stand structure and composition—among other cumulative effects—is a hypothesized cause of moose population declines in this and other parts of B.C. by the Provincial Moose Management Team. In this project, habitat enhancement treatments were designed to modify the stand structure of pine plantations to create forage opportunities and overwintering habitat conditions important to moose that disappear in plantations as canopy closure increases.

The treatments prescribed included thinning to reduce stand densities and creating gaps. The variation in densities and gap sizes is intended to inform future restoration and silviculture activities that support moose recovery. Under this project, four 1,400 hectare hexes were treated.

Red Canyon Ungulate Habitat Enhancement Project

Tobacco Plains Indian Band

The Galton Range of the Rocky Mountains contains grasslands and open forests that provide important habitat for ungulates, including Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, and Rocky Mountain elk. However, forest ingrowth and encroachment due to fire suppression and the establishment and spread of invasive plants have reduced the quantity and quality of habitat.

To help improve ungulate habitat, Yaq'it ʔa-knuq'it First Nation (Tobacco Plains Indian Band) partnered with the B.C. Ministry of Forests on ungulate habitat enhancement efforts in the Galton Range, specifically within the Red Canyon Project Area. Funding from Together for Wildlife, HCTF, FESBC, and the BC Wildfire Service was used to support this work. An Ecosystem Management Plan was developed that describes three proposed treatment units in the project area: harvest, slash, and prescribed burn. Monitoring plots were installed, invasive plants were documented in the project area, and slashing was completed in the slashing treatment unit to improve sightlines for ungulates. The removal of dense, immature conifers may also enhance the quality and quantity of forage for sheep, deer, and elk, while decreasing fuel loading.



Advancing the Goals of the T4W Strategy

Support and expand Conservation Lands (Goal 3, Action 11)

- HCTF directed funding to one program under this Action, the Conservation Lands Operations & Management program, for a total of \$401,565
- T4W funding supported conservation lands activities throughout the province, with investments spread across 6 of the 9 Conservation Lands Regions
- Funds were used for a wide array of activities, from supporting the creation or updates of management plans, to enhancement projects such as thinning overgrown coniferous forest and promoting native vegetation growth to increase forage for ungulates, to treating and removing invasive species near wetland areas
- Significant funding went to working in partnership with First Nations on activities ranging from foreshore inventory and mapping to determining shared management priorities

Project Profiles

In the Thompson Okanagan

- \$40,000 in T4W funding was invested at nsək'łniw't/McTaggart-Cowan Wildlife Management Area (WMA) for post-wildfire habitat assessment and/or public use monitoring in partnership with Penticton Indian Band
- Addressed impacts and developed management recommendations associated with the 2020 Christie Mountain Fire and subsequent 2021 Thomas Creek Fire, which together burned approximately 50% of the WMA
- This project involved a Traditional Ecological Knowledge Keepers assessment, with an additional \$35,000 of in-kind support provided by Penticton Indian Band. In addition, closure signage was developed and installed in partnership with the Nature Trust of BC, which also supplied labour to download wildlife camera trap data from the network installed in the WMA to monitor human and wildlife use to inform management recommendations.

In the Kootenays

- Over \$8K of T4W funding was invested into the Redfish Creek Conservation Complex in 2021-22. This project focused on the preparation and sourcing of materials for the repair of an eroding stream bank along Redfish Creek. The erosion was threatening important riparian habitat, downstream infrastructure, and the outflow of the Redfish Creek spawning channel.
- In 2021, an engineer was hired to develop drawings/plans for the repair project, with a focus on keeping habitat features in place (e.g., a large overhanging cedar tree). Additionally, all of the required armour rock was sourced and delivered to the site to prepare for the repair to take place the following year.



Right: Nature Trust of BC crew helping lay a fish-grade pond liner for the Big Ranch wetland enhancement project. Photo credit: The Nature Trust of BC



Advancing the Goals of the T4W Strategy

Support wildlife research (Goal 2, Action 5)

The T4W Strategy's Goal 2 is "data, information, and knowledge drive better decisions." In 2023, HCTF began delivering the T4W Scholarship program. Each year, \$200,000 has been available to fund 10 scholarships of \$20,000 each. Since 2023, the T4W Scholarship has supported 30 students pursuing their master's or PhD in wildlife stewardship and conservation.

- There were a total of 34 eligible applicants in 2023. Of these applicants, 65% included Indigenous partnerships (up from 59% in 2022, before HCTF began administering the program). 90% of awarded projects had an Indigenous partnership, showing a positive shift towards the co-development of research and respect for Indigenous knowledge.
- 36 eligible applications were received in 2024, and 24 were received in 2025 as timing delays led to a shorter intake window. The sentiment repeatedly shared by students is that these awards have made a significant difference in their ability to undertake their research.
- The 2023 scholarship projects took place around the province, with 2 in northern B.C., 2 in coastal areas, 1 that was province-wide, and 5 in the southern areas of B.C., including the Kootenays, Okanagan, and Cariboo regions. 2024 and 2025 continued to have good representation throughout the province.
- The first virtual scholarship series was held in January 2024 for students to connect, share, and showcase their work. These have continued annually. The series is attended by HCTF staff and board members, other students, and representatives from the Province. HCTF continues to build and support opportunities for the scholarship recipients to connect, share with each other, and grow the larger conservation community.

The T4W Scholarships have had a profound impact on the lives of their recipients and enabled important research on wildlife and habitat stewardship in BC.



Zoe Konanz is a master's student studying at the University of British Columbia. Her work is supporting the Yunesit'in Government's goals to restore cultural burning as part of a broader vision for land healing. To do this Zoe is exploring two questions: how moose and mule deer forage responds to cultural burns and how habitat usage changes for wildlife following burning. This study aims to support Yunesit'in in their fire stewardship goals while contributing to broader ecological understanding.



Danny McNeil-Wilmott is a doctoral student currently studying at the University of Northern British Columbia. Their work, in partnership with Williams Lake First Nation, is examining how the reintroduction of cultural burning practices can help minimize the effects of historical changes on the area. This project seeks to understand how fire stewardship can restore habitat networks and biodiversity, while also ensuring the T'exelcenc people are able to maintain culturally important practices.



Strategic Partnerships for Habitat Enhancement

To deliver the T4W Strategy, HCTF worked with 37 different partner organizations, including 12 First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations:

Grant Recipients	
American Friends of Canadian Conservation	Salt Spring Island Conservancy
Applied Mammal Research Institute	Saulteau First Nations
Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot & Barkley Sounds	Seepanee Ecological Consulting
BC Trappers Association	Simpcw First Nation
BC Wildlife Federation	Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC
British Columbia Conservation Foundation	St'át'imc Government Services
Bulkley Valley Centre for Natural Resources Research & Management	Stqeeeye' Learning Society
Bulkley Valley Rod & Gun Club	Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation
Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society	Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Deering Timber Ltd.	The Granby Wilderness Society
Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust	The Nature Trust of British Columbia
Fraser Valley Conservancy	Tobacco Plains Indian Band
Ministry of WLRs (including previous MFLNRO)	Tsilhqotin National Government
Nazko First Nation	University of British Columbia
Okanagan Nation Alliance	University of Northern British Columbia
PEPAKEN HÁUTW Foundation	WCS Wildlife Conservation Society Canada
Phyla Biological Consulting	Wildex Consulting Ltd.
Ridgeline Wildlife Enhancement	Young Naturalists' Club of BC Society
Salmon Parks Stewardship Society	



Investing in Capacity

Goal 5, Action 23 is to “invest in capacity to ensure Indigenous governments can effectively and efficiently participate in all aspects of wildlife stewardship.” Under this action, HCTF leveraged multiple contributions, including T4W funding, Environment and Climate Change Canada funding, and HCTF’s surcharge funding, to launch a new program called Capacity Grants. Capacity Grants provide funding to build and strengthen organizations’ capability and capacity to design and deliver conservation or restoration projects. They assist with the first steps in planning, designing, engaging, or implementing a project.

T4W funding supported 11 Capacity Grants throughout 2023-24 and 2024-25, including 5 that went to Indigenous Nations and organizations. 14 other Indigenous-led projects were approved and funded from other sources in those cycles. Total funding invested in capacity building for Indigenous Nations in that period was \$321,181.

Project Profile

Hwial'asmut tu tumuhw (Taking Care of the Earth) Stqeeye' Learning Society

Stqeeye' Learning Society is an Indigenous-led non-profit committed to supporting the transmission of Quw'utsun traditional knowledge from their Elders and Knowledge Keepers to their youth through land-based education programs at Xwaaqw'um. Through this project, ten individuals were trained in Cultural Monitoring, including five Indigenous youth, as well as one Indigenous youth trained in Small Vessel Operating Proficiency (SVOP) and one staff biologist in R statistics for Wildlife Biology. Training youth as Cultural Monitors allows them to support and be mentored by Cowichan cultural monitors on projects

such as wetland restoration construction, stream restoration, and culvert replacements, as well as creating a sense of pride and responsibility for taking care of these streams and the fish within them. Staff walked with representatives from Cowichan Tribes, a forest ecologist, a forest carbon specialist, and an eco-forestry expert, and Cowichan Tribes was present for a Forest Management Planning meeting. Engaging with specialists, volunteers, and Cowichan Tribes representatives ensures that the planning processes are inclusive and reflective of the wider community's needs. Training staff in these skills builds resiliency into future projects as the staff can now stand in for Cowichan Cultural monitors during scheduling bottlenecks or when the ferry is not running.



Earned Income

All contributions to HCTF begin earning interest or investment income on the date the payment is received. As of March 31, 2025, the T4W contributions generated a combined total of \$124,885. This is additional funding that is re-invested to align with the goals of the original contributions. The earned income enabled HCTF to approve two additional projects under the T4W initiative:

- 8-517 *Are White-tailed Deer Impeding Mule Deer Recovery?*
 - \$69,988 in 2024-25
- 7-518 *Elk Migration and Sightability Correction Factor Trials in Central B.C.*
 - \$41,470 in 2024-25

At this time, the earned income in the T4W Scholarships account is nearly enough to fund one additional scholarship of \$20,000.

Conclusion

By directing Together for Wildlife resources through HCTF, the Province has enabled:

- Strategic research investment via scholarships aligned with T4W objectives.
- Robust on-the-ground conservation through habitat restoration, enhancement, monitoring, and land acquisitions.
- Collaborations with Indigenous communities and conservation partners.
- Improved data-driven wildlife management supporting provincial strategies.

This integrated model of T4W Strategy + HCTF delivery has facilitated tangible progress across wildlife and habitat conservation in British Columbia.

The following appendices list all approved projects under each contribution.



Appendix 1 – Summary of Projects and Expenditures (Contribution #1)

Together For Wildlife Contribution #1 (March 2021) - \$1,700,000			
Project Title	Region	Project Leader	Total Expenses
NatureKids BC: Nature Clubs Project	Multi-Region	Young Naturalists' Club of BC Society	\$32,523
Conservation Land Operations and Management	Multi-Region	Ministry of FLNRO	\$401,565
BC Wild Sheep Conservation and Movi Control Program	Multi-Region	Phyla Biological Consulting	\$60,000
Columbia Shuswap Invasives Restoration	Multi-Region	Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society	\$27,304
The BC Furbearer Tissue Bank - Building a Foundation for Wildlife Conservation	Multi-Region	BC Trappers Association	\$43,679
Capacity Building for Cultural and Prescribed Fire in the Dry Interior	Multi-Region	BC Wildlife Federation	\$8,000
Supporting Capacity-building for Indigenous-led Bat Conservation	Multi-Region	WCS Wildlife Conservation Society Canada	\$8,000
Promoting Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement on Salt Spring Island	Vancouver Island	Salt Spring Island Conservancy	\$49,005
Habitat Protection and Connections for Western Toads	Vancouver Island	Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot & Barkley Sounds	\$19,587
Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project, Phase 2	Vancouver Island	BC Conservation Foundation	\$5,000
Empowering BC Conservation Organizations to Acquire Lands from US Owners	Vancouver Island	American Friends of Canadian Conservation	\$11,200
Salmon Parks Guardian Program	Vancouver Island	Salmon Parks Stewardship Society	\$15,200
Enhancing Upland Farmland for Wildlife in the Fraser River Estuary	Lower Mainland	Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust	\$30,000
Creating an Indigenous-led Conservation Initiative for a Mountain at Risk in S'ólh Téméxw	Lower Mainland	Fraser Valley Conservancy	\$16,000
Fraser River Bighorns: Fraser West Disease Assessment and Herd Recovery	Thompson - Nicola	Phyla Biological Consulting	\$63,385
Monitoring the Stein/Nahatlatch Grizzly Bear Population During Recovery	Thompson - Nicola	St'át'imc Government Services	\$54,208



(Appendix 1 continued)

Project Title	Region	Project Leader	Total Expenses
Simpcw First Nation Badger Ecology and Culvert Rehabilitation Project	Thompson - Nicola	Simpcw First Nation	\$10,000
Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Program	Kootenays	Ministry of FLNRO	\$29,583
Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor - Wycliffe Prairie	Kootenays	The Nature Trust of BC	\$200,000
Grizzly Bear Management Plan	Cariboo	Tsilhqotin National Government	\$8,000
Tsilhqot'in National Government Moose Management Plan	Cariboo	Tsilhqotin National Government	\$8,000
Restoring Whitebark Pine Ecosystems to Enhance Subalpine Bear Habitat	Skeena	Bulkley Valley Centre for Natural Resources Research & Management	\$25,000
Old Fort Mtn. Moose Winter Range Browse Enhancement Project	Skeena	Bulkley Valley Rod & Gun Club	\$43,139
Tuchodi Prescribed Burns for Wildlife Habitat	Omineca/Peace	Ridgeline Wildlife Enhancement	\$1,785
Determining the Nutritional Importance of Kokanee to Grizzly Bears	Omineca/Peace	Ministry of FLNRO	\$32,498
Trophic Changes Resulting From Sub-lethal Glyphosate Based Herbicide Use in Forests: Fungi, Plants and Pollinators	Omineca/Peace	University of Northern British Columbia	\$30,000
Collaborative Approach to Moose Enhancement along the Omineca River	Omineca/Peace	Wildex Consulting Ltd.	\$2,491
Prescribed Burns for Moose, Elk, and Deer in the Doig River Area	Omineca/Peace	Ridgeline Wildlife Enhancement	\$5,000
Restoring Riparian Cottonwood of the Kettle River	Okanagan	The Granby Wilderness Society	\$42,700
Enhancement of Winter Range Habitat for Mule Deer	Okanagan	Applied Mammal Research Institute	\$44,795
Skaha Lake Eastside - Lot 1	Okanagan	The Nature Trust of BC	\$200,000
Are White-tailed Deer Impeding Mule Deer Recovery?	Okanagan	University of British Columbia	\$69,988
Cherryville Community Forest Habitat Enhancement Prescription	Okanagan	Deering Timber Ltd.	\$2,353
			\$1,599,988



Appendix 2 – Summary of Projects and Expenditures (Contribution #2)

Together For Wildlife Contribution #2 (March 2022) - \$740,000			
Project Title	Region	Project Leader	Total Expenses
PEPAKEN TE TENEW: Restoration & Resilience in the W̱SÁNEĆ Homelands	Vancouver Island	PEPAKEN HÁUTW Foundation	\$30,000
American Badger Occupancy in Simpcwúl'ecw	Thompson - Nicola	Simpcw First Nation	\$2,500
Identifying Wolverine Reproductive Dens in the Columbia Mountains	Kootenays	Seepanee Ecological Consulting	\$10,725
Red Canyon Ungulate Habitat Enhancement Project	Kootenays	Tobacco Plains Indian Band	\$64,430
Canoe Valley Wetland Connectivity Restoration Project	Omineca/Peace	Simpcw First Nation	\$2,500
Using Large-Scale Functional Habitat Restoration Tools to Enhance Moose Populations in North-Central BC	Multi-Region	Ministry of FLNRO	\$216,000
Determining Factors Affecting Moose Population Change	Multi-Region	Ministry of FLNRO	\$48,093
Mustelid Oases in Large Clearcuts: Debris Piles as Habitat Restoration	Kootenays	Applied Mammal Research Institute	\$14,997
Nazko Road Rehabilitation for Moose Habitat Enhancement	Cariboo	Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC	\$73,373
Xwaaqw'um Wetland Restoration 2024	Vancouver Island	Stqeeeye' Learning Society	\$50,000
Okanagan River Fish and Wildlife Restoration in Okanagan Falls	Okanagan	Okanagan Nation Alliance	\$49,231
Atlin East Sheep Movement Monitoring & Baseline Health Assessment	Skeena	Taku River Tlingit First Nation	\$54,155
Okanagan yilíkʷlxkn - Wild Sheep Disease Management	Okanagan	Okanagan Nation Alliance	\$13,177
Elk Migration and Sightability Correction Factor Trials in Central BC	Omineca/Peace	Ministry of WLRS	\$41,470
Hwial'asmut tu tumuhw (Taking Care of the Earth)	Vancouver Island	Stqeeeye' Learning Society	\$13,500
Community Road Mortality Monitoring Project	Okanagan	Okanagan Nation Alliance	\$6,320
Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation Guardian Program	Cariboo	Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation	\$17,000
			\$707,470



Appendix 3 – Summary of Scholarships Awarded

Together For Wildlife Scholarships <small>*All T4W scholarships were for \$20,000 each</small>				
Year	University	Degree	Study Species	Location
2023	UVic	PhD	Fishers	Southern Interior
2023	UBC	PhD	Grizzly Bears	Southeastern B.C.
2023	UVic	MSc	Ungulates	N/A
2023	UBC	PhD	N/A	N/A
2023	UNBC	MSc	Understory Plants	Central Interior
2023	TRU	MSc	Western Rattlesnakes	Southern Interior
2023	UBC	MSc	Columbian Spotted Frogs	N/A
2023	UVic	MSc	N/A	Central Coast
2023	UVic	PhD	Goats & Bears	N/A
2023	UNBC	MSc	Stone's Sheep	Northern B.C.
2024	UBC	MSc	Stone's Sheep	North-Central B.C.
2024	UBC	PhD	Mule Deer	Southern Interior
2024	UBC	MSc	Black-tailed Deer	Southern Coast
2024	UVic	PhD	Fishers	Southern Interior
2024	UNBC	MSc	Stone's Sheep	Northern B.C.
2024	UBC	PhD	Cougars	Southern Interior
2024	UVic	MSc	Black-tailed Deer	Southern Vancouver Island
2024	SFU	MSc	Black Turnstone & Surfbirds	Sailish Sea
2024	TRU	MSc	Bighorn Sheep	Southern Interior
2024	SFU	MSc	N/A (government)	Southern Interior
2025	TRU	MSc	Co-management (Fire)	The Nicola Watershed
2025	UNBC	MSc	Sheep	Dome Mountain
2025	UVic	MSc	Wolves and Deer	Heiltsuk Territory
2025	UVic	PhD	Data Collection & Community Science	N/A

