



## **B.C. draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework?**

- The draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework proposes a new approach to the stewardship of land and water in B.C. that is founded on the principles of reconciliation and inclusion
- The draft framework's commitments include:
  - Prioritizing the conservation and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity as part of natural resource management decisions
  - Developing new legislation and/or updating current legislation and other enabling tools to implement the vision and actions of the framework
  - Creating biodiversity-related guidance and standards, in partnership with First Nations, that will be used to inform land and water use planning

### **What do you mean by “prioritizing” biodiversity and ecosystem health?**

- Explicitly considering biodiversity and ecosystem health as a priority means a thoughtful, integrated and inclusive stewardship of the air, land, water and all living things
- B.C. is rich in natural resources. Industries like timber harvesting and mining have long been and will continue to be an important part of the province's economy.
- At the same time, biodiversity and ecosystem health are threatened from multiple factors
- B.C.'s economic resilience is interconnected to ecosystem resilience, so both are at risk from these threats
- The B.C. government recognizes the need to take a more holistic approach to make sure ecosystems in the province are self-sustaining and nurture a wide variety of species. This will also help support the long-term social and economic well-being of communities throughout B.C.
- That's why we're making changes so that policies, decisions and actions related to land use consider their potential impacts on ecosystems and the many benefits they provide

### **Why do we need to prioritize ecosystem health and biodiversity? Why now?**

- We're taking action now to protect biodiversity and ecosystem health in the face of climate change. Severe drought, water shortages, record-breaking wildfires, atmospheric rivers, major flooding events, heatwaves and landslides are increasingly impacting people living in British Columbia
- This work is important because biodiversity and healthy ecosystems provide a range of environmental, social, cultural and health benefits for communities. These include clean air and water, settings for spiritual practices and food sustainability. They also help preserve Indigenous ways of life, which in turn enhance reconciliation efforts in B.C.

- This approach will apply to all sectors and ecosystems throughout B.C. It will also provide strategic direction to transform land and water stewardship practices to respond to the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change
- The goal is to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecological integrity to support healthy and resilient communities and economies for generations to come

### **How would the final Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework tie into other provincial initiatives?**

- The draft framework outlines the B.C. government's statement of intent, principles, and actions that will help establish a strategic direction for prioritizing biodiversity and ecosystem health throughout the province
- At the same time, many other initiatives and programs are already underway in B.C. that support similar goals and intended outcomes. For example, the draft Watershed Security Strategy, Coastal Marine Strategy, Cumulative Effects Framework and Together for Wildlife Strategy all provide support for healthy ecosystems
- The final Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework will help align and integrate these initiatives by setting out a common vision and building efficiencies between these programs, policies and strategies

### **How will the final framework be developed and implemented?**

#### **Phase 1:**

- The draft framework was developed through a collaborative engagement process in 2023 with First Nations and other parties, including industry, non-governmental organizations, local communities, municipal leaders and academia. Research and experiences with this type of approach elsewhere in Canada and other parts of the world have also helped inform the draft and the innovative ideas within it
- Consultations with First Nations and engagement with local governments, industry, environmental organizations and the public on the draft framework took place from November 2023 to January 2024
- Over 7,000 responses were received, with most responses expressing support for the draft framework's vision and key actions that represent a shift from current land and water management practices to one that considers ecosystem health, community well-being and economic resiliency more holistically
- Many supportive responses emphasized the complexity of this shift and the need for additional consultations and engagement to ensure that the final framework is well understood, is broadly supported and the implementation path is clear

#### **Phase 2:**

- As part of Phase 2, we will work to:
  - Assess the need for legislative change and advance co-development of new legislation and/or update existing legislation with First Nations and engage people living in British Columbia
  - Enable other tools (policy, guidance, outreach) to achieve the vision and intent of the framework
  - Take action immediately to implement key measures using existing legislative tools

**If you have other questions, please email [biodiversity.ecosystemhealth@gov.bc.ca](mailto:biodiversity.ecosystemhealth@gov.bc.ca)**