

Lhá:lt/Harrison-Chehalis Wildlife Management Area - Management Plan Update

Report on SCCLMP Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Deliverables

March 30, 2020

Overview of Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Deliverables:

- A. Summary of all meetings, consultations, and engagements, including key concerns and discussion points
- B. Plan for completing update
- C. Draft management plan update framework
- D. Invoice for works completed to date

Description of Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Deliverables:

- A. Summary of all meetings, consultations, and engagements, including key concerns and discussion points
 - Various discussions with FLNRORD Terrestrial Wildlife section
 - Discuss management plan update process, approach to engaging First Nations, Ministry staff support for plan completion
 - Various discussions with FLNRORD Aquatic Wildlife Resources section
 - Agreement to collaborate where possible on plan drafting and update process
 - Kendra Morgan designated as Aquatic team point-person to assist with plan update process
 - Various discussions with provincial Conservation Lands staff
 - Discuss and share examples of recently completed Conservation Land management plan updates
 - Suggest doing an evaluation of the 1997 plan to identify gaps and determine what worked or did not work with 1997 plan
 - Suggest a 5-7 year “Operational Plan” with specific tasks to accomplish; this will help to focus future work, establish tasks with measurable outcomes, and help to demonstrate the utility of the management plan and WMA
 - Discuss process Conservation Land Program tentative template, and current contract in the Kootenay-Boundary Region to update two plans
 - October 4, 2019 meeting at The Nature Trust of BC (NTBC owns 194 hectares of WMA)
 - Discuss and scope management plan update process; agreement to prioritize FN engagement, and use input from those communities to lead the update process
 - NTBC/SCCLMP agreement to include some specific, tangible actions
 - Include guidance for Operation & Maintenance priorities to help direct the NTBC Conservation Youth Crew summer team
 - NTBC does not want to promote access to their properties, but education/information signs are ok
 - November 14, 2019 meeting with Sts’ailes leadership and staff (meeting minutes attached)
 - Discussion about how Sts’ailes would like to participate in the WMA management plan update
 - Sts’ailes does not want to see the management plan hung up on issues raised by neighbouring nations

- Sts'ailes is open to neighbouring nations positively engaging in the WMA, but does not want the other nations to negatively impact work on the WMA and management plan update
 - Some Sts'ailes community members are critical of the WMA.
 - Sts'ailes request for funding to support Sts'ailes participation in WMA management plan update → Eric to follow up with MIRR
 - Sts'ailes interested in possible land exchange with province to include some Sts'ailes land and fee simple property in the WMA → Eric to follow up with MIRR
 - Proposed next steps:
 - Inform other Nations that management plan update is happening
 - Work on funding options, discuss levels of engagement possible with and without funding
 - Eric start drafting plan update, followed by workshop with Sts'ailes/Scowletz/Leq'a:mel to talk about the layout and goals/objectives → workshop may be challenging to schedule due to limited capacity and many priorities
 - Eric incorporate workshop feedback into updated draft.
 - Updated draft presented to Sts'ailes community through council, probably at an open house (upcoming open houses scheduled for June 10, 2020 and September 30, 2020)
- Multiple attempts to set up meetings with representatives from each Sq'ewlets and Leq'a:mel First Nations
 - Meeting scheduled with Sq'ewlets representative postponed indefinitely due to bereavement leave.
 - Leq'a:mel representatives not responding to most recent email inquiries.
- Various discussions with FLNRORD First Nations Relations team
 - Discuss which First Nations to engage for management plan update, protocol for engagement, Sts'ailes request for funding to support WMA management plan engagement
- Discussions with Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR)
 - No provincial government funding available to support Sts'ailes engagement in WMA management plan update
 - Confidential conversation about proposed land exchanges between the Province and Sts'ailes
- November 17, 2020 conversation with David Hancock about WMA management plan update, and engagement with Harrison Salmon Stronghold
- December 2020, Informed DFO Hatchery in WMA of management plan update, invitation extended to provide input on update
- March 4, 2020 meeting with James Leon (Aboriginal Rights & Title, Sq'ewlets First Nation) and Sq'ewlets Councillor to discuss WMA management plan update, process, Sq'ewlets concerns, and Sq'ewlets involvement moving forward
 - Sq'ewlets currently views any WMA designation in their traditional territory as an infringement on Sq'ewlets rights & title. However, Sq'ewlets is not closing the door to WMA designation as a conservation mechanism, particularly with respect to consideration of in the future possibly adding Harrison Bay to the WMA.

- Presently, Sq'ewlets and Sts'ailes are working together to better manage the area of shared interest; this includes the southwestern-most portion of the WMA from the Lougheed Highway bridge to Government Island.
 - For the WMA management plan update, Sq'ewlets would like to continue Nation-to-Nation engagement with the province and Sts'ailes. This includes Eric Balke (SCCLMP) continuing to engage directly with James Leon (Aboriginal Rights & Title, Sq'ewlets) regarding management plan progress and content.
 - Sq'ewlets would like the updated WMA management plan to include more neutral wording about WMA management. For example, "...in the spirit of Sts'ailes and Sq'ewlets working together..."
 - Sq'ewlets would like the updated WMA management plan to clearly articulate what the WMA not infringing on rights & title means.
 - At present, Sq'ewlets does not wish to pursue any "showstopper" for the WMA.
- March 9, 2020 meeting with Scott Barrett (FLNRORD Director of Resource Management, and Regional Manager for the WMA) about WMA management plan update process
 - Discuss focus of WMA values, WMA objectives, accountability, using data to inform action, and empowering conservation partners to action.
 - Ministry indicated some financial support may be available for certain upcoming WMA management plan update steps (e.g., renting rooms for plan engagement).
- Repeated attempts to set up a meeting with a representative of Leq'a:mel First Nation have gone unanswered.
- Attempt to connect with the District of Kent has gone unanswered.
- In mid-March, Sts'ailes Administration limited its activities indefinitely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unclear if Sq'ewlets or Leq'a:mel First Nations have taken similar action.
 - As these Nations focus on the health and safety of their communities, the WMA management plan is likely to be a very low priority for the foreseeable future as the pandemic continues.
 - Constructively engaging with these Nations regarding the management plan process during the pandemic is unlikely.
 - In-person meetings to discuss the management plan update and solicit input on the plan are not feasible for the foreseeable future.

B. Plan for completing update

- Continue reviewing similar Conservation Land management plan updates, as needed **(completed)**
- Complete high level review of 1997 WMA management plan to identify strengths/weaknesses, gaps, what worked/did not work **(completed)**
- Review 2015/2016 consultation record and public feedback prior to WMA designation, and identify ideas/concerns for management plan and future update **(completed)**
- Tentative plan for ongoing engagement with rights holders, stakeholders, and the public
 - **Postpone management plan update process and ongoing engagement for 1 year due to COVID-19 pandemic**
 - First Nations and local communities must focus on the health and safety of their communities during the pandemic.

- Current social distancing measures mandated by the Provincial and Federal Health Officers limit in-person interactions to prevent the spread of the virus.
 - Direct input on key aspects of the management plan update are the next step of the process, and feedback
 - Work with Harrison Salmon Stronghold to convene meeting to solicit targeted input on key aspects of the management plan, including vision statement, WMA values, management objectives and strategies, and plan implementation
 - By March 31, 2021, propose convening a workshop with HSS partners before June 15, 2021.
 - Connect with representatives of District of Kent and Fraser Valley Regional District to (i) open conversation about local government's thoughts/concerns about the WMA and management plan update, and (ii) determine the appropriate approach for community engagement.
 - By March 31, 2021, schedule in person meetings to be held before April 30, 2021.
 - Propose meetings for community input on management plan update in September/October 2021.
 - Proposed Management Plan Draft Schedule
 - Stage 1 - Draft Management Plan Update Framework (completed)
 - Draft management plan framework complete
 - Includes proposed template, useable text from previous management plan update, outline of proposed sections/content
 - **Postpone Management Plan Update Process one year** due to limitations engaging First Nations leadership/communities and the public in plan update because of COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Stage 2 - Management Plan Draft (postpone until August 31, 2021)
 - Comprehensive draft complete, all sections and figures drafted
 - Draft ready for input from Sts'ailes and other communities
 - Target input from Sts'ailes community at September, 2021 community meeting.
 - Stage 3 - Management Plan Finalized (postpone until March 1, 2022)
 - Feedback from First Nations and community engagement incorporated
 - Plan ready for Regional Manager review and sign off
- C. Draft management plan update framework: Stage 1 - Draft Management Plan Update Framework (completed)
- Adapted BC Parks management plan template to LHC WMA
 - Created management plan working draft, including useable text from 1997 management plan
 - Prepared document with Guidance for Management Plan Update, including:
 - Overview of existing commitments;
 - Feedback from the 2013 public consultation prior to WMA designation; and
 - Recommendations for WMA Management Plan Update and Process