

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKING GROUP

### 1. Background

The British Columbia *Species and Ecosystems at Risk Local Government Working Group* (SEAR LGWG) was established in the fall of 2009 in response to the Minister of Environment's interest in developing a collaborative, provincial vision for species at risk protection on private land. The SEAR group consists of representatives from municipal, regional and provincial governments and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) who jointly produced the discussion paper *Working Together to Protect Species at Risk: Strategies Recommended by Local Government to Improve Conservation on Municipal, Regional and Private Lands in British Columbia*<sup>1</sup>, in January 2011. The SEAR LGWG provided 45 recommendations for provincial government, local governments and UBCM under five strategies:

- 1) *Increase local government awareness of species at risk.*
- 2) *Facilitate use of effective tools and techniques.*
- 3) *Identify and collaborate on shared responsibilities.*
- 4) *Conduct ecosystem mapping and encourage data sharing.*
- 5) *Engage landowners in species at risk habitat protection.*

The approach aims to build on the extensive work already underway by provincial and local governments and to facilitate further discussion among local governments about species and ecosystems at risk protection on private and local government lands.

### 2. SEAR LGWG Purpose

The SEAR LGWG is intended to be a forum for communication and consensus to allow for collaborative working on SEAR issues in British Columbia through information sharing on:

- a) mechanisms for species at risk protection in Official Community Plans (OCPs), Land Use Bylaws (LUBs), Environmental Development Permit Areas (EDPAs), Regional Growth Strategies, Protected Area Networks (PANs), etc.; and,
- b) voluntary incentives for landowners to protect species at risk on private lands.

Biodiversity is the foundation of the human economy. Human activities are putting undo strain on ecosystems and causing increases in the number of SEAR, demonstrating that we are living beyond the carrying capacity of our environment. The goal of the SEAR LGWG is to enhance species and ecosystems at risk protection on private and local government lands through collaboration between the province, local governments and UBCM.

### 3. Approach

The SEAR LGWG:

- recognizes each jurisdiction has a unique way of working and contributing to the SEAR LGWG, and its own capacity to participate;

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<sup>1</sup>For a copy of the discussion paper please go to: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/SAR%20Paper%20January%202011%20FINAL.pdf>

- aims to help guide SEAR management, provide strategic direction, support, training and capacity building opportunities within local governments;
- provides a network to support a coordinated approach for SEAR protection;
- members themselves provide a source of knowledge and resource, like a library of people, for other members and neighbouring local governments. Information sharing can be used by members for specific local projects and for seeking broader commitment [from all levels of government and targeted public] to enhancing SEAR protection on local government and private lands;
- recognizes many local governments have good examples of existing SEAR work within their jurisdiction and provides an opportunity to share these examples with the other members;
- provides higher level guidance and encouragement for continued and new SEAR initiatives and allows SEAR LGWG members to build upon existing information and programs; and
- endeavours to create momentum for SEAR protection by supporting existing work and building on it by encouraging new local governments to participate.

#### **4. Regional Implementation**

The Discussion Paper provides 45 recommendations with an overall strategic focus for implementing actions regionally, while recognizing the need to include the important work of land trusts and local conservation groups. Implementation focuses on five areas across southern BC: *Kootenays, Thompson, Okanagan, Lower Mainland, and Vancouver Island*, while recognizing there are additional areas of the province that will require implementation. This includes plans to engage northern communities in a similar discussion paper and sub-working group initiative in the future, depending on the preferred approach and available resources. Regional sub-working groups are formed in these five areas and subsequent invitations to relevant environmental stewardship organisations, land trusts and local conservation groups operating within the region. The provincial government will take a lead on the initial establishment of the sub-working groups, with shared involvement with the SEAR LGWG as the sub-working group begins to address the recommendations. Implementation will include ongoing monitoring, identification of gaps and how to potentially fill the gaps. Results and updates will be provided to local and provincial government elected officials and executives for future program and policy development.

#### **5. Roles and responsibilities**

- Provincial government – coordination and facilitation of the SEAR LGWG; provision of resources (information and, when possible, potential funds for workshops); provide regular updates on any provincial legislative or policy developments related to SEAR that directly impact local governments.
- UBCM – provide links to the UBCM Environment Committee and Executive; provide endorsement of the 45 recommendations of the Discussion Paper; encourage participation by local governments; provide links to national and international groups (e.g., the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, ICLEI); ongoing support and participation.
- Regional governments – staff and elected official participation; encourage participation by other local governments; provide peer-to-peer advice.
- Municipal governments – staff and elected official participation; encourage participation by other local governments; provide peer-to-peer advice.

- Federal government – participation in SEAR LGWG meetings; provision of resources (information and, when possible, potential funds); provide regular updates on any federal legislative or policy developments related to SEAR that directly impact local governments.
- Advisory Committee – provision of strategic input from participating agencies (see Addendum below for more information).

## **6. Guiding principles for SEAR LGWG**

- Open and transparent: All activities and decision-making are conducted in an open and transparent manner.
- Cooperative: SEAR LGWG members work together.
- Consensus: Wherever possible, agreement will be sought through mutual understanding.
- Solution-oriented: SEAR LGWG members will seek to resolve issues.
- Active participation: SEAR LGWG members will attend scheduled meetings, read materials and communicate to peers whenever possible.
- Respect: SEAR LGWG members respect the right of others to hold and express their opinions, values and beliefs.

## **7. SEAR LGWG Membership**

The work of the SEAR LGWG focuses on SEAR related issues related to local governments with support from the BC provincial government. Elected officials and staff from additional municipal and regional governments are encouraged to become SEAR LGWG members. Land trusts, local conservation groups and other relevant organisations are invited to participate in regional implementation by the regional sub-working groups.

## **8. Meeting frequency**

The SEAR LGWG will communicate regularly via email (frequency varies depending on focus of work, but ideally once a month) and hold teleconferences approximately two to four times a year, or as required. A face-to-face workshop may also occur annually, depending on availability and interest, and will be organised by a voluntary subcommittee of the SEAR LGWG. Regionally focussed teleconferences and/or face-to-face meetings for the regional sub-working groups may occur more frequently as required (e.g., particularly during formation).

## **9. Funding**

The SEAR LGWG operates independently of any one funding source. Members of the SEAR LGWG participate on a voluntary basis, and are not financially compensated for their time. Committee members may be compensated in order to attend the face-to-face workshops if funds are available.

Dated: April 2012

Amended: January 2013

## ADDENDUM

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### Advisory Committee

#### 1. Purpose:

From 2009 to 2011, the strategic direction for the SEAR LGWG was provided in the form of a project charter. Once the final deliverable (the Discussion Paper) was completed, a sub-working group of the SEAR LGWG developed the Terms of Reference, which was commented on and approved by the SEAR LGWG, to better define the focus of the SEAR LGWG. Decisions for SEAR LGWG work are made by consensus with the SEAR LGWG participants. To assist the Ministry of Environment with the lead role of coordination and facilitation of the SEAR LGWG, and to ensure inter-ministerial communications from participating ministries and other agencies on the SEAR LGWG are maintained, a provincial Advisory Committee was established in January 2013. The work of the SEAR LGWG has two levels of focus, first is province-wide communications and collaboration; second is the regional implementation and maintaining/establishing communities of practice regarding SEAR in each region. The Advisory Committee focuses on the first, i.e., issues pertaining to the province-wide level.

The Advisory Committee provides strategic input to SEAR LGWG work, including:

- development of collaborative documents;
- symposium themes;
- high level, province-wide issues related to the regional implementation of the Discussion Paper recommendations; and
- assist with communications and promotion of initiatives and work of the SEAR LGWG within their agencies and between participating agencies.

#### 2. Membership:

Each member of the Advisory Committee represents an agency that is represented on the SEAR LGWG.

- Ministry of Environment (MoE)
- Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)
- Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) (may rotate similar to the local government representative – please see below)
- Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development (MCSCD)
- Ministry of Agriculture (MAGri)
- Climate Action Secretariat, MoE (CAS)
- A rotating SEAR LGWG local government representative will also attend to provide a local government perspective to discussions, participating for six months to attend two calls/meetings and any email exchanges during that time, before another local government representative volunteers to take over. The local government representative may serve more than one six month term if there are no other volunteers. If more than one local government participant is interested in volunteering at a time, the

volunteer will be selected randomly. The selection of volunteers in subsequent terms will also ensure there is equal opportunity for representation from the different regions in BC (e.g., if the Kootenay region is represented first, then the local government representative for the following term must be from a different region). If the local government representative is not able to complete a term, the SEAR LGWG will be notified and another volunteer, ideally from the same region, may step in to complete the term.

**3. Advisory Committee Meeting Frequency:**

The Advisory Committee will meet (in person or on teleconference) quarterly, or as needed. Emails may also be exchanged on specific topics at times throughout the year.