

Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

Meeting #33 Minutes

January 8th, 2025 12:30 – 3:30 pm

Via Zoom

Attendees	
Council Members:	Staff:
Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.)	Jen Psyllakis, A/ADM, Resource Stewardship Division, WLRS
Nancy Wilkin	Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation, WLRS
Adam Ford	Michael Burwash, Associate Director Wildlife, Wildlife Branch, WLRS
Alyssa Lepka	Logan Wenham, Executive Director, Wildlife Branch, WLRS
Andrea Barnett	
Cailyn Glasser	Guests:
Jason Northcott	Hon. Randene Neill, Minister of WLRS
John Bergenske	Seamus Wolfe, Minister's Chief of Staff
Kari Stuart-Smith	Marshall Scott-Bigsby, Ministerial Assistant
Megan Hanacek	Lori Halls, Deputy Minister WLRS
Naomi Owens-Beek	Helen Schwantje DVM, M.Sc.
Shaun Hollingsworth	Hunter Lampreau, Forum Co-Chair
	Mariana Nagy-Reis, Forum Co-Chair
	Consultants:
	Derek Thompson
	Judith Cullington

Purpose of Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Meet with Minister Neill ♦ Learn about the 2025 Wildlife Disease Association Conference ♦ Learn about the Forum's Strategic Plan Engagement ♦ Prepare for Wildlife Dialogues ♦ Review the revised terms of reference
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Action items (January meeting)	Lead	Status
Share Helen Schwantje's contact information with Council.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Revise the terms of reference to incorporate Council suggestions and bring these to the March meeting for review and approval.	Avril Nagel	Complete
Update the Dialogues breakout group questions, and include the survey results in the next correspondence with registrants.	Judith Cullington	Complete
Connect with MWAC members to ensure there are moderators for both Dialogues sessions.	Judith Cullington	Complete

Minutes	
1. Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Simoogit Hleek (Chief Harry Nyce Sr.) provided a welcome prayer.
2. Approval of November 2024 meeting minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Action items from last meeting completed or in progress. <p><i>Moved by Andrea Barnett, seconded by Kari Stuart-Smith, to approve the November 2024 meeting minutes. Approved.</i></p>
3. Co-chairs report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Nancy Wilkin noted that the MWAC, Forum and PHTAT chairs met with the RWAC co-chairs in early December. One topic of discussion was the importance of more First Nations representation. ♦ The Advisory Groups and RWACs will share important correspondence on an ongoing basis.
4. Preparation for meeting with Minister	Members took time to prepare for the meeting with the Minister.
5. Wildlife Disease Association Conference	<p>PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION</p> <p>Helen Schwantje provided a presentation on the upcoming international Wildlife Disease Association Conference in Victoria, July 28 – August 1, 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Wildlife Disease Association is a leading international scientific organization representing wildlife health. ♦ Dr. Schwantje spoke to the recent conference in Australia and its focus on Indigenous ways of knowing. ♦ The Victoria conference will build on this, and highlight approaches in North America, especially British Columbia. They anticipate 450-500 attendees. ♦ She encouraged MWAC members to get involved as presenters and attendees. <p>DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Bats and white nose syndrome would be a good addition to the topics; and Chronic Wasting Disease in cervids is a priority. ♦ Several MWAC members expressed an interest in participating. ♦ Council informed the Minister of the opportunity to attend the conference. <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Judith Cullington to share Helen Schwantje's contact information with Council.
6. Working Group Updates	<p>Strategies Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Strategies Working Group met in November and provided input to the Dialogues format.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The next meeting will be in February, with a focus on thresholds and cumulative effects. ♦ A special meeting will be called once the Ministerial mandate letters are released. <p>Research Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Avril Nagel noted that the report on the cooperative model has been sent to Council. More work will occur in the near future. <p>Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Council discussed proposed approaches to updating the terms of reference to address how external groups have the opportunity to speak to Council. ♦ It was agreed to seek Council input for any proposed external presenters (via email). ♦ Some presenters might only speak to a sub-group of Council members. <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avril Nagel to revise the terms of reference to incorporate Council suggestions and bring these to the March meeting for review and approval.
<p>7. Meeting with Minister Neill</p>	<p>Minister Randene Neill and some of her staff joined the Council for an informal discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Minister and Council members introduced themselves. Council members stressed that they are here to help the Minister achieve wildlife priorities. ♦ It was noted that CWD is a high priority issue that merits quick action to prevent further spread. There is significant impact for people who rely on these cervids for food. The Minister would like to meet with Adam Ford to discuss this further. ♦ The Minister asked Council for feedback on how Council is working, and how it can be improved. ♦ The Minister would like to meet again with Council once the mandate letters have been released.
<p>8. Wildlife Dialogues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Judith Cullington provided a summary of the responses to the Dialogues Survey. ♦ Registration has been strong (44 Indigenous and 86 stakeholder groups). ♦ Members provided direction on the breakout group questions. <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Judith Cullington to update the breakout group questions, and include the survey results in the next correspondence with registrants. ➤ Judith Cullington to connect with MWAC members to ensure there are moderators for both sessions.
<p>9. Closing</p>	<p>Upcoming meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Next MWAC meeting March 5th ♦ Wildlife Dialogues January 24th 9 – 11 am (Indigenous), January 28th 12:30 – 2:30 pm (stakeholders)