



BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

2018-2019 Columbia Region Action Plan Update

Date Revised: 01 November 2018

Introduction to the FWCP

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and Public Stakeholders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams.

The FWCP was established to compensate for impacts to fish, wildlife, and their supporting habitat, resulting from the construction of BC Hydro generation facilities. Today, the FWCP takes a forward-looking ecosystem-based approach to compensate for fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams.

BC Hydro has water licence obligations in the Columbia and Peace regions, and has made voluntary commitments to address the impacts of dams in the Coastal Region. BC Hydro fulfills the applicable obligations through the work of the FWCP, which is funded annually by BC Hydro.

The FWCP directs those funds towards projects that align with its Action Plans and address priority actions across its three regions. The fish and wildlife projects funded by the FWCP in its Coastal, Columbia, and Peace regions help fulfill its vision of thriving fish and wildlife populations in watersheds that are functioning and sustainable, and support the FWCP's three strategic objectives:

- 1. Conservation**

Maintain or improve the status of species or ecosystems of concern. Maintain or improve the integrity and productivity of ecosystems and habitats.

- 2. Sustainable Use**

Maintain or improve opportunities for sustainable use, including harvesting and other uses. Harvesting includes First Nations, recreational, sport and commercial harvests. Other uses may include cultural, medicinal, or non-consumptive uses.

- 3. Community Engagement**

Build and maintain relationships with stakeholders and Aboriginal communities. This objective stems from BC Hydro's social responsibility policy and the Province of B.C. shared stewardship objective.

FWCP's Action Plans

FWCP's strategic plans (aka Action Plans) describe the strategies and Priority Actions needed to accomplish FWCP objectives at the basin or watershed-level. The Action Plans guide FWCP investments and are referenced annually by the regional Boards to track progress toward implementation, set annual priorities and guide decision-making in setting out and approving the Annual Operating Plan for each region.

FWCP strategic plans (aka Action Plans) provide strategic direction for each region based on the unique priorities and compensation opportunities and commitments in the region, and reflect the FWCP vision, mission and strategic objectives.



In the Columbia Region, the Basin Plan sets forth the strategic direction for the FWCP in this region. It includes the vision, principles, policy context and strategic objectives that form the foundation of the FWCP as well as a short description of the Columbia Basin landscape and an overview of the hydro-electric facilities and footprint impacts created by those facilities.

Action Plans identify priority actions for the restoration, conservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the Columbia Region. Taken together, the Basin Plan and accompanying Action Plans present the FWCP priorities for investments in compensation activities within the Columbia Basin. These plans also guide regional Board funding decisions as all funded projects must align with one or more Action Plan priorities.

Currently, there are seven Action Plans in the Columbia Region:

- Large Lakes Action Plan
- Small Lakes Action Plan
- Species of Interest Action Plan
- Streams Action Plan
- Upland/Dryland Action Plan
- Riparian and Wetlands Action Plan
- Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Plan (UKEEP)¹

Action Plans were originally developed in June 2012 with the exception of UKEEP, which was finalized in August 2014. The Riparian and Wetlands Action Plan was revised in September 2014 based on input received from stakeholders, and replaced the earlier (June 2012) version.

Given the fundamental linkage between the Action Plans and the projects that are funded and delivered, it is important to understand how the funded works and studies are addressing Action Plan priorities. This, in turn, will support the FWCP in achieving its overarching vision, mission and strategic objectives.

Updating our Columbia Region Action Plans

In 2018, the FWCP is initiating a process to update its Columbia Region Action Plans. Final, updated Action Plans are scheduled for completion in August 2019.

The updated Action Plans will reflect results from a desktop strategic project review (completed in September 2018), input from First Nations, agencies, stewardship groups, and others, and will include priority actions that support the FWCP's strategic objectives, mission, and vision.

The FWCP is committed to seeking input from a broad range of perspectives and is seeking early input to help inform the development of initial ideas to be considered in the updated Action Plans. These early ideas will be reviewed by the Columbia Region Board in January 2019 and will be the basis for broader discussion during our upcoming, spring 2019 engagement process where we will seek input from a broad range of interested groups and individuals.

¹ Our five-year partnership agreement with Columbia Basin Trust (the Trust) to fund fish and wildlife projects under the Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Plan (UKEEP) has concluded and may be considered in Columbia Region Action Plan updates.



Early engagement on draft action ideas

As noted above, we want to host initial discussions in fall 2018 to:

- Gather information to help us draft updates to the Action Plans that will be discussed during the broader engagement process, planned for spring 2019.
- Help FWCP identify a comprehensive suite of draft ecosystem-based priority actions that reflect our mission, build on our current actions and projects, and support us to be forward-looking.
- Prepare updated 2019 Action Plans that define our priority actions and guide our Columbia Region funding decisions for the next five years, when the next Action Plan review will be considered by the Board.

FWCP has contracted LGL Limited environmental research associates (LGL) to lead all technical aspects of the Action Plan update process. FWCP's Communications Coordinator, Lynne Betts, is supporting LGL with the engagement and is working with the Columbia Region Manager, Crystal Klym, to coordinate First Nations engagement in this process. The Columbia Region Board is responsible for final endorsement of the updated Action Plans.

Resources

In preparation for the discussion, please consider reviewing our current Columbia Region Action Plans at <http://fwcp.ca/region/columbia-region/>.