



FISH & WILDLIFE COMPENSATION PROGRAM GOVERNANCE MANUAL

April 2024

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program 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.

This updated 2024 Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program Governance Manual was approved by the Steering Committee on April 8, 2024.

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Table of Contents

1 GOVERNANCE MANUAL OVERVIEW	5
1.1 Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program overview.....	5
1.2 Strategic framework: vision and mission	6
1.3 Operating principles	7
1.4 Strategic objectives and regional action plans.....	7
1.5 The partnership approach	9
1.5.1. Agency partners	9
1.5.2. First Nations partners.....	10
1.5.3 Public partners	10
1.6 Overview of the regions	11
Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program—Peace Region.....	11
Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program—Columbia Region	11
Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program—Coastal Region.....	11
1.7 Governance manual purpose and structure	11
2 LEGAL CONTEXT AND FUNDING.....	13
2.1 Columbia and Peace region water licences	13
FWCP Licence Condition Details.....	13
2.2 FWCP annual funding.....	14
3 PROGRAM GOVERNANCE – GENERAL OVERVIEW	15
3.1 Steering committee	15
3.2 Regional boards.....	15
3.3 Regional First Nations Working Groups	15
3.4 Regional technical committees.....	16
3.5 Program manager	16
3.6 Region managers	16
4 PROGRAM DELIVERY.....	17
4.1 Project delivery model.....	17
4.2 Regional annual operating plans	17
4.3 Data and report management	18
4.4 Communications and community engagement	18
5 STRATEGIC PLANNING, ANNUAL REPORTING AND PROGRAM REVIEW	20
5.1 Strategic planning.....	20

5.2 Annual report	20
5.3 Evaluation and audit	20
5.4 Governance manual review.....	21
APPENDIX A.....	22
REGIONAL BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	22
APPENDIX B.....	27
BOARD MEMBERSHIP	27
APPENDIX C.....	33
CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES	33
APPENDIX D	38
REMUNERATION	38
APPENDIX E.....	41
FIRST NATIONS WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	41
APPENDIX F.....	45
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE	45
APPENDIX G	50
PROJECT REVIEW CRITERIA AND PROCESS.....	50
APPENDIX H	52
REGION MANAGER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	52
APPENDIX I.....	54
DATA AND REPORT MANAGEMENT OWNERSHIP OF FWCP PROJECT INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	54

1 GOVERNANCE MANUAL OVERVIEW

1.1 Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program overview

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) was established to compensate for footprint¹ impacts to fish, wildlife, and their supporting habitats resulting from the construction of BC Hydro generation facilities. The FWCP operates in three regions of British Columbia: Coastal, Columbia, and Peace (Figure 1). In the Columbia and Peace regions, the FWCP is in place to meet conditions related to the protection or enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats in BC Hydro's Water Licences² issued under the provincial [Water Sustainability Act](#) (previously the Water Act). The FWCP is a voluntary commitment by BC Hydro in the Coastal Region. The FWCP is funded annually by BC Hydro. By funding projects that aim to compensate for impacts to fish and wildlife populations in the FWCP's Coastal, Columbia, and Peace regions, the FWCP is fulfilling BC Hydro's applicable water licence obligations and commitments to compensate for fish and wildlife impacts.

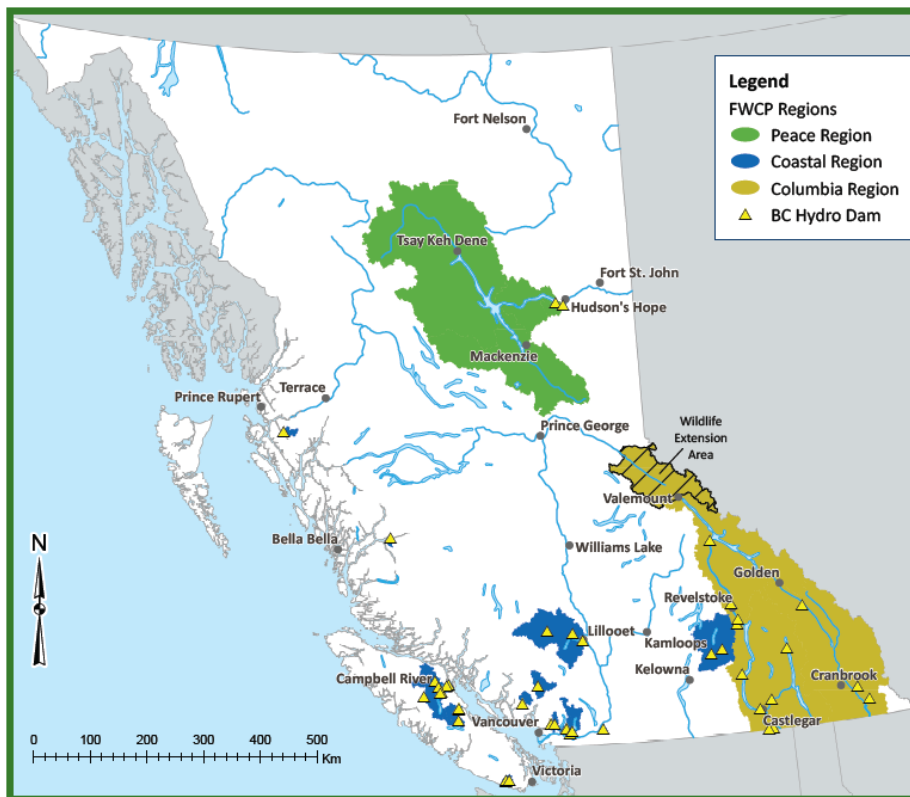


Figure 1: Regional boundaries for the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program.

¹ Footprint impacts refer to the permanent loss of habitat associated with dams and related infrastructure, including the permanently flooded habitat (below the drawdown zone) resulting from reservoir creation.

² [Section 2.1](#) describes the water licence conditions related to the FWCP.

1.2 Strategic framework: vision and mission

The FWCP vision is:

Thriving fish and wildlife populations in watersheds that are functioning and sustainable.

While the FWCP operates in watersheds that have been altered by hydroelectric development, the FWCP vision—an expression of the desired future state—recognizes that an effective program can support the maintenance of healthy fish and wildlife populations that will meet both conservation and sustainable use objectives. Actions focused on conserving and, where possible, restoring ecosystem function will help species be more resilient to emerging pressures such as climate change and the cumulative effects of other overlapping resource developments.

The FWCP Mission describes the functional approach to achieving its vision:

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program compensates for fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams.

This mission aligns with the general condition in BC Hydro’s water licences in the Columbia and Peace regions and BC Hydro’s commitment in the Coastal Region, which require BC Hydro to undertake programs or remedial measures to address losses to fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

FWCP’s strategic framework identifies a program-wide vision, mission and strategic objectives. Building from the vision, mission and strategic objectives, regional action plans identify priorities to be addressed through the delivery of projects. See [Figure 2](#), FWCP’s strategic framework.

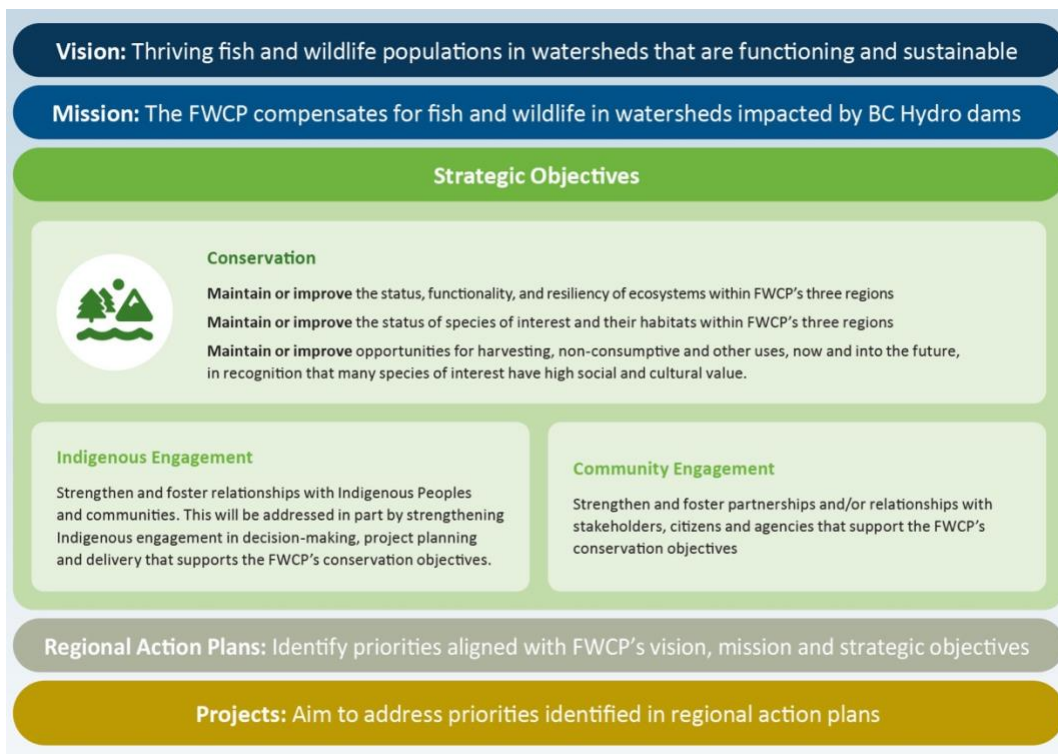


Figure 2: The FWCP’s strategic framework reflects a program-wide vision, mission, and strategic objectives that define the FWCP’s approach to funding and delivering eligible fish and wildlife projects that align with regional action plans.

1.3 Operating principles

The following operating principles guide and frame a consistent approach to strategically managing the broad suite of fish and wildlife projects in all regions.

Approach: the FWCP has a forward-looking ecosystem-based approach that defines the desired outcomes and takes actions to restore, enhance, and conserve priority species and their habitats.

Decision-making: the FWCP efficiently uses its resources and works with its partners to make informed and consensus-built decisions that enable the delivery of effective projects that address identified regional priority actions.

Geographic scope: the FWCP is active within the watersheds, basins, and ranges of the populations of species affected by generation facilities owned and operated by BC Hydro.

Objectives³: the FWCP defines and delivers on compensation objectives that reflect the partnership's collective goals and align with provincial and federal fish and wildlife conservation and management objectives in the areas where the FWCP operates.

Delivery: the delivery framework provides for a combination of project delivery approaches consistent across regions while allowing enough flexibility to meet unique regional requirements and ensure the most efficient and effective means to product delivery.

1.4 Strategic objectives and regional action plans

The FWCP's strategic objectives form the basis of regional action plans. These objectives, set out below, also support meeting both BC Hydro's water licence conditions in the Columbia and Peace regions and its commitment and intent when voluntarily establishing the FWCP in the Coastal Region in partnership with the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), First Nations, and the public.

The FWCP's regional action plans provide strategic direction for each region based on the unique fish and wildlife priorities and compensation opportunities and commitments in the region and reflect the FWCP's vision and mission.

Each regional action plan further describes the strategies and actions needed to accomplish FWCP objectives in the respective regions. The regional action plans guide FWCP investments and should be referenced annually by the regional boards⁴ to track progress toward implementation, set annual priorities, and guide decision-making in setting out and approving the annual operating plan for the region.

³ FWCP objectives are defined by the partners (agencies, First Nations, and the public) through a consensus-based strategic planning process. FWCP does not have direct management authority for fish and wildlife and needs to ensure that its activities are consistent with applicable laws/regulations regarding fish, wildlife and habitat management.

⁴ For clarity, there are three regional boards, one for each FWCP region: Coastal, Columbia, and Peace.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	RATIONALE
<p>CONSERVATION</p> <p>Maintain or improve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The status, functionality, and resilience of ecosystems within the FWCP’s three regions. 2. The status⁵ of species of interest⁶ and their habitats within the FWCP’s three regions. 3. Opportunities for harvesting⁷, non-consumptive and other uses, now and into the future, in recognition that many species of interest have high social and cultural value. 	<p>Conservation objective #1 addresses the concept of ecosystem health and integrity not specific to an individual species or their habitat.</p> <p>Conservation objective #3 addresses the human connection to our ecosystems; for example, First Nations’ food systems, sustenance, cultural, and recreational uses of species and ecosystems are important. In many cases, efforts to maintain or improve the status of species and ecosystems will also support sustainable use.</p>
<p>INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Strengthen and foster relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities. This will be addressed in part by strengthening Indigenous engagement in decision-making, project planning and delivery that supports the FWCP’s conservation objectives.</p>	<p>The FWCP is committed to strengthening and evolving its relationships with Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>One example is the FWCP’s efforts to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, priorities, and values into FWCP projects and decisions.</p>
<p>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Strengthen and foster partnerships and/or relationships with stakeholders, citizens, and agencies that support the FWCP’s conservation objectives.</p>	<p>The community engagement objective recognizes the importance of the FWCP engaging with communities, including local citizens and agencies, in a meaningful way that contributes to long-term positive relationships, collaborative decision-making, delivery of effective projects funded by the FWCP, and long-term support of the FWCP’s vision and mission.</p>

⁵ **Status** may include federal or provincial listing, current population levels and trends, and risks and threats to species of interest and their habitats. For ecosystems, status may include federal or provincial listing, trends, risks, and threats to those ecosystems.

⁶ **Species of interest** are federally or provincially listed, culturally significant species identified in the FWCP’s regional action plans, or important regionally as identified in the FWCP’s regional action plans.

⁷ **Harvesting** includes First Nations’, licensed, recreational, and commercial harvests. Allocation of fish and wildlife for sustainable use is not a responsibility of the FWCP, but rather the Province of B.C. and the Government of Canada (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) respecting constitutional rights [and allocated on the following basis: conservation, followed by First Nations’ rights (e.g., food, social, and ceremonial purposes), followed by other uses]. Other uses may include cultural, medicinal, or non-consumptive uses such as wildlife viewing.

1.5 The partnership approach

The FWCP operates as a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., DFO (the agency partners), First Nations, and public stakeholders. All partners are considered equal and input from all partners is given equal consideration. The FWCP strives for engagement and participation of all partners in priority setting, approval, review, and delivery of the annual operating plan for each region. The FWCP is committed to continuously seeking ways to strengthen participation by all partners, as identified in the FWCP's strategic objectives of Indigenous and community engagement ([Section 1.4](#)).

1.5.1. Agency partners

Each agency partner has its own regulatory accountabilities in participating in the FWCP:

- BC Hydro has a [Water Sustainability Act](#) obligation to address the conservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife affected by the original footprint development for its hydroelectric facilities in the Columbia and Peace regions.
- The Province of B.C. has regulatory responsibilities for the conservation and management of non-tidal fish, wildlife, ecological, and water resources.
- DFO has a number of regulatory responsibilities related to the proper management and control of fisheries, the conservation and protection of fish habitat, and the protection and recovery of aquatic species at risk.

As the FWCP is the agreed-to mechanism to meet conditions of the water licences that authorize the operation of Columbia and Peace facilities, the agency partners for the FWCP are primarily BC Hydro and its provincial regulators in these two regions.

Although DFO has participated as an interested observer, currently it does not directly participate on boards or committees in these two regions. The opportunity remains for DFO representation in the Peace and Columbia Regions. DFO does actively engage as a full partner in the Coastal Region due to its interest in and oversight of the salmon fishery and participates actively on the Coastal board and fish technical committees.

Agency staff participate on FWCP regional boards and technical committees, and each agency partner may take on additional responsibilities, including providing in-kind services and support.

The agency partners have committed to working in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to establish a clear and sustainable path to lasting reconciliation. The provincial and federal governments have passed legislation⁸ and action plans⁹ which identify commitments to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in tangible and measurable ways. The way the

⁸ [Province of B.C.: Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#); Government of Canada: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

⁹ [The Province of B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#) was finalized in March 2022 and is a five-year plan (2022-2027). [The Government of Canada's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#) was finalized in June 2023 and is a five-year plan (2023–2028). [BC Hydro's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Plan](#) was finalized in June 2023.

agency partners participate in the FWCP and approach the partnership should reflect the agency partners' commitments to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

1.5.2. First Nations partners

The historic and ongoing impacts to fish and wildlife and their habitats from the creation of BC Hydro's reservoirs have a direct and long-lasting impact to First Nations' way of life and economies. First Nation participation as a partner in the FWCP is an important step in supporting reconciliation. First Nations also have a responsibility as traditional caretakers and stewards of the land and, as such, bring their Indigenous perspectives, values, and knowledge to the FWCP.

First Nation partners have a governance role in the FWCP through their participation on FWCP regional boards. They also support the collaborative planning and implementation of the FWCP through their participation in regional First Nations Working Groups (as applicable) and technical committees. First Nation members also create awareness, understanding, and support for the FWCP within their respective communities.

The partnership with First Nations involves recognizing and respecting First Nations' cultural and heritage values and intrinsic knowledge and experience with respect to re-establishing healthy fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The partnership also requires respect for First Nations' rights, governance systems, policies, and protocols (e.g., information-sharing policies and protocols). The FWCP also provides opportunities (e.g., capacity support) to support First Nations participation as equal partners in decision-making and in program delivery and Indigenous engagement in projects. As supported by the regional boards, First Nations partners and Indigenous Peoples are engaging in the FWCP in ways that may be unique and tailored to each region.

As supported by its regional boards, the FWCP is empowered to determine its own unique approach to advancing reconciliation as it relates to the overall delivery of the FWCP and as appropriate given the FWCP's strategic framework.

1.5.3 Public partners

Public partners participate as members of the boards and technical committees. Public members on regional boards represent the public in their region and add value to the overall delivery of the FWCP through their familiarity with fish and wildlife issues within the region and the public's priorities with respect to conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife. Public partners bring forward relevant issues, concerns, and ideas. Public members also create awareness, understanding, and support for the FWCP and will identify opportunities to build or maintain relationships with their respective communities. The FWCP engages with local communities and citizens (e.g., stewardship groups, academic institutions, individuals, businesses, consultants, non-government organizations) through FWCP projects, and action planning processes to understand the public's priorities for fish and wildlife. The FWCP also hosts outreach events to share information about the FWCP's projects, results, and how to access FWCP grants. Community engagement is a key component of the FWCP's strategic framework.

1.6 Overview of the regions

Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program—Peace Region

The FWCP's Peace Region, formerly known as the Peace/Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, was established in 1988 to meet the fish and wildlife-related conditions of the water licences.

The purpose of the Peace/Williston FWCP was to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations affected by the construction of BC Hydro's W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams in the Peace River Basin. The FWCP area is the upper Peace watershed, which includes Dinosaur Reservoir, Williston Reservoir, and all of their tributary watersheds.

Site C will be a third dam and generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. To satisfy the provincial and federal regulatory requirements to construct and operate the dam, BC Hydro has established several environmental monitoring, mitigation, and compensation programs to address pre- and post-construction impacts to the environment. Because BC Hydro manages these Site C compensation commitments as part of the Site C project, FWCP does not currently have a role in supporting fish and wildlife compensation for Site C. Both Site C and FWCP have an interest in sharing information regarding active programs to identify overlaps or synergies between FWCP's projects and Site C environmental programs.

Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program—Columbia Region

The FWCP's Columbia Region, formerly known as the Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, was established in 1993 to compensate for fish and wildlife populations affected by the construction of BC Hydro dams in Canada's portion of the Columbia River Basin. This FWCP merged already existing compensation programs for Arrow, Duncan, Mica, Seven Mile, and Revelstoke facilities, which have water licence conditions related to fish and wildlife compensation. The FWCP operates throughout the Canadian Columbia and Kootenay River watersheds.

Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program—Coastal Region

The FWCP's Coastal Region, formerly known as the Bridge-Coastal Restoration Program, was established in 1999 to assist in the restoration of fish and wildlife populations and habitat in watersheds affected by the construction of hydroelectric generation facilities in BC Hydro's Bridge River/Coastal Generation Area (which includes 14 watersheds on Vancouver Island, the Mainland Coast, the Lower Mainland, as well as the Bridge-Seton and Shuswap River watersheds). The FWCP's Coastal Region is a voluntary program initiated by BC Hydro in partnership with its regulators (DFO and the Province of B.C.) in response to First Nations and community interests to address opportunities for restoration in these watersheds.

1.7 Governance manual purpose and structure

The governance manual provides guidance for the effective delivery of the FWCP. Specifically, the governance manual's purpose is to:

- describe the legal context, strategic approach, governance, and essential components of program management and delivery in the three regions;
- outline how the partnership will address fish and wildlife compensation commitments in all three regions;

- outline the responsibilities and decision-making processes for program governance bodies (the steering committee, regional boards, technical committees, and First Nations Working Groups described in [Section 3](#)) to support FWCP's strategic objectives and the delivery of strategically driven and technically sound projects that reflect local priorities in each region; and
- provide operational and administrative clarity and direction while recognizing the unique aspects of the three regions and the need to respond to regional priorities.

High-level background and context are provided in Sections 2 to 5 and include an outline of the legal context and program funding; an overview of program governance and decision-making processes; an overview of the approach to program delivery; and processes for strategic planning, program review, reporting, and amendment.

Appendices A to I provide the details regarding committee (i.e., regional board, technical committee, and First Nations Working Group) terms of reference, staff roles and responsibilities, and program implementation guidelines and procedures.

This manual is intended to guide and support efficient and effective strategic planning, program management, and project delivery in the regions. The manual does not set out detailed procedures for developing, administering, and delivering plans and projects.

There are a number of foundational documents for the FWCP, including water licence conditions (for Columbia and Peace facilities), memoranda of understanding between the Province of B.C. and BC Hydro, several administrative agreements, protocol manuals, and program governance and delivery guidelines¹⁰. This governance manual considers previous historical administrative agreements, guidelines, and protocol manuals relative to the FWCP while defining a harmonized governance and delivery framework. In addition to administrative agreements and protocol manuals, regionally developed agreements¹¹ may exist or be developed that provide a framework for collaboration between the regional First Nations and/or other FWCP partners. This manual does not replace any existing collaboration agreements but is to be used as a current resource that describes the FWCP's partnership model and the approach to supporting the partnership.

¹⁰ 1. Peace-Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program Administrative Agreement between Ministry of Environment, Land and Parks and BC Hydro for Management and Operation of the Peace/Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, 1994; 2. Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program Administrative Agreement between Ministry of Environment (MoE), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and BC Hydro for Program Management and Operations, revised February 2005 (unsigned); 3. Bridge-Coastal Restoration Program Interim Governance Framework, March 2008; 4. Peace/Williston Compensation Program Procedures Manual (Draft), February 1999; 5. Guidelines for the development of a new delivery model and renewed governance structure, June 2012.

¹¹ In 2012, a memorandum of understanding titled "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PEACE/WILLISTON FISH & WILDLIFE COMPENSATION PROGRAM Between British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BCHPA) And The Province of B.C. As Represented By The Minister Of Environment (the "Minister") And [Participating First Nation]", was signed between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., and multiple First Nations in the Peace Region to provide a framework for collaboration between the parties related to First Nations' participation in the FWCP's Peace Region; capacity building and resourcing; and the use of scientific knowledge, local knowledge and traditional, cultural, and heritage values in the FWCP.

2 LEGAL CONTEXT AND FUNDING

2.1 Columbia and Peace region water licences

Fish and wildlife compensation for footprint impacts is a condition of BC Hydro's water licences under the [Water Sustainability Act](#) (previously B.C. Water Act) for five of the facilities in the Columbia Region (Mica, Revelstoke, Arrow, Seven Mile, and Duncan) and the two facilities in the Peace Region (W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon). These water licences include a general condition that BC Hydro undertake programs (or remedial measures) for the protection or enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitat in the areas impacted by the construction of its dams and generating facilities (footprint impacts).

The conditions for BC Hydro to undertake fish and wildlife compensation programs are separate from BC Hydro's Water Use Plans. The Water Use Plans deal with the operational impacts—not the footprint impacts—of its generating facilities. The Water Licence Requirements (WLR) program monitors the implementation of BC Hydro's obligations while operating under the terms of Water Use Plans Orders under the B.C. Water Sustainability Act. To minimize confusion between the WLR Program and the FWCP, the term "water licence conditions" is used in this manual to describe the general clauses pertaining to the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program.

FWCP Licence Condition Details

In the FWCP's Peace Region, the water licences for the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams creating Williston and Dinosaur Reservoirs contain the condition that the licensee shall undertake "remedial measures for the protection or enhancement of fisheries and wildlife habitat" or provide "programs for the protection or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat".

Subsequent clarification letters to BC Hydro in 2008 from the Comptroller of Water Rights contained the following interpretive paragraph with regard to the fish and wildlife clause: "At the present time, the Peace Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program is in place and meets the ongoing requirements of this clause. Therefore, BC Hydro is in compliance with clause (l)¹² of the licence as long as the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program is in place, adequately funded, and fulfilling its needs and obligations."

In the Columbia Region, the regional program was created in 1993 as the amalgamation of earlier compensation programs established to meet conditions in the water licences for Arrow, Duncan, Mica, Seven Mile, and Revelstoke. These licence conditions are for "such remedial measures for the protection of fisheries and wildlife" or "programs for the protection, or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and for the mitigation of losses of habitat, and studies related thereto."

Subsequent clarification letters to BC Hydro in 2008 and 2009 from the Comptroller of Water Rights contained the following interpretive paragraph with regard to the fish and wildlife clause: "At the present time, the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program is in place and meet the ongoing requirement of this clause. Therefore, BC Hydro is in compliance with

¹² Or Clause (k) depending on licence.

clause (o)¹³ of the licence as long as the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program is in place, adequately funded, and fulfilling its needs and obligations.”

As such, the generalized conditions found in the various water licences described above establish the need to compensate for footprint impacts on fish and wildlife resources. The FWCP is the mechanism by which these conditions are met.

Importantly, and by mutual agreement of the agency partners, the FWCP was extended to address the footprint impacts of all watersheds affected by the development¹⁴ of existing BC Hydro hydroelectric generation facilities regardless of the existence of a water licence condition as outlined in [Section 1.6](#).

It is BC Hydro’s responsibility (i.e., FWCP’s program manager) to periodically notify the Comptroller of Water Rights about the water licence conditions for fish and wildlife compensation being met. There is no prescribed period for this notice, but the Comptroller’s office is notified when significant changes occur to the FWCP and is provided with the outcome of program evaluations (see [Section 5](#)).

2.2 FWCP annual funding

Each FWCP region is annually funded from the deemed interest of 4.54% applied to a notional compensation fund balance specific to each region maintained by BC Hydro. The funds are notional in that no actual pool of capital has, or will be, set aside for it.

The notional funds are increased for inflation each year based on the reported total [Canadian Consumer Price Index \(CPI\)](#) in October (for the Columbia Region) and December (for the Peace and Coastal regions). Annual funding that is not spent in any given year is carried over to be used by the region in future years. At no time can funds be transferred across regions due to the regulatory nature of the Columbia and Peace region funds.

In addition to the annual funding, each FWCP region may borrow funds from BC Hydro for the purposes of land securement, given the nature and timing of land securement opportunities. Borrowed funds are subject to repayment with interest in equal instalments over 10 years. Interest on such borrowings will be the composite of the yield on a benchmark Government of Canada 10-year bond at the date of borrowing, increased by the BC Hydro All-in-Spread as published by the Provincial Treasury in the Financing Alternatives Report, issued for the week prior to the borrowing date. A portion of the available funds for future years will be required to make instalment payments. Repayments will be treated as a program cost in the year the payment is made.

¹³ Or Clause (p) or (k) depending on licence.

¹⁴ See [Section 1.6](#) for details on Site C environmental monitoring, mitigation, and compensation programs.

3 PROGRAM GOVERNANCE – GENERAL OVERVIEW

The FWCP's governance in each region is accomplished through a regional board which is supported by regional fish and wildlife technical committees and may also be supported by regional First Nations Working Groups. The environment-hydro steering committee (hereafter referred to as the steering committee) is an external committee that holds overall accountability for the FWCP and its strategic direction and supports the FWCP's governance. The FWCP has a consistent terms of reference for each committee (i.e., regional board, technical committee, and First Nations Working Group) as applicable to their roles and responsibilities. In addition, the steering committee or regional boards may establish ad hoc committees that are either task-oriented or support the overall governance of the regional program.

The [FWCP's governance structure](#) is supported by a program manager, region managers, a project coordinator, and consultants that support the strategic, operational, and administrative aspects of the FWCP.

The committees are briefly described below; appendices to this manual set out the terms of reference, including each committee's membership, roles, responsibilities, and administration.

3.1 Steering committee

The steering committee, representing the federal and provincial government (regulators) and BC Hydro—comprised of senior officials from their respective agencies—exists to provide oversight on a range of fish and wildlife-related issues relevant to BC Hydro. First Nations also have representation on the Steering Committee as it relates to FWCP matters.

The steering committee sets the overall policy direction for the FWCP, including the governance structure and strategic framework, oversees periodic FWCP evaluations, approves significant changes to the FWCP, identifies emerging issues, and addresses disputes arising from within the FWCP when necessary. The steering committee does not engage in operational decision-making by the regional boards as outlined in [Section 3.2](#). The steering committee is supported by a secretariat consisting of representatives from relevant program areas for each agency partner with a reporting line to the steering committee member.

At the time of updating the FWCP Governance Manual in 2024, the steering committee terms of reference was in draft format. Once finalized, it will be included in this manual.

3.2 Regional boards

The regional boards provide local oversight of the planning and implementation of the FWCP within the regions. They make decisions on strategic priorities, annual expenditures, and investments by the FWCP in their respective regions. The regional boards give direction and advice to the region manager. For information on key roles and responsibilities, refer to [Appendix A](#), Regional Boards Terms of Reference, [Appendix B](#), Board Membership, and [Appendix G](#), Project Review Criteria and Process.

3.3 Regional First Nations Working Groups

First Nations Working Groups (where established) provide advice to the regional boards, fish and wildlife technical committees, and region managers. Advice includes First Nations'

considerations and input into all aspects of planning and delivery of the FWCP. This includes supporting the development, maintenance, and effective implementation of regional action plans, developing opportunities for First Nations' involvement in projects, and reviewing fish and wildlife grant applications from a First Nations' perspective. For information on key roles and responsibilities, please refer to [Appendix E](#), First Nations Working Group Terms of Reference, and [Appendix G](#), Project Review Criteria and Process.

3.4 Regional technical committees

Providing advice to the regional board and region manager, the fish and wildlife technical committees provide technical assessment and advice related to the planning and implementation of the FWCP at the regional level, including supporting the development, maintenance, and effective implementation of regional action plans and providing fair and objective technical review of fish and wildlife grant applications. For information on key roles and responsibilities, please refer to [Appendix F](#), Technical Committee Terms of Reference, and [Appendix G](#), Project Review Criteria and Process.

3.5 Program manager

The program manager is responsible for leading the FWCP staff (e.g., region managers) and supporting consultants who help implement the strategic, operational, and administrative aspects of the FWCP across the three regions (e.g., communications contractors). The program manager works closely with all levels of the FWCP, including the steering committee, regional boards, region managers and, where applicable, regional and provincial stakeholders, agencies, and Indigenous groups and may also provide support to regional boards as a BC Hydro board member.

The program manager is responsible for employment and labour relations matters related to the FWCP staff (see [Appendix H](#) for further details). The program manager role is supported by BC Hydro as an in-kind contribution to the FWCP.

3.6 Region managers

Region managers are accountable to the respective regional boards for FWCP implementation. This includes facilitating the development of annual operating plans, logistical support for committee meetings, supporting board communications with other committees and groups as required, administering funding agreements with project proponents, establishing procurement processes, and reporting to the board on work plan implementation. Region managers are supported by a coordinator with administrative and business coordination responsibilities, including budgetary, contract administrative, and grant management system support. Funding for the region manager and coordinator positions comes from the FWCP regional notional funding (see [Section 2.2](#)). See [Appendix H](#), Region Managers Roles and Responsibilities, for a complete list of responsibilities.

4 PROGRAM DELIVERY

Building from the strategic framework ([Section 1.2](#)), FWCP's delivery model and governance structure were first developed as a means to provide a consistent framework for delivery of the FWCP in all three regions while allowing enough flexibility so that each region can customize their approach to delivery to meet unique regional requirements.

4.1 Project delivery model

Regional boards are empowered to find the most efficient and effective means to deliver the components of the annual operating plans aligned with the FWCP's operating principles (see [Section 1.3](#)). Boards ensure the delivery of high-quality, on-the-ground projects that benefit fish and wildlife in the regions.

The project delivery model is flexible and may utilize a combination of approaches to determine annual funding priorities and to deliver FWCP projects, including but not limited to:

- an intake of grant applications from project proponents with an effective process to evaluate and prioritize grant applications against the action plans;
- implementing appropriate procurement approaches (e.g., a request for proposal) to undertake specific projects or activities deemed to be critical to effectively implementing action plans (i.e., a directed action); and
- where there are long-term operational projects (e.g., spawning channels or nutrient restoration programs), determine that the most cost-effective way of sustaining the long-term continuity of the project is to enter into a longer-term funding agreement (with the Province of B.C. or other delivery body).

This combination of delivery mechanisms will be used in each region, as required and deemed appropriate by the board, to effectively and efficiently deliver annual operating plans.

4.2 Regional annual operating plans

Consistent with the action plans, the board is responsible for ensuring that an annual operating plan is developed and that annual budget allocations are made on projects that align with and carry out the objectives and priorities identified in the action plans.

The annual operating plan describes, on an annual basis, the activities, including scope, schedule, and budget, for:

- operational activities, including land acquisition and management, annual and ongoing projects (Columbia Region only); projects put forward by proponents in response to the annual intake of grant applications; and/or directed projects with specific scopes of work issued through procurement processes (e.g., direct award, request for proposal);
- strategic planning activities and other discrete initiatives (e.g., FWCP evaluation and audit);
- communications and community engagement; and
- administration.

The annual operating plan sets out the work for each fiscal year. The annual operating plan is prepared by the region manager, with input and advice from regional boards, technical committees, First Nations Working Groups, and contractors as appropriate (e.g., support with planning directed, annual and ongoing projects, communications work plans and budgets). The

annual operating plan is reviewed, discussed, modified as required, and approved by the regional board before February 15 of each year. Funds will be released once the regional board has approved the annual operating plan and will be released at the beginning of the fiscal year. The program manager will communicate the approved annual operating plans to the steering committee on behalf of the regional boards.

The approved annual operating plan and any subsequent detailed operating or project plans will represent the requirements to be fulfilled by the region manager for which they are accountable to the regional board.

4.3 Data and report management

The FWCP will make the reports, data, and information collected using FWCP funds open and freely available to the public except where the data are deemed secured as defined under the provincial policy¹⁵. Secured data are still accessible to those who require access for specific purposes. Specific requirements around data and information standards, submission, and intellectual property need to be established to ensure the data can be incorporated into provincial data management systems and distributed easily and effectively. These requirements are detailed in [Appendix I](#).

4.4 Communications and community engagement

Communications and community engagement play an important part in the FWCP. The partners of FWCP wish to create a cohesive message to all audiences across the province, highlighting the successes of projects efficiently and effectively while recognizing the unique needs and features of the FWCP within each region. The partners also wish to have input and participation from the communities and First Nations in the regions.

Key objectives of FWCP communications and community engagement include:

- raising awareness and understanding of FWCP goals and objectives within the context of the fish, wildlife, and ecosystems in the watersheds where the FWCP operates;
- communicating key information about opportunities for funding, including funding application intake dates, decision criteria, strategic objectives, and other relevant information;
- raising awareness and understanding of FWCP achievements and results;
- recognizing the contribution of the partnership to the FWCP outcomes;
- maintaining a distinct and recognizable FWCP brand and key messages regarding the FWCP for use by all individuals associated with its governance and implementation;
- designing and delivering effective community engagement as required within a region (e.g., to gather input during strategic planning processes); and

¹⁵ An example of secured data would be ecologically sensitive data such as the nesting locations for a rare species of raptor. Publishing this kind of occurrence data can increase the risk of disturbance or poaching. In these cases, the published mapping will indicate the presence of the species in an area, but the specific location is masked. Data are available to those who need it under a written agreement as to how the data can be used and shared.

- engaging local communities and First Nations to seek input to raise awareness of FWCP initiatives and encourage participation in delivery.

A communications and community engagement strategy will be in place for the FWCP, to be reviewed every three years. It will use various tools to build public awareness of FWCP and its accomplishments, bridging the Coastal, Columbia, and Peace regions and recognizing each region's unique and current needs. The communications strategy will establish and maintain overarching, consistent key messages and consistent formatting, branding, and guidelines for various media and tools (e.g., website, social media, e-letters, fact sheets, and news releases). The strategy will also set the protocols and partner review procedures to enable regional messaging on events, opportunities, and project outcomes in a timely manner (e.g., specific project news, community meetings, and strategic planning).

The program manager will coordinate the development of the communications strategy, which may be developed by a communications contractor or other internal communications support persons (e.g., agency partner communications departments). The person(s) developing the strategy will work with the region managers and partners to develop the plan, seek input and review by the regional boards, and coordinate implementation.

Annual regional communications plans are developed by the communications contractor or other internal communications support persons with support from the region manager for review and approval by boards at regional annual general meetings as part of the annual operating plan. The regional communications plans will complement and align with the program-level communications strategy described above.

The regional boards will together guide and approve FWCP branding and changes to current program-wide policies (e.g., logo, colours, and print formats).

5 STRATEGIC PLANNING, ANNUAL REPORTING AND PROGRAM REVIEW

5.1 Strategic planning

As described in [Section 1.4](#), the FWCP regional action plans provide strategic direction for each region and identify sub-objectives and actions required to support the FWCP's strategic objectives at the regional level. Regional action plans are updated as deemed necessary by the regional board (typically every five years). A regional board's decision to update the action plans will consider the progress made on the actions and opportunities to build on the progress achieved to date. It will also consider the current relevance and importance of the actions to FWCP partners and awareness of any emerging issues not captured in the current action plans.

When directed by the regional board, the region manager will lead the development of an approach to updating the action plans with guidance and input from the regional board and committees. The approach should be strategically guided and scoped by the regional board. It should build on the progress made to date on actions and ensure adequate engagement with FWCP partners, First Nations, stakeholders, and the public. It should consider timeliness and cost-effectiveness of updating the action plans and be a transparent and accountable process.

5.2 Annual report

The region manager shall prepare an [annual report](#) for the consideration and approval of the regional board. It will present an account of work done to meet objectives of the annual operating plan, results accomplished (e.g., project outcomes), a financial statement for the annual budget and operating account, and any assets acquisition or disposal.

The annual report will also demonstrate BC Hydro's compliance with water licence conditions in the Columbia and Peace regions by demonstrating that the FWCP is in place, adequately funded, and fulfilling its needs and obligations. The annual report will be submitted to the steering committee each year. The annual report is supplemental to the evaluation and audit ([Section 5.3](#)).

5.3 Evaluation and audit

The steering committee will direct the initiation of an independent evaluation and audit of the FWCP approximately every five years. Regional boards will be involved with establishing the terms of reference and will participate in the evaluation process. For efficiency and consistency, the audit will be conducted for all three regions at the same time and will include a financial audit and a review of the following:

- regional funding levels;
- program effectiveness (outcomes achieved in relation to the action plans);
- program efficiency (including efficiency at the governance and program delivery levels);
- organizational structure;
- partnership roles;
- remuneration for board, technical committee, and First Nations Working Group members; and

- grant application and project review processes.

Upon completion of the evaluation and audit, the steering committee secretariat will facilitate the development and completion of a response statement containing corrective actions to address those areas where the potential for improvement was identified.

This evaluation and response statement will be approved by the steering committee and forwarded by the FWCP's program manager to the Comptroller of Water Rights as the principal document to demonstrate BC Hydro's progress in addressing water licence conditions in the Columbia and Peace regions.

In addition to the evaluation and audit, the FWCP's vision, mission, operating principles, and strategic objectives may be reviewed on a longer-term basis (e.g., every 10 years or more) as requested by the steering committee and/or regional boards given the longer-term outlook and broader context of strategic statements and objectives.

BC Hydro's corporate audit may also, at times, conduct an internal audit of the FWCP, including a financial audit and review of adherence to corporate/public sector policies and codes of conduct for BC Hydro employees.

5.4 Governance manual review

This manual shall be reviewed following each FWCP evaluation and audit described above or as needed. The manual may be amended at any time with the recommendation of the regional boards and approved by the steering committee and will replace all previous versions.

APPENDIX A

REGIONAL BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose of the regional board

Operating under the strategic framework, the purpose of each regional board is to provide local oversight to the planning and implementation of the FWCP at the regional level. More specifically, the purpose is to:

- act as the local decision maker on strategic priorities and annual expenditures and investments by the FWCP;
- make decisions that support advancement of the strategic framework (i.e., vision, mission, strategic objectives, principles, and action plans) established for the FWCP (at both the provincial and regional levels). Decisions are also informed by recommendations from technical committees and First Nations Working Groups, as applicable;
- ensure partner perspectives are considered during decision-making processes;
- ensure the FWCP operates within the available budget, makes fiscally responsible investments, and can report effectively on expenditures; and
- support efforts to raise awareness, understanding and local support for the FWCP.

Roles and responsibilities of the board

The specific roles and responsibilities of the regional board and its members are to:

- provide oversight to the development of regional action plans and recommend their approval to the steering committee;
- establish annual priorities based on regional action plans and available budget in consultation with technical committees and First Nations Working Groups, as appropriate;
- review and approve the annual operating plan and budget, which includes grant applications for proposed projects, directed and/or long-term project scopes of work, administrative expenses, strategic initiative work plans, and communications work plans;
- participate in the development and implementation of regional and/or provincial communications plans and strategies;
- raise awareness, understanding, and support for the FWCP within their respective communities, groups, organizations, and agencies (as opportunities arise and in consultation with the region manager). Opportunities could be through club meetings and events, casual conversations, agency meetings and communications, First Nations community events, etc.;
- communicate (via the board chair/co-chairs) with the steering committee on strategic or other issues requiring their guidance, clarification, or decision if the regional board cannot come to a resolution on these issues or if these issues may have broader implications to the FWCP;
- review budget and project updates (e.g., regional budget spend tracking; directed project updates) provided by the region manager to ensure that regional activities are within budget and resources are being effectively used;

- review and approve the annual report and provide it to the steering committee (see [Section 5](#));
- support FWCP reviews (see [Section 5](#)) at defined intervals;
- participate in a new board member orientation with the region manager prior to attending their first board meeting;
- provide annual feedback and recommendations to the program manager about program administration and the region manager's performance of duties;
- approve new public members on the regional fish and wildlife technical committees and regional board; and
- abide by the code of conduct ([Appendix C](#)).

Role of the chair (or co-chairs)

The chair or co-chairs of the board work with the region manager to plan the business of the board and to chair meetings. The chair or co-chairs work and communicate on behalf of the board.

The regional board will select the chair or co-chairs for each board. Capacity, chairing abilities, and cost-effectiveness are the key considerations. Given these considerations, the program manager may assume a chairing role for each regional board for an indefinite term if decided by the regional board and to be revisited every two years. Aside from the program manager, a chair or co-chair will be selected through a request for nominations process led by the region manager. If more than one nomination is received, the board will decide by consensus on the most suitable co-chairs based on the key considerations above. The chair or co-chairs of the regional board serve a renewable two-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms unless otherwise agreed to by the regional board. If the chair or co-chair seat is vacated, the above process will be initiated by the region manager.

Specific tasks of the chair or co-chairs (supported by the region manager) are to:

- chair board meetings and facilitate productive, respectful discussions that conform to these terms of reference;
- support the region manager with preparing for board meetings, including advising on the approach to meetings and agenda items, reviewing draft agendas and meeting summaries, and approving requests for observers to attend board meetings;
- represent board views to stakeholders and communities when this has not been otherwise delegated by the board;
- represent the board on various matters, as required, including acting on strategic board decisions and issues on behalf of the board; and
- support development and approval of the board chair message in the annual report.

Board secretary

The region manager will be the board's secretary (see [Appendix H](#) for details).

Mode of operation

Meetings

The board will meet at a minimum twice a year. One meeting should occur at the start of the business planning cycle¹⁶ to determine priorities and any direction to be given to technical committees, First Nations Working Groups, or external proponents. A second meeting, the Annual General Meeting (AGM), should be held to evaluate and approve the annual operating plan. The AGM will be held in January or no later than the second week of February before the start of the fiscal year. Wherever practical, regular meeting dates will be agreed upon and scheduled well in advance to maximize attendance. Special meetings may be scheduled as needed (e.g., strategic planning sessions). Meetings may be in person or virtual, depending on the nature of the meeting and other considerations, such as opportunities for project site visits and maximizing board attendance.

Meeting agendas will be set approximately 10 working days in advance of meetings. Materials will be provided by the region manager, with support from the chair/co-chairs, at least one week before the meeting. Meeting summaries will be kept, summarizing matters discussed and decisions made. The meeting summary will not attribute views on external project funding applications to specific board members.

From time to time, board decisions are required outside of planned board meetings. The decision-making process for these decisions shall consist of a decision note circulated by the region manager to the board. Board deliberation and decision-making may be virtual or via email, depending on the nature of the decision and at the discretion of the board chair/co-chairs.

Board members must:

- read the agenda and associated material before the meeting to support well-informed decisions. Requests for additional information should be made at least one week (five business days) before the meeting;
- be responsible for ensuring they are informed of any missed discussions or decisions due to meeting absenteeism or late arrival. Late-arriving members shall participate without disrupting the meeting to optimize the most efficient use of time. Meetings will begin and adjourn according to the scheduled times;
- participate constructively in discussions and encourage others to do the same. Listen with an open mind to the opinions of others, and seek common ground and shared solutions (i.e., consensus) in the best interests of the FWCP;
- respond to requests to review draft meeting summaries and other action items in a timely way or accept their finalization without input;
- attend board meetings to the best of their ability/availability. All board members are expected to attend meetings. A board member that misses three consecutive meetings can be removed by a majority vote of the board. The board can initiate actions to appoint a replacement; and
- approve all budget and strategic planning decisions only when a quorum is present. A

¹⁶ The fiscal year for the FWCP runs from April 1 of a given year to March 31 of the following year. For example, nomenclature Fiscal Year 2024 runs from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

quorum is attained when half of all members are in attendance representing a cross-section of the agency, First Nations, and public partners.

Only board members or their designated alternates (see below), the region manager, and approved observers (e.g., technical committee or First Nations Working Group members, external reviewers, designated contact persons, or other persons approved in advance by the board or the chair/co-chairs) will attend meetings. Observers will participate in discussions only as approved by the chair/co-chairs.

Opportunity for alternates

Given the unique candidacy appointment process for public board members, finite appointment terms, and specific criteria used to evaluate and select public board members (see [Appendix B](#)), alternates will not be permitted for public board members.

All board members are expected to attend board meetings to the best of their ability/availability as identified in this mode of operation. For situations where agency and First Nations members cannot attend a meeting, a designated alternate may attend on behalf of the board member, based on the following criteria:

- First Nations or agency board members can designate an alternate to attend a maximum of one meeting per year, unless otherwise agreed to in discussion with the region manager and chair/co-chairs.
- Alternates will adhere to the mode of operation for board meetings and the Code of Conduct ([Appendix C](#)).
- Alternates will have the necessary skills and assets for agency and First Nations board members, as described in [Appendix B](#).
- If an alternate will be attending a board meeting, this decision will be communicated with the region manager at least one week in advance of the meeting. The region manager may contact the designated alternate to discuss board meeting preparation.
- Alternates will come prepared for the meeting, having communicated with the board member they are representing to gain any necessary information pertaining to the meeting and their responsibilities and having read any provided pre-reading materials in advance of the meeting.
- Long-term alternates for extended leaves of absence will also be accommodated. The board member and designated alternate should contact the region manager to make appropriate arrangements.

Task groups and ad hoc committees

The board, at its discretion, can establish time-limited task groups or ad hoc committees to work on a specific issue and make recommendations back to the board. Terms of reference and reporting requirements for task groups or ad hoc committees may be established. The board cannot delegate its decision-making powers to such groups or committees.

Decisions

The regional board will strive to fully explore all interests and options and to develop consensus decisions. Consensus is defined as a decision that all members can accept. Members may not agree with all the specific details of a decision reached by consensus, and it may not fully incorporate everyone's views, but it is a decision that members can and will support both within

and outside the board. When consensus cannot be achieved, differing views will be recorded in the meeting's minutes and other relevant documents. At its discretion, the board may choose to use a structured decision-making process for contentious or difficult decisions.

For expedience, certain minor administrative decisions of the board, such as the approval of meeting summaries or appointment of ad hoc committees, etc., may be made by a simple majority vote. However, in no case will the chair or co-chairs unduly restrict discussion and consensus building.

Where the board is unable to reach a decision, and the majority of members agree that a decision cannot be reached at the regional level, the dispute resolution procedure will be implemented.

Dispute resolution

A board dispute resolution process is provided to ensure that the board does not allow difficulties in reconciling differing interests and perspectives to cause either conflict escalation on the board or unacceptable delays in decision-making. Specifically, it is available to ensure that annual operating plans, project selection, and funding decisions are not delayed, with potential consequences for individual project schedules and relationships with proponents and partners.

As part of their commitment to accepting a position on the board, members agree to participate in a dispute resolution process, if necessary, as outlined below:

1. The board may pursue dispute resolution based on actual or anticipated breakdown or difficulties in consensus-building related to annual operating plans, funding recommendations, or other board decisions.
2. If the dispute is related to the annual operating plan, the board should make all efforts to resolve the dispute within two weeks after the annual deadline for funding approvals. (A two-week grace period is provided to allow the board to schedule extra working meetings if needed to reach a decision.) A timeframe for dispute resolution will be established for other disputes, based on the perceived urgency or implications if the decision is not made within the established timeframe.
3. To initiate dispute resolution, the board chair or co-chairs, in consultation with board members and the region manager, can appoint a mediator acceptable to the board majority. If the board chair or co-chairs are a party to the dispute, the region manager will, with majority board support, appoint a mediator for the dispute resolution process and will set a reasonable deadline for the resolution of the dispute. The mediator will work with the board chair or co-chairs (or region manager if the chair or co-chairs are involved in the dispute) to design an appropriate process based on the nature of the dispute.
4. If the board fails to resolve the dispute with the assistance of a mediator within the established timeframe, the board chair or co-chairs will seek assistance from the steering committee, who may determine other appropriate courses of action to decide on the issue at hand, to resolve the board dispute, and to avoid recurrence.

APPENDIX B

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Board membership

The regional boards will be comprised of members from BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., DFO¹⁷, First Nations, and the public. In addition to the information provided in this appendix, the FWCP's partnership approach is further described in [Section 1.5](#).

The number of board members is not fixed, but it must be a functional size to operate efficiently and cost-effectively. Regional boards will typically include two members from each of BC Hydro and the Province (with at least one member residing in the region), one member from DFO, three public members, and at least three First Nations members. A list of the current FWCP Coastal, Columbia, and Peace region's board members and the size of each regional board will be maintained and posted publicly on fwcp.ca.

Decisions regarding additional board membership (i.e., an increase in the number of board members) will be made by the steering committee with recommendations from the regional boards supported by an appropriate business case. The board's business case may consider the following:

- the functional size of the board to operate efficiently and cost-effectively (e.g., the maximum number of board members and maximum partner representation);
- balancing the administrative expenditures of the board with fish and wildlife project expenditures and other annual operating costs;
- opportunity for membership for First Nations where the geographical boundary of an FWCP region overlaps their Treaty lands, reserves, territories, or areas of interest; and
- fair, equitable, and balanced partner representation on the regional board.

Agency member candidacy

Roles and responsibilities

BC Hydro and provincial and federal government members (i.e., agency members) on regional boards bring their agency perspectives to the board's business by bringing forward relevant issues, concerns, and ideas. Agency members will advise on whether proposed FWCP projects may duplicate programs and projects of their respective agencies. Agency members will advise on opportunities for FWCP projects and initiatives to complement, align with, and build upon existing agency programs, projects, and management objectives. Agency members will also create awareness, understanding, and support for FWCP within their respective agencies. Agency members will ensure that their agency's members on other committees (e.g., technical committee members) are aware of relevant board decisions.

The primary skills or assets of agency members are:

- familiarity with regional fish, wildlife, and environmental issues, especially as they

¹⁷ DFO does not currently sit on the Columbia and Peace Region boards or technical committees; however, the opportunity remains for their representation in those regions.

- relate to their respective agencies' programs, projects, and management objectives;
- ability to clearly and effectively communicate agency perspectives and information; and
- excellent communication skills.

Recruitment: Appointment process and term

Agencies will appoint board members from their respective agencies, ensuring that appointed individuals have the appropriate background, skills, and organizational roles to fulfill their duties as board members. The steering committee will be informed of the agency representation and may assist in appointing agency members to fill vacancies if needed.

Agency appointments will be for an indefinite period, where that appointment relates directly to the appointee's organizational role.

First Nations member candidacy

Roles and responsibilities

First Nation members on regional boards bring First Nations' perspectives to the board's business by bringing forward relevant issues, concerns, and ideas. First Nation board members also create awareness, understanding, and support for the FWCP within their respective communities and will identify opportunities to strengthen and foster relationships with their respective communities. First Nation board members will ensure that their Nation's members on other committees (e.g., First Nations Working Group members) are aware of relevant board decisions.

The primary skills or assets of First Nation members are:

- familiarity with fish, wildlife, and environmental issues, especially within their respective territories and communities;
- ability to bring an Indigenous knowledge perspective (including cultural and heritage values) to incorporate into decision-making;
- ability to effectively represent the interests of their respective Nations; and
- excellent communication skills.

Recruitment: Appointment process and term

The process to select First Nation members to the regional boards shall be determined by means chosen by the First Nations themselves and will each serve an indefinite term, provided the member continues to have the support of the Nation.

A First Nations appointment will be provided to the region manager, identifying the support of the Nation and suitability of the appointee for this role, including their ability to meet the primary skills expected of First Nations members. Where required, the region manager will seek advice from existing board members on approaching First Nations for membership appointments. The regional board may develop its own process for seeking membership opportunities, given the membership and candidacy considerations identified above.

Public member candidacy

Roles and responsibilities

Public members on regional boards represent the public in their region by bringing forward relevant issues, concerns, and ideas. Public members also create awareness, understanding, and support for the FWCP and will identify opportunities to strengthen and foster relationships with their respective communities. Members are appointed to offer a broad regional perspective rather than having a single issue, single interest group, or single organization focus.

The primary skills or assets of public members are as follows:

- familiarity with fish, wildlife, and environmental issues, especially within their region;
- excellent communication skills (i.e., the ability to share and receive information through a network of contacts and the ability to effectively communicate at board meetings); and
- an extensive network of contacts among the region's stakeholders across a broad range of interests and not one constituency.

Further information on the primary skills and assets of public members is provided in the evaluation criteria below.

Appointment approval and term

Public members will be solicited through a recruitment process, as detailed [below](#). The standard term of board appointments for public members will be three years with the option of renewing for a second term. Public members have term-based appointments to ensure opportunity for diversity in regional perspectives and geographic representation within the region, given the broad nature of the public member position. Every attempt will be made to stagger the terms of members so that only one public seat is vacated in any given year.

1. Appointments and reappointments are subject to regional board approval. For reappointments, the board will consider the need to balance continuity in board work and succession planning with the need to provide an opportunity for different parties to have a seat at the board table.
2. Public members may serve for a maximum of six consecutive years (two terms), except in exceptional circumstances where appointment for one more year is judged by the board to be in the best interests of the FWCP based on succession-planning needs.
3. Members who have served for six years and cease to be a member for at least two years may be eligible for appointment through the normal recruitment process.
4. If a seat is vacated, the board may direct the region manager to initiate the recruitment procedure to fill the vacancy.

Recruitment and appointment principles

The recruitment, selection, and appointment process for public members will reflect and balance the following principles:

Simple, transparent, and accessible: the application opportunity and process is a public process, open to the public and stakeholders and free from the political bias of specific interest groups;

Informed: potential appointees are provided sufficient information to understand the job; information on appointees is brought forward to the selection committee (which may consist of the board as a whole or a selection sub-committee; [see following section](#)) before appointment;

Professional: provide professional standards and best practices in board accountability, partnering, and multi-stakeholder decision-making;

Fair: ensure that the FWCP's integrity, accountability, and reputation are protected and avoid political bias or entrenchment of interest groups;

Open: enabling opportunity to support inclusivity and diversity, ensuring a range of groups, interests, diverse backgrounds, and geographical areas is represented at the board table, and complementing other FWCP mechanisms for input from the public and stakeholders;

Time and cost-appropriate: control time and costs of the selection process commensurate with the FWCP's scope and benefits.

Recruitment and appointment process

Board recruitment and appointment processes will include at least the following steps:

1. The board will review current board representation needs to meet board composition targets. This should result in the board defining the desired qualities and considerations to balance members on the board and fill gaps in current representation needs. Possible considerations may include:
 - balancing access to and involvement on the board across the region, such as by geographic area or interested stakeholder groups (e.g., academic or scientific community, general public, resource end-users);
 - supporting inclusivity and diversity in board representation; and
 - balancing skills and experience.
2. Formal notification of seats available shall be made through advertising, website, and circulation of relevant information on the recruitment and selection process to the public and a broad range of contacts in partner and stakeholder organizations and community groups.
3. Application packages shall be developed by the region manager on behalf of the board and made available to all interested applicants responding to the notification. The application package shall include:
 - notice of public member position availability and instructions for applying (including application form, resume, and letters of endorsement);
 - summary of the roles and responsibilities of board members;
 - expectations of sitting board members (attendance at meetings, code of conduct, and conflict of interest guidelines);
 - selection criteria; and
 - remuneration information.
4. At the board's discretion, an ad hoc selection committee may be formed from among the standing board members with the effort to include representation from agencies, First Nations and public partners, or a decision to have the entire board involved in the selection process. The board or selection committee will also determine if an interview is part of the selection process for each potential candidate.

5. Upon receipt of applications, the region manager shall compile the applications, prepare a high-level summary, and prepare application review materials (i.e., evaluation criteria) to support the selection committee or board in reviewing and ranking the applications.
6. Applicants will provide the FWCP, via the region manager, with a completed application form, one-page cover letter highlighting relevant experience, background and knowledge, current resume, and at least one letter of endorsement demonstrating community support for their application. Applicants will also disclose any potential conflicts of interest when applying (see [Appendix C](#)).
7. The selection committee or board will conduct a fair review of information on all potential applicants to determine the best fit.
8. The selection committee will recommend candidates for appointment to the board (if selection is done by committee). If the board has questions regarding the recommended appointment, the questions will be directed to the selection committee to clarify expectations. The board may request an alternate recommendation or ask the selection committee to review candidates again. The board will be ultimately responsible for approving the appointment.
9. The appointment decision will be communicated to all nominees. With the appointee's agreement, the appointments will be communicated within the region through the FWCP's communications materials.
10. The region manager will be an advisor and coordinator to the recruiting process and a member of any group with responsibilities related to recruiting. The region manager may attend all meetings but will not have voting ability.
11. The region manager will ensure that all required and appropriate liaisons with applicants, external communications, and formal notifications related to recruiting are carried out.

Evaluation criteria

The criteria below are used to evaluate the candidacy of public members. Additionally, the board will identify further considerations for public candidates, including prioritizing certain criteria based on the identified needs of the board.

Involvement in conservation activities and/or organizations:

- number of years involved as an active member of organizations;
- variety of public involvements across a range of organizations and constituencies;
- relevance of candidates' work-related activities;
- current and past responsibilities; and
- letters of endorsement.

Fisheries, wildlife, and environmental technical/biological knowledge:

- affiliation and range of fish/wildlife group participation;
- academic credentials and work-related experience; and
- references and an optional interview as determined by the example.

Oral and written communication skills:

- clarity of application; and
- publications, speaking engagements.

Ability to effectively communicate with stakeholder groups, local communities, and the public:

- references demonstrate a proven ability to present a regional perspective;
- experience with regional boards or boards of other organizations an asset;
- types of organizations participated in (community-based, region or province-wide);
- positions held; and
- ability to share and receive information about the FWCP through a network of contacts as opportunities arise (e.g., through club meetings and events, casual conversations, etc.).

Experience and extent of network within stakeholder groups:

- number of groups the candidate currently has links with; and
- number of groups candidate receives formal communications from.

Experience in committee/board work using consensus decision-making:

- types of organizations and decision-making processes participated in;
- some knowledge of administrative law;
- business knowledge and ability to approve and oversee expenditures and make effective financial decisions; and
- ability to resolve conflict or address a situation that involves several conflicting perspectives.

Knowledge of the FWCP:

- knowledge of FWCP vision, mission, and objectives; and
- knowledge of FWCP partners.

Availability and time:

- ability to attend meetings.

Residency of applicant:

- length of time residing in or near their respective FWCP region.

Current representation in the region:

- consideration of other current representation in the sub-region or geographic area by other public board members.

APPENDIX C

CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Code of conduct

This code of conduct has been established as an expectation of all FWCP committee members (i.e., regional board, First Nations Working Group and technical committee members). These expectations are required of all members in addition to their roles and responsibilities and any other guidelines outlined in this manual.

All members agree to abide by the following:

Professional conduct: members will conduct themselves in a professional manner that fosters confidence and reflects positively on the board, the FWCP, and the partners.

Best interest: members will act in the best interest of the FWCP in making decisions and are committed to protecting the FWCP's integrity, accountability, and reputation. Members may bring the perspectives of the partner groups or communities they are members of (or are familiar with) to discussions but do not act as advocates for a specific group when exercising their duties.

Staying informed: members will make every effort to become familiar with FWCP business practices, initiatives, and program areas and may also participate in field trips organized by the region manager or others to learn more about projects and issues.

Confidentiality: members in discussion with proponents, potential proponents, contractors, potential contractors, the general public, their own organizations, or other parties will use the utmost professional judgment and discretion related to confidential and sensitive aspects of their position as a member. Confidential matters include all personnel matters and all discussions related to the review of grant applications or directed project proposals, including details of grant applications and directed project proposals not selected for funding. All draft documents are considered confidential. Legal issues, rationale for individual funding decisions, and other issues designated by the committee are treated as confidential.

Conflict of interest: members will comply with the conflict of interest guidelines set out below.

Limits to authority: members will recognize that they have no individual authority to direct FWCP staff, committees, or contractors.

Respect: members acknowledge that multiple, legitimate objectives are being addressed through the FWCP and will respect the rights of all members to be heard during discussions and decision processes, always remaining respectful to each other.

Diversity in discussion/unity in implementation: members will recognize that, while decisions or actions adopted by a committee may not fully reflect their views, it is their responsibility to support implementation of these decisions or actions as being the considered decision by the committee. An individual member will have the right and duty to present additional evidence and argument to the committee for further consideration, and the committee will have the opportunity to reconsider its decisions and actions.

If a member breaches the code of conduct, the respective committee chair or co-chairs, with support from the region manager, will implement a corrective or disciplinary action process as appropriate. If the committee chair or co-chair is involved in a breach of conduct, the region manager will seek support from the regional board chair/co-chairs and/or the program manager as appropriate. Considerations when determining the appropriate corrective or disciplinary action may include perceived risks to the integrity and reputation of the FWCP, impacts to the functionality of the committee, and the members' willfulness and intentions with not adhering to the code of conduct. In severe cases, disciplinary action could include removing the member or recommending to the board the removal of the member from the respective committee.

Conflict of interest guidelines

The following guidelines are designed to be in addition to, rather than in replacement of, any existing conflict of interest policies in place by the FWCP's agency partners. All staff members of partner agencies remain subject to their own organization's conflict of interest policies, procedures, and penalties.

The steering committee, regional board, technical committee, First Nations Working Group members, the program manager, region managers, and any partner agency staff involved in the FWCP, including full-time, part-time, and casual staff, are jointly referred to as the FWCP representatives.

All FWCP representatives mentioned above will conduct themselves in a way to preserve and retain the confidence of stakeholders, First Nations, and the public in the FWCP's ability to discharge its responsibilities properly, accomplish its purpose, and carry out its functions in a fair, objective, and transparent manner, without real or perceived conflict(s) of interest. In particular, FWCP representatives will avoid any situation where they might be in a position of real or perceived conflict of interest in relation to the FWCP. To reduce potential conflicts of interest and minimize capacity constraints, individual members may only sit on one committee at a time (i.e., board, technical committee, First Nations Working Group¹⁸).

An FWCP representative has a real conflict of interest when, in performing a duty or function of the position, they have the opportunity to further their personal or financial interests or the personal or financial interests of their relatives or personal friends. A financial interest includes pecuniary or economic interest or advantage and includes any real or tangible benefit that personally benefits the FWCP representative.

An FWCP representative has a perceived conflict of interest when, in performing a duty or function of the position, they have an appearance of an opportunity to further their personal or financial interests or the personal or financial interests of their relatives or personal friends.

¹⁸ Situations where a First Nation cannot appoint separate individuals to committees due to capacity constraints may be accommodated.

For clarity, FWCP representatives **may be** in a conflict of interest when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- FWCP representatives are personally involved in an FWCP grant application or directed project proposal that has or will be submitted.
- FWCP representatives are from the same company, research group, centre, institute, First Nation, provincial ministry, federal department or agency, organization, or another type of institutional group as an applicant named in a grant application or directed project proposal.
- FWCP representatives are or have been a close personal friend or relative of an applicant or directed project proponent.
- For some other reason, FWCP representatives believe they cannot, in good faith, provide an objective review of the project application/directed project proposal.
- FWCP representatives request or accept from an individual, corporation, or organization, directly or indirectly, a personal gift or benefit that arises from their activities with the FWCP other than:
 - the exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together;
 - token exchanges as part of the protocol; and/or
 - the normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions.

An example of a real conflict of interest includes when an FWCP representative's immediate family member is an applicant or directed project proponent who would receive financial benefit from funding. An example of a potential perceived conflict of interest includes when an FWCP representative has provided a letter of support to an applicant for a project.

FWCP representatives **do not** have a conflict of interest when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- FWCP representatives have no opportunity to further their own personal or financial interests or the personal or financial interests of their relatives or personal friends.
- FWCP representatives represent the views of their respective organizations.
- FWCP representatives provide services required by their employer as part of their normal job function (e.g., technical or design input, issuing permits, licences, drafting safety plans, or other aspects of a project application).
- FWCP representatives act in a fair and objective manner such that real conflicts of interest and/or bias do not occur.
- FWCP representatives refer requests, such as letters of support, or pre-application project planning to other appropriate individuals, where possible, with the relevant expertise or involvement within or outside their respective organization.

Declaration

All FWCP representatives will:

1. perform their duties conscientiously and not put themselves in a position where their private, family, or business interests and those of the FWCP might be, or might be perceived to be, in conflict;
2. declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest to their region manager as soon as such conflicts are known. For any known real or perceived conflicts of interest arising during the FWCP year, such declarations must be made at the outset of each FWCP year and then throughout the FWCP year as soon as the real or perceived conflict of

interest becomes known;

3. include all information and facts on the declarations that give rise to the real or perceived conflict of interest, including the nature of any relationship with an applicant or proponent and the nature of the possible personal or financial interest involved. For example, the FWCP representative is a relative of an applicant;
4. ensure that any relationship or involvement with a grant application, an applicant, a directed project proposal or a proponent, even where it may not lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest, is fully declared before participating in any evaluation or decision relating to that application, applicant, directed project proposal, or proponent;
5. recuse themselves from participating in a project application where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest that cannot otherwise be mitigated. Participation includes discussion, review, and decision-making. Where grant applications or directed project proposals with a real or perceived conflict of interest are expected to be discussed at a meeting, the FWCP representative shall note the conflict at the start of the meeting immediately following a review of the agenda. Or, if not recognized during agenda review, at the time a grant application or directed project proposal is being considered, as soon as the person recognizes they may be in actual or perceived conflict they should acknowledge it. The FWCP representative shall exit the meeting during any discussion of the grant application or directed project proposal. The meeting minutes shall capture the conflict of interest and recusal of the FWCP representative; and
6. refer any questions regarding the potential conflict of interest and grant application or directed project proposal to their applicable region manager where an FWCP representative perceives the potential for a conflict of interest concerning a project application.

Process for dealing with a real or perceived *declared* conflict of interest

1. Upon receiving a declaration of a conflict of interest, the applicable region manager shall review the declaration and determine whether a real or perceived conflict of interest exists. Where it is not evident whether a conflict of interest exists, the region manager may discuss the declaration with the FWCP committee or group on which the FWCP representative sits, as well as the board, FWCP staff, and any FWCP advisors, as deemed necessary, to make a determination.
2. Should a determination be made that a declared real or perceived conflict of interest exists on a grant application or directed project proposal, the region manager will consider whether any steps can be taken to mitigate the conflict of interest such that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to the public interest. Where mitigation is not feasible, the FWCP representative shall recuse themselves from participating in that grant application/directed project proposal review in accordance with these guidelines. The region manager may discuss the matter with the FWCP committee or group on which the FWCP representative sits, the board, FWCP staff, and any FWCP advisors, as deemed necessary, to establish appropriate mitigation measures.
3. The region manager shall record the details of all conflict of interest matters, including the final determination and any mitigation measures adopted, and shall maintain such records with the FWCP files.

Process for dealing with a real or perceived *undeclared* conflict of interest

1. Should the FWCP become aware of a potential real or perceived conflict of interest on the part of an FWCP representative that has not been declared, the region manager shall promptly discuss the matter with that FWCP representative, collect all pertinent information from relevant sources, and determine whether a real or perceived conflict of interest exists. The region manager may discuss the issue with the FWCP committee or group on which the FWCP representative sits, the board, FWCP staff, and any FWCP advisors, as deemed necessary, to make a determination.
2. Should a determination be made that an undeclared conflict of interest exists, the region manager will consider whether any steps can be taken to mitigate the conflict of interest such that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to the public interest. A determination that an undeclared conflict of interest exists is a breach of the code of conduct and will be dealt with accordingly (see above). As appropriate, the representative's applicable supervisor and/or leader will be notified of the undeclared conflict of interest.
3. The region manager shall record the details of the undeclared conflict of interest, including the final determination and any mitigation measures adopted, and shall maintain such records with the FWCP files.

APPENDIX D

REMUNERATION

Remuneration guidelines for regional board, technical committee, and First Nations Working Group members are provided in this appendix. Employees of the partner agencies assigned to the regional boards and technical committees will not be reimbursed for time but may recover expenses (reasonable accommodation, mileage, and meal expenses) related to travel costs when attending scheduled meetings for the FWCP.

Honorarium

Public and First Nations members will receive remuneration at the following rates:

- \$70 per hour for eligible activities (see list below), adjusted every three years with the rate of inflation¹⁹.

Eligible board activities

The eligible activities for claiming remuneration at the above rates include:

- attendance at scheduled regional board meetings;
- preparation time for each annual general meeting, including project reviews; actual time (i.e., maximum number of hours/days) for reimbursement to be determined annually by the region manager based on the number of grant applications and agenda review package content. Region managers will consult with each other to ensure consistency and fairness across the FWCP regions;
- preparation time for other FWCP meetings; opportunity for reimbursement and actual time for reimbursement to be determined by the region manager when providing meeting preparation meeting materials to the board;
- attendance at up to two (maximum) scheduled regional board field trips per year;
- attendance at scheduled all-region board meetings (i.e., tri-region meetings), which may be held bi-annually or at another suitable frequency;
- attendance at scheduled community engagement events on behalf of the FWCP and at the request of the program manager and/or region manager;
- reasonable travel time to scheduled regional board meetings, plus reasonable vehicle distance charges at current BC Hydro rates (with appropriate documentation); and
- participation time for public stakeholder and First Nations engagement activities associated with action plan review and update processes.

Board members requesting these charges will discuss their travel time and distances with the region manager for prior approval; travel costs will typically not be paid for board meetings held virtually.

¹⁹ Inflation is based on the reported total [Canadian Consumer Price Index \(CPI\)](#) in December.

Eligible technical committee & First Nations Working Group activities

The eligible activities for claiming remuneration at the above rates include:

- attendance at scheduled technical committee and First Nations Working Group (FNWG) meetings;
- preparation time for project review meetings (typically in November or December each year) or other assigned reviews (e.g., [Columbia and Peace region FNWG Notice of Intent](#) process);
- actual time (maximum number of hours/days) for reimbursement to be determined annually by the region manager based on the number of grant applications, agenda review package content, or the number of other assigned reviews. Region managers will consult with each other to ensure consistency and fairness across the FWCP regions;
- First Nations with more than one representative appointed to a First Nations Working Group, preparation and/or review time may only be provided for one member per Nation or community at the discretion of the region manager;
- preparation time for other FWCP meetings; opportunity for reimbursement and actual time period for reimbursement to be determined by the region manager when providing meeting preparation materials to the committee or FNWG;
- attendance at up to two (maximum) scheduled regional technical committee/FNWG field trips per year;
- attendance at scheduled community engagement events at the request of the program manager or region manager;
- reasonable travel time to scheduled technical committee and FNWG meetings, plus reasonable vehicle distance charges at current BC Hydro rates (with appropriate documentation), regardless of meeting duration;
- participation time for action plan reviews and updates.

In addition, time to support other FWCP services or tasks, such as directed project scope of work development and other regional initiatives as requested by the region manager and/or board. An appropriate amount of time to complete requested activities may be determined by the region manager in discussion with the member prior to the member performing the requested activities.

Technical committee and First Nations Working Group members requesting these charges will discuss their applicable travel time and distances with the region manager for prior approval; travel costs will typically not be paid for meetings of less than one hour of scheduled duration that are held virtually.

Expenses

Reasonable administrative expenses (e.g., long-distance charges, photocopying) will be reimbursed at cost, with appropriate documentation and with prior approval of the region manager.

Accommodation and other travel expenses such as meals, taxi, parking, and airfare will be reimbursed at cost, with appropriate documentation/invoices. Mileage and meals will be paid consistent with BC Hydro's current mileage and meal per diem rates (see [Reimbursement section](#) below).

Where air travel is available and appropriate, but an FWCP member chooses to travel by vehicle, the mileage claim is limited to the lesser actual mileage and the lowest equivalent airfare available. For sites with no airport, the lowest equivalent fare is determined from the nearest appropriate airport to the destination. The mileage claim is limited to the lesser actual mileage and the lowest equivalent airfare available, plus mileage to and from the meeting site and the nearest airport.

Note there is an element of in-kind support implied in accepting an appointment to a regional board, technical committee, or FNWG. In particular, this includes communicating with a member's respective organization or community on FWCP-related initiatives unless otherwise agreed to with the region manager. Remuneration will be reviewed as part of a five-year program evaluation in all three regions.

Reimbursement

Public and First Nation board, First Nations Working Group, and committee members will use the current FWCP Member Expense Claim Form created for this purpose and maintained by the FWCP. The expense claim form will be updated from time to time to reflect any changes to current rates or other matters. Electronic copies can be obtained from the FWCP business coordinator or region manager.

Please note that an appropriate level of detail must be provided by members requesting reimbursement for eligible activities, including:

- expense date (yy/mm/dd);
- expense type and supporting details;
- expense amount (as outlined in this Appendix D); and
- supporting documentation (e.g., hotel receipt).

All expense claims must be received within 60 days of occurrence; otherwise, they will not be accepted for reimbursement

APPENDIX E

FIRST NATIONS WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

Operating under the strategic framework and direction of the relevant regional board, the purpose of the First Nations Working Group (FNWG) is to provide First Nations advice at the regional level. It works to facilitate the collaborative planning and implementation of the FWCP. More specifically, the purpose is to:

- support the development, maintenance, and implementation of regional action plans for the FWCP;
- ensure that decision-making incorporates local knowledge, Indigenous knowledge, and cultural and heritage values and is not solely directed from a scientific approach;
- advise the regional board and FWCP office on appropriate engagement with the First Nation's communities;
- act as liaisons to share and receive information between the FWCP and First Nations communities represented on the FNWG;
- advise the regional board on priorities for implementing action plans;
- advise the regional board and fish and wildlife technical committees if needed on any issues of alignment or potential conflict with respect to proposed activities; and
- support development of regional initiatives (e.g., capacity development initiatives) to strengthen First Nations' participation as equal partners in the FWCP decision-making and the delivery of FWCP projects.

Roles and responsibilities of First Nations Working Groups

Reporting to the relevant regional board, the FNWG will:

1. Support the development, maintenance, and implementation of regional action plans by:
 - participating in workshops, reviewing and making recommendations to the regional board regarding alignment of priority actions with First Nations' priorities, interests, values, and culture;
 - advising the regional board on when updates to the plans are necessary;
 - providing advice on how to effectively engage with First Nations' communities during development of the regional action plans and support the First Nations engagement process;
 - providing advice to the regional board on implementing new projects to address priority actions in action plans as part of the annual operating plan development cycle.
2. Review proposed projects:
 - FNWG members review proposed fish and wildlife grant applications through the Notice of Intent²⁰ process and advise on which projects FNWG members

²⁰ See fwcp.ca/notice-of-intent for more information on the Notice of Intent process

wish to be contacted on by grant applicants. FNWG members will communicate with FWCP grant applicants and determine opportunities for incorporation of First Nations' values, perspectives, and participation in FWCP projects.

- The FNWG provides an objective evaluation of all fish and wildlife grant applications proposed from a cultural, historical, traditional, or scientific knowledge-based approach. It provides a ranked list of sound projects for regional board review and approval, including summaries of evaluations. The FNWG uses the review criteria and process described in [Appendix G](#) to evaluate and rank projects.
 - For the Columbia Region FNWG only:
 - The Columbia Region FNWG will participate in planning and implementing annual and ongoing project activities in the Columbia Region based on the objectives of the annual and ongoing project activity.
 - Supported by the technical committees, as appropriate, the Columbia Region FNWG will identify and develop Indigenous-led directed projects based on a board-approved annual budget to support priority projects for the Nations in alignment with regional action plans.
3. Supported by the technical committees, the FNWG will participate in directed, long-term project development, as appropriate, based on the objectives of the directed, long-term project. Participation may include developing components of scopes of work relevant to the FNWG, recommending scoring criteria, participating in the proposal review and selection process, and reviewing components of annual work plans for multi-year directed, long-term projects.
 4. Support the development of initiatives and plans to strengthen First Nations' involvement in decision-making and the delivery of FWCP projects (e.g., Peace Region capacity plan and initiatives).
 5. Be available in an advisory role for the region manager, technical committees, and the regional board.
 6. Provide comment on FWCP communications materials as required and where appropriate.
 7. Support FWCP reviews (see [Section 5](#)) at defined intervals.
 8. Abide by the code of conduct ([Appendix C](#)).

Role of the chair (or co-chairs)

The First Nations Working Group will select a chair (or co-chairs) with capacity, chairing abilities, and interest in chairing being key considerations. The regional board will be notified of the FNWG's chair selection and could assist with the selection process if requested by the FNWG. The chair of the FNWG must commit to a renewable two-year term minimum.

Specific responsibilities of the chair (or co-chairs) are to:

1. lead the FNWG in fulfilling its mandate and following established procedures for the review of proposals and other documents;
2. act as a facilitator during FNWG meetings to support the FNWG in reaching a consensus;
3. act as the primary contact between the FNWG and the regional board, including representing the FNWG and sharing FNWG project evaluation outcomes with the regional board;
4. liaise with the region manager or regional board as needed;
5. co-ordinate with the region manager on meeting preparation and logistics;
6. communicate advice, concerns, or recommendations of the FNWG to the region manager, the regional board, or the steering committee for appropriate distribution.

Membership

Considerations for membership in a FNWG may be regionally distinct and will be comprised of individuals who have been appointed by the regional partner First Nation.

The FNWG must be a functional size to operate efficiently and cost-effectively and, as such, the FNWG in the Peace Region will have up to a maximum of two members per Nation; and the FNWG in the Columbia Region will have up to a maximum of three members per Nation. All members will have the appropriate skills, abilities, experience, and position with the First Nation to fulfill the FNWG duties as outlined in the [Roles and responsibilities](#) section of this appendix.

Appointment process

The process to select First Nations representatives to the FNWG shall be determined by means chosen by the partner First Nations themselves. Each partner Nation will appoint members to the FNWG and notify the region manager of new appointments or changes to any appointments. Appointments will be communicated by the partner First Nation's board member and/or the First Nation's current leadership.

Term

First Nations Working Group appointments will be for an indefinite period provided the representative continues to have the support of the Nation, where that appointment relates directly to the appointee's organizational role, or until the member resigns or the Nation nominates a new representative.

If a seat is vacated, the region manager will communicate with the respective First Nation's board member and/or the First Nation's current leadership to support filling the vacancy.

Mode of operation

Meetings

The number and frequency of meetings will be determined by the region manager in consultation with the chair or co-chairs and will reflect regional program timelines for annual planning and any emerging issues.

Meeting agendas for FNWG meetings will be set approximately 10 working days in advance of meetings. Materials will be provided by the region manager, with support from the chair, at least one week before the meeting.

Only members of the FNWG, the region manager, and any approved observers (e.g., external reviewers, designated contact persons, or other persons approved in advance by the FNWG or as represented by the chair) will attend meetings. For clarity, observers will only participate in decision-making with prior approval.

The region manager will develop meeting summaries on matters discussed and decisions made. The summaries will not attribute views on external project funding applications to specific FNWG members.

Task groups or ad-hoc committees

The regional board may form regional or FWCP-wide task groups or ad-hoc committees to deal with a range of issues, which could include members of the FNWG. Once formed, task groups and ad-hoc committees may be requested to develop terms of reference for approval by the regional board.

Decisions

The FNWG will strive for consensus decisions. Consensus is defined as a general agreement that all members can accept. Members may not agree with all the specific details of a decision reached by consensus, and it may not fully incorporate everyone's views, but it is a decision that members can and will support both within and outside the team. When consensus cannot be achieved, differing views will be recorded in the meeting's minutes and other relevant documents. At its discretion, the FNWG may choose to use a structured decision-making process for contentious or difficult decisions.

For expedience, certain administrative decisions of the FNWG may be made by a simple majority vote, such as the approval of meeting summaries. However, in no case will the chair unduly restrict discussion and consensus building.

APPENDIX F

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The FWCP's Columbia and Peace regions each have one wildlife technical committee and one fish technical committee. The FWCP's Coastal Region has one wildlife technical committee. It has three fish technical committees to cover the geographically diverse locations of the BC Hydro facilities within its purview: one for Vancouver Island, one for the Coast and Lower Mainland, and one for the Southern Interior.

Purpose

Operating under the strategic framework and direction of the relevant regional board, the purpose of the technical committees is to provide technical assessment and advice related to the planning and implementation of the FWCP at the regional level. More specifically, the purpose is to:

- support the development of regional action plans for the FWCP;
- ensure the technical soundness of projects proposed in alignment with technical review considerations identified in [Appendix G](#);
- provide technical support and oversight for directed²¹ project development and implementation; and
- advise the regional board on priorities for implementing the regional action plans.

Roles and responsibilities of technical committees

Reporting to the regional board, technical committees:

1. Support development, maintenance, and implementation of regional action plans by:
 - participating in workshops, reviewing and recommending to the regional board regarding content and technical merit of draft plans;
 - advising the regional board on when updates to the plans are necessary; and
 - providing advice to the regional board on implementing action plans by identifying potential priorities for investment as part of the annual operating plan development cycle.
2. Review and support the development and implementation of proposed projects by:
 - providing an objective, scientific evaluation of all fish and wildlife projects proposed and provide a ranked list of technically sound projects for regional board review and approval, including summaries of technical evaluations. Technical committees use the review criteria and process described in [Appendix G](#) to evaluate and rank projects;
 - supporting development of directed projects by participating in drafting scopes of work, recommending scoring criteria, participating in the proposal review and selection processes, and reviewing annual work plans for multi-year directed projects; and
 - providing technical support to the region manager in reviewing project

²¹ For the Columbia Region, directed projects include annual and ongoing projects.

deliverables, including submitted approval conditions and project draft reports as required.

3. Review and provide technical input, as required, to technical processes and materials developed for the FWCP (e.g., grant evaluation criteria updates, annual regional guidance);
4. Support FWCP reviews (see [Section 5](#)) at defined intervals;
5. Participate in task groups and ad hoc committees on a range of issues as directed by the regional board;
6. Abide by the code of conduct ([Appendix C](#)); and
7. Follow any professional practice requirements while fulfilling roles and responsibilities as technical committee members (e.g., [Professional Governance Act](#) and associated regulations).

Role of the chair

Regular availability is necessary as the technical committee chair or co-chairs must work closely with the region manager. The chair or co-chair selection will be made by the technical committee itself, with capacity, chairing abilities, and cost-effectiveness being key considerations. The chair or co-chair will be selected through a request for nominations process led by the region manager. If more than one nomination is received, the technical committee will decide by consensus on the most suitable chair or co-chairs based on the key considerations above. The chair or co-chair of the technical committee serves a renewable two-year term.

Specific responsibilities of the chair are to:

1. lead the technical committee in fulfilling its mandate and following established procedures for the technical committee as outlined in these terms of reference;
2. chair technical committee meetings and facilitate productive, respectful discussions that conform to these terms of reference;
3. support the region manager with preparing for technical committee meetings, including reviewing draft agendas and advising on approach to meeting and agenda items;
4. act as the primary contact between the technical committee and the regional board, the region manager, and the First Nations Working Group chairs as needed;
5. support the region manager with determining requirements for and approach to any additional technical support (see [Appendix G](#) and below);
6. sign off on results of technical committee reviews as documented for the regional board with support from the region manager;
7. communicate advice, concerns, or recommendations of the committee to the region manager for appropriate distribution; and
8. make recommendations to the board on behalf of the technical committee with regard to the recruitment of new technical committee public members. This includes advice on key experience or expertise that would improve committee functioning and on prospective members identified through the recruitment process.

Membership

Technical committees should be reflective of the partnership and will be comprised of members from BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., DFO²² (Coastal Region only), as well as First Nations, at their discretion, and the public as needed. All members will have the appropriate technical background, experience, and skills to fulfill their committee member duties as outlined in the [Roles and responsibilities](#) section.

The number of committee members is not fixed, but it must be of a functional size to operate efficiently and cost-effectively. Technical committees will typically include two members from each of BC Hydro and the Province of B.C. and one member from DFO (Coastal Region fish technical committees only). First Nation participation will be determined with input from First Nation board members and appointed by First Nations. The Nations will appoint their technical committee members. Public participation will typically be limited to one or two qualified members.

Appointment process

BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., DFO (in the Coastal Region) and First Nations will appoint committee members from their respective organizations, ensuring that appointed individuals have the appropriate technical background, skills, and organizational role to fulfill their duties as committee members.

The region manager, with support from the chair or co-chairs, will facilitate the process of appointing public members of the technical committee, ensuring a fair and transparent process. The technical committee will determine in advance if there are other selection criteria that should be included in the recruitment process as deemed appropriate based on the current composition and expertise of the technical committee.

Candidates must have the appropriate skills and experience to fulfill the technical committee duties outlined in the [Roles and responsibilities](#) section, and any other selection criteria the technical committee deems appropriate.

The technical committee will review all candidate applications and recommend a candidate for board approval.

Term

BC Hydro, government agency and First Nations appointments will be for an indefinite period, where that appointment relates directly to the appointee's organizational role.

The standard term of technical committee appointments for public members will be three years, with the option of renewing for additional terms, subject to board approval. When deciding on re-appointments, the board will consider input from the appropriate technical committee and region manager on the need to balance continuity in committee work with the need to provide an opportunity for different parties or skill sets to participate.

²² DFO does not currently sit on the Columbia and Peace region technical committees; however, the opportunity remains for their representation in those regions.

If a seat is vacated, the region manager will initiate an appropriate recruitment process to fill the vacancy.

Opportunity for additional technical support

The committee, at their discretion, may seek additional technical support outside of the committee membership when or if the current technical committee membership cannot support certain tasks due to resource constraints or lack of subject matter expertise. The region manager will facilitate this process with support from the chair or other technical committee members as necessary.

Mode of operation

Meetings

The number and frequency of meetings will be determined by the region manager in consultation with the chair or co-chairs and will reflect regional program timelines for annual planning and any emerging issues.

Meeting agendas for committee meetings will be set approximately 10 working days in advance of meetings. Materials will be provided by the region manager, with support from the chair or co-chairs, at least one week before the meeting.

Agenda items may be referred to the technical committees by the regional board, region manager, and the First Nations Working Groups as applicable.

Only members of the committee, the region manager, and approved observers (e.g., board members, external reviewers, designated contact persons, or other persons approved in advance by the committee or the chair) will attend meetings. Observers will participate in discussions only as approved to do so by the chair.

Meeting summaries will be kept, summarizing matters discussed and decisions made. The meeting summary will not attribute views on external project funding applications to specific technical committee members.

Task groups or ad-hoc committees

The regional board may form regional or FWCP-wide task groups or ad hoc committees to deal with a range of issues, which could include members of the technical committees. Once formed, task groups/ad hoc committees may be requested to develop terms of reference for approval by the regional board.

Decisions

The technical committee will strive for consensus decisions. Consensus is defined as a decision that all members can accept. Members may not agree with all the specific details of a decision reached by consensus, and it may not fully incorporate everyone's views, but it is a decision that members can and will support both within and outside the technical committee. When consensus cannot be achieved, differing views will be recorded in the meeting summary. Other relevant documents and dissenting views will be made known to the regional board when the particular item is presented to the board for discussion and/or approval. At its discretion, the

technical committee may choose to use a structured decision process for contentious or difficult decisions.

For expedience, certain administrative decisions of the technical committee may be made by a simple majority vote, such as the approval of meeting summaries. However, in no case will the chair unduly restrict discussion and consensus building.

Opportunity for alternates

Given the unique candidacy and nomination appointment process for public technical committee members and finite appointment terms, alternates will not be permitted for public technical committee members.

All technical committee members are expected to attend meetings to the best of their ability and availability as identified in the mode of operation. For situations where agency and First Nations members cannot attend a meeting, a designated alternate may attend on behalf of the technical committee member based on the following criteria:

- Alternates can attend a maximum of one meeting per year for a First Nations or agency technical committee member.
- Alternates will adhere to the mode of operation for meetings (above) and the code of conduct ([Appendix C](#)).
- Alternates will have the appropriate technical background, experience, and skills to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of technical committee members, as noted in the [Roles and responsibilities](#) section.
- If an alternate will be attending a technical committee meeting, this decision will be communicated with the region manager at least one week in advance of the meeting.
- Alternates will come prepared for the meeting, having communicated with the technical committee member they are representing to gain any necessary information pertaining to the meeting and their responsibilities and having read any provided pre-reading materials in advance of the meeting.

APPENDIX G

PROJECT REVIEW CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The FWCP implements a three-step process for reviewing projects (i.e., grant applications and directed project proposals) that involves review by the FWCP's regional fish and wildlife technical committees and First Nations Working Groups (FNWGs) as applicable, followed by review and decision-making by the applicable regional board. The general guidelines for the project review process apply to all committees (i.e., boards, technical committees, FNWGs) and program staff, as applicable. Information regarding the grant application evaluation criteria and process will be updated from time to time and be available and maintained on the FWCP website.

General guidelines for project review process

1. Program staff (e.g., region managers) will perform a preliminary screening of grant applications and directed project proposals at their discretion. The outcomes of the preliminary screening will be provided to the committees for their consideration. They may consider criteria such as alignment with FWCP project eligibility criteria and experience with the applicant, including the status of existing or past FWCP projects.
2. Reviewers will review and rank each grant application individually before meeting with their committee. At the committee meeting, the members will make consensus-based decisions on final evaluations of projects. Directed project proposals may also be reviewed by committees²³. Final decisions regarding project funding will be made by the applicable regional board.
3. Reviewers are not to introduce bias in evaluations based on personal views of priorities, ensuring a high level of fairness and accountability in the project review selection process. Members will carry out their review responsibilities in accordance with the code of conduct and conflict of interest guidelines, including following confidentiality provisions as set out in [Appendix C](#).

Guidelines for technical committee grant application review process

1. Grant applications are reviewed based on the application content, existing technical evaluation criteria, and the technical committee members' knowledge and familiarity with site-specific information and considerations that affect project feasibility.
2. The technical committees will review applications on technical and scientific merit only and will not address issues that other review committees evaluate. The review will typically consider:
 - alignment with FWCP action plan actions and intended outcomes;
 - technical design and approach;
 - budget and cost-effectiveness;

²³ The review process for directed project proposals will depend on the selected procurement approach and may include specific review criteria and scoring.

- project team experience and qualifications; and
 - if the project conflicts with or duplicates other partner activities or programs.
3. If a grant application requires specific technical expertise for review, further detailed review and analysis may be delegated to one or more members of the technical committee or external technical support person. The region manager will facilitate this process with support from the chair or other technical committee members as necessary.
 4. Technical committee members may consult with external expert reviewers for their individual grant application reviews if they deem it important in their review process. The technical committee will consider the results of the expert input in the overall assessment.

Guidelines for First Nations Working Groups application review process

For regions that have established a First Nations Working Group (FNWG):

1. Grant applications are reviewed based on the application content, existing FNWG evaluation criteria, and the FNWG members' knowledge and familiarity with site-specific information and considerations related to the proposed project. The review will typically consider the following:
 - alignment with First Nations' values, priorities, and interests; and
 - efforts to engage First Nations, including project development and involvement, and plans to share project information and results with First Nations.
2. FNWG members may consult with relevant external reviewers for their individual grant application reviews if they deem it important in their review process, such as specific community members, knowledge holders and colleagues. The FNWG will consider the results of the external input in the overall assessment.

Guidelines for regional board grant application review process

1. Grant applications are reviewed based on the application content, existing board evaluation criteria, evaluations and recommendations from the FWCP office, technical committees, and First Nations Working Groups (as applicable), and the board members' knowledge and familiarity with site-specific information and considerations related to the proposed project.
2. The evaluation criteria will focus on how well the project addresses FWCP's strategic framework (e.g., vision, mission), including strategic objectives and regional priorities, as well as partnerships and partner funding supporting the project.

APPENDIX H

REGION MANAGER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Region managers play a key role in managing and administering FWCP operations in each region. Region managers are dedicated full-time to the FWCP, are accountable to the regional board, and report to the board on all operational matters.

Reporting to each regional board, region managers are responsible for managing all aspects of the FWCP in their respective regions. This includes work planning, committee (i.e., regional board, technical committee, First Nations Working Groups) coordination, budget management, procurement and administration, proponent liaison, strategic planning, and special projects or initiatives. Region managers support the FWCP boards by enabling them to carry out their responsibilities and execute their decisions. The region managers also seek guidance and support from the program manager (see [Section 3.5](#)) to manage operational and strategic issues, including support with executing board decisions.

For employment and labour relations matters, the region manager reports to the program manager (see [Section 3.5](#)). The program manager will seek input from the board regarding region manager performance during the annual performance review cycle and will remain open to suggestions and feedback from the board during the year. Should issues arise that require a significant decision, including hiring, promotion, transfers, and/or dismissal, the program manager will conduct that process per established labour relations methods. A hiring subcommittee may be considered for this purpose, with input from the board. Final decisions regarding the region manager position will be at the discretion of the steering committee.

In addition to other responsibilities set out in this manual, region managers have overall responsibility for:

1. facilitating the development of the regional action plans that set the long-term direction of the FWCP in the region;
2. developing a regional annual operating plan that defines what will take place within the FWCP each fiscal year for approval by the board;
3. managing ongoing operations by supporting FWCP grant applicants with the application process and supporting project proponents and contractors with managing issues and providing guidance related to the delivery of projects and other contracts;
4. coordinating and facilitating regional strategic initiatives and special projects at the direction of the board;
5. ensuring there is an appropriate administrative process to receive, review, fund, and deliver projects under the regional annual operating plan that meet BC Hydro (public sector) requirements. The process includes the intake of grant applications, development of directed annual and ongoing projects, planning and implementation processes (e.g., request for proposal processes), project review and decision-making processes, and distribution of funds for project delivery;
6. managing and overseeing the regional annual operating budget, including providing financial updates to the board and development of the regional annual report ([Section 5](#));

7. discretionarily increasing project budgets up to 5% per project within a given year without seeking approval from the board (ensuring that a contingency budget is available to support such an increase);
8. fulfilling a secretary function by planning and facilitating regional board, technical committee, and First Nations Working Group (as applicable) meetings and decision-making processes. This includes developing the meeting agenda, board briefing and decision notes (as applicable), preparing meeting materials, and writing meeting summaries in accordance with the committee's mode of operation;
9. communicating board direction on annual priorities and budget availability to the technical committees, First Nations Working Groups, and project proponents as appropriate;
10. providing direction and input into the annual regional communications plan and three-year communications strategy;
11. raising awareness of the FWCP with the public, First Nations, and stakeholders through participation in communications and community engagement initiatives as identified in the annual regional communications plan (e.g., FWCP outreach events);
12. advising, coordinating, and serving as an ex-officio member of any committee for a board or technical committee public member recruiting process; and
13. coordinating and delivering new committee member orientation sessions.

APPENDIX I

DATA AND REPORT MANAGEMENT OWNERSHIP OF FWCP PROJECT INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The FWCP requires that proponents provide all project information (project final reports and any information, data, programs, and products developed by the proponent in relation to the project) to the Province of B.C. for sharing broadly as open data and to be published under an open data licence.

To facilitate the management and distribution of data and information created using FWCP funds, all contracts or contribution agreements issued by the FWCP will contain wording that ensures the Province of B.C. is not limited in its ability to distribute data and related information for use by others. Specifically, contract wording should state that any intellectual property rights associated with project information will be owned by the project proponent and that the project proponent will grant BC Hydro an irrevocable, perpetual, assignable, royalty-free licence to:

- exercise the rights of copyright holder as set out in the [Copyright Act \(Canada\)](#), including the right to use, reproduce, modify, publish, and distribute the project information; and
- the right to sublicense or assign to third parties, including contractors and consultants of BC Hydro and FWCP partners (each a sublicensee) any or all of the rights granted to BC Hydro.

The proponent must also acknowledge and agree that BC Hydro or its sublicensees may share the project information broadly as open data and publish it under an open data licence. The proponent must covenant and agree to irrevocably waive in BC Hydro and its sublicensees' favour any moral rights which the proponent (or employees or agents of a proponent) may have in the project information and, upon request, the proponent must deliver to BC Hydro documents satisfactory to BC Hydro of such waiver of moral rights.

Data and information security

The Province of B.C. will manage all FWCP data in accordance with the Species and Ecosystems Data and Information Security (SEDIS) Policy and Procedures which include provisions that facilitate the securement of data for the purposes of publication, the securement of data collected on private lands, and/or the securement of data associated with expressed First Nations interests.

Project data and information to be secured for the purposes of publication will be effectively categorized as “proprietary” and held secure (i.e., not publicly and openly available) for a defined period (usually no more than three years) to allow for publication. As per the SEDIS policy and procedures, when this defined period of time expires the data will be made public and openly available. Proponents must discuss requests for securing data as “proprietary” for the purposes of publication with FWCP and the Province of B.C. prior to final report submission.

Project data and information to be secured that is associated with private lands will also be effectively categorized as “proprietary” and held secure (i.e., not publicly and openly available) but will be made accessible to specific government staff to use for business purposes only. These data will also be shared externally if, and only when, the “need to know” criteria are met (as per the SEDIS policy and procedures). Proponents undertaking projects whereby data and

information collected may pertain to private land, should only provide these data to FWCP if they agree to these data being managed in this way.

Project data and information to be secured that pertains to expressed First Nations' interests will also be effectively categorized as "proprietary" and held secure (i.e., not publicly and openly available) but will be made accessible to specific government staff to use for business purposes only.

These data will only be shared externally if approved by the applicable First Nations. Proponents undertaking projects whereby data and information collected may pertain to expressed First Nations' interests should only provide these data to the FWCP if they agree to these data being managed in this way.

If proponents do not agree with these data security provisions, the FWCP must be notified and the final reports should identify where and by whom these data and information are being managed and stored.

Standards for reporting

Project proponents are required to submit to BC Hydro and to the Province of B.C. technical reports detailing the objectives, outcomes, and deliverables of their projects. Final reports should be submitted in PDF format. Where applicable, data should be digitally captured in accordance with the appropriate [RISC \(Resource Inventory Standards Committee\) standards](#).

Where projects wish to deviate from RISC standards, the proponent should provide an explanation and rationale for the use of the alternate methods. If alternative methods are used, the minimum data subVisi requirements must be fulfilled to allow the data to be loaded into corporate data systems.

Additional reports may be required for FWCP project management purposes to meet reporting requirements for project status, completion, or budget expenditures.

Submission of project information

In addition to project reports, other supporting project information such as maps, project photographs, project communications, spreadsheets, and databases must be submitted to the Province of B.C. using standard electronic formats and applicable data submission protocols. Spreadsheets should be compatible with MS Excel, and databases should be compatible with MS Access and should be uploaded directly to the Province of B.C.

Further information regarding data submission formats and protocols is available via the links listed below.

- [Wildlife and Plant Data Submission](#)
- [Terrestrial Ecosystem Information \(TEI\) Data Submission](#)
- [Fish Data Submission](#)

Requests for data submission support should be sent to:

- Wildlife and plant data: SPI_Mail@gov.bc.ca
- Fish data: FishDataSub@gov.bc.ca
- Ecosystems data: TEI_Mail@gov.bc.ca