

BCAC/ARDCORP
Agriculture Environment Initiatives Committee
Agriculture Environment & Wildlife Fund Wildlife Initiative - Strategic Direction

Objective:

To support development and implementation of an effective and comprehensive suite of programs to address wildlife agriculture conflicts in all regions of BC by:

- Assisting producers to prevent or mitigate impacts
- Building partnerships between government and non-government agencies to facilitate implementation of projects and programs
- Assisting agencies in making wildlife damage mitigation and compensation programs more effective
- Supporting projects that demonstrate conflict resolution opportunities

Partners:

Building partnerships is an effective way of developing a common understanding of issues and the effectiveness of measures to reduce conflicts. Key agency partners include:

- BC Agriculture Council
- BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL)
- BC Ministry of Environment (MoE)
- BC Ministry of Forests (MoF)
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
- Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAFBC)
- Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service
- BC Wildlife Federation
- Ducks Unlimited Canada

Tools:

The tools to address conflicts are comprised of a wide range of programs, projects and actions that can be undertaken by agencies and organizations in cooperation with producers. Major tools and key partners include:

- Agriculture Wildlife Program (MAL/AAFC) – Initiated in 2008, cash compensation for forage and cattle losses.
- Provincial Agriculture Zone Wildlife Program (MoE) – In implementation phase, targeting of wildlife management in agricultural areas to address impacts, coordination of hunting to improve it's effectiveness as a mgmt tool.
- Agriculture Environment and Wildlife Fund (BCAC/IAFBC) – In implementation phase, wildlife issues identified as a key area for AEI Mgmt Cttee lead.
- Wild Predator Loss Control Program (BCCA/BCAC/MoE) – Seeking funding and potential expansion for continuation into 09-10 and

beyond, currently targeted at responding to attacks on cattle, potential for inclusion of other livestock.

Key Challenges:

Significant progress has been made on many fronts over the last 8 years. There is a much clearer understanding of the problems and solutions. New programs are being implemented. Agencies and organizations are finding new ways to cooperate in addressing the issue. Still there remain some major challenges and gaps:

- Further refinement and implementation of the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program
- Enhancing the effectiveness of hunting as a wildlife management tool to mitigate impacts on forages
- Finding an effective way to mitigate migratory waterfowl impacts on forages
- Finding more publicly acceptable and cost effective ways to mitigate or prevent bird damage to horticultural crops
- Addressing forest ingrowth impacts on grazing for wildlife and livestock
- Assessing impacts of climate change related scenarios such as mild winters and pine beetle on wildlife populations and range

Strategic Actions for AEI Management Committee:

Selection of projects that address the main challenges identified above. Some potential activities include:

- Cost effective way of facilitating hunt coordination initiatives
- Support for BC Wildlife Federation "Outdoor Passport" initiative as a means to building trust between landowners and hunters.
- Clarifying constraints related to landowner and hunter liability concerns
- Develop project proposals to address most pressing constraints to effective wildlife impact mitigation
- Evaluation and implementation of mitigative measures in support of compensation program
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Appendix A

Wildlife Damage Mitigation Overview

Wildlife damage mitigation:

- Supports commitment to MAL forage and livestock loss compensation program
- Complements preventative measures by producers

Wild predator loss mitigation

- Proposal by BCAC/ARDCORP to IAF is under consideration. That proposal may see inclusion of sheep as well as cattle
- Current program is closely linked to the MAL Wild Predator Loss Compensation program as a "verified" loss is required to trigger a mitigative action
- The program provides a mechanism for response to attacks by wild predators on livestock

Wild ungulate forage loss mitigation

- Intended to reduce need for producer funded prevention measures such as exclusion fencing
- Support by producers for mitigative measures is an expectation for continued access to MAL Forage Loss Compensation Program
- Effective hunting is seen as only viable option to manage wild ungulate numbers in agricultural areas
 - Constraints to hunting effectiveness in reducing impacts
 - Lack of hunter interest in non-trophy animals
 - Hunting season opening timing to reduce "pressure"
 - Limited access by hunters in agricultural areas
 - Concerns by landowners about allowing hunting
 - Opportunities to improve hunting effectiveness
 - MoE PAZWP initiative proposals on regulatory changes
 - "Agricultural Tags" for non-trophy animals taken in agricultural areas
 - Adjusted timing of seasons to meet agricultural impact concerns and target populations
 - BCWF Outdoor Passport initiative
 - Encourage respect by hunters for landowner concerns
 - Address landowner liability concerns
 - Encourage partnering of hunters and agricultural landowners
 - AEI/MoE hunt coordination initiative (Peace R, E Kootenay)
 - Reduce hassle of managing access by hunters
 - Assist hunters in accessing hunting opportunities with willing landowners