

British Columbia Guide to Recovery Planning for Species and Ecosystems

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *British Columbia Guide to Recovery Planning for Species and Ecosystems* is a resource for recovery practitioners, stakeholders, and other interested parties wishing to understand the recovery planning process for species and ecosystems in British Columbia (B.C.). It is designed to provide direction and guidance to provincial recovery teams, management teams, and personnel working towards developing species or ecosystem management and recovery. Documents prepared following these guidelines will satisfy provincial content requirements and will contribute, to the extent possible, to fulfilling legal requirements under Canada's [Species at Risk Act](#) (SARA).

The [Conservation Framework](#) (CF) is B.C.'s approach for maintaining the rich biodiversity of the province. The CF provides a set of science-based decision support tools to prioritize species and ecosystems for conservation and to determine the most appropriate and effective management actions. Recovery planning in B.C. is guided by the priorities assigned to species and ecosystems under the CF. Also, species and ecosystems assigned to the Planning Action Group under the CF are potential targets for recovery planning activities as outlined in this guide.

Recovery planning is a process to identify, define, and facilitate implementation of priority actions to ensure the survival and recovery of species and ecosystems considered to be of conservation concern. Depending on the specific circumstances of a planning process, the goal of recovery planning can range from maintaining current population size and distribution (survival) to fully restoring the species as a viable, self-sustaining population (recovery). Recovery planning helps B.C. and Canada meet national and international commitments to preserve biodiversity, including species and ecosystems at risk.

Recovery documents represent expert science advice to the Province. These documents may be produced by an individual, although they are generally produced by a recovery or management team, which is comprised of individuals with the biological and technical expertise required to determine the measures needed to recover or manage a species or ecosystem. Completed and approved recovery documents are published on the Ministry of Environment [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#). Where applicable, documents posted on this website are made available to the Government of Canada for adoption and posting on the [SAR public registry](#) to assist federal agencies with legislative requirements under the SARA.

For a species or an ecosystem in B.C. that has been designated as extirpated, endangered, or threatened, the planning process is typically documented in a recovery strategy. A recovery strategy is a science-based document that identifies goals, objectives, and strategic approaches that provide a co-ordinated direction for recovery. If needed, one or more action plan documents may also be produced. The purpose of an action plan is to build on the direction specified in the recovery strategy by defining and guiding implementation to help achieve the recovery goals and objectives.

A management plan may be prepared for priority species or ecosystems under the Conservation Framework that are considered to be at risk of becoming endangered, threatened, or of special concern. A management plan identifies the conservation activities and land use measures needed to ensure, at a minimum, that the target species or ecosystem does not become threatened or endangered. Similar to a recovery strategy, management plans summarize the best available science-based knowledge to identify goals, objectives, and strategic approaches that provide a coordinated direction for conservation. Management plans may also offer detailed advice on implementation of the measures in the plan.

Success in the recovery/conservation of a species or ecosystem depends on the commitment and co-operation of many different constituencies that may be involved in implementing the directions set out in a recovery document. The B.C. Ministry of Environment encourages all British Columbians to participate in the recovery/conservation of species of conservation concern as part of a shared stewardship approach.

This document provides an overview of the recovery planning process in B.C. (Chapter 1). It also contains specific guidance and templates outlining the process and requirements for initiating a recovery planning process (Chapter 2), drafting a recovery document (Chapter 3), reviewing and publishing a recovery document (Chapter 4), and implementing a recovery plan (Chapter 5).

Species and ecosystems recovery planning remain active areas of policy and program development. All components of this guide will be updated as new information and direction become available. Questions about issues not covered in this guide should be directed to the Ministry of Environment Recovery Planning Coordinator.

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1 INTRODUCTION TO RECOVERY PLANNING

This chapter provides an overview of recovery planning in British Columbia. It explains what is meant by recovery and recovery planning for a species or ecosystem, why and how recovery plans are initiated, as well as where to find recovery planning documents.

1.1 What Is Recovery?

Species and ecosystem recovery is the process by which the decline of a species or ecosystem at risk is arrested or reversed, and threats are removed or reduced to improve the likelihood of persistence in the wild.

What recovery means for a particular species or ecosystem will vary depending on case-specific circumstances. Recovery can be defined anywhere along a continuum from maintenance of current population size and distribution (e.g., for those species that have naturally small ranges or population sizes in B.C.) to increasing populations to viable, self-sustaining levels, able to withstand natural environmental fluctuations and stochastic events (e.g., species that have experienced significant declines in population size and/or distribution in B.C.). An important step in all provincial recovery planning processes is to clearly define recovery based on the specific circumstances of the target species or ecosystem.

1.2 What Is a Species or Ecosystem of Conservation Concern?

A species or ecosystem of conservation concern is any species or ecosystem that has been assigned a high conservation score under one or more of the [Conservation Framework](#) (CF) goals (see Section 1.8.3). This may include species or ecosystems that are not yet considered to be “at risk”.

A **species or ecosystem at risk** is one that is extirpated, endangered, or threatened, or of special concern (formerly called vulnerable). Please see the glossary for definitions of these terms (Appendix 1).

1.2.1 Conservation Status of Species and Ecosystems in B.C.

In B.C., specialists with the Conservation Data Centre assign status ranks to species and ecosystems conservation

In B.C., specialists with the [Conservation Data Centre](#) (CDC), in consultation with other experts, assign provincial conservation status ranks to species and ecosystems according to a set of criteria developed by the international organization [NatureServe](#). This set of criteria considers 10 conservation status factors that are organized into three broad categories – rarity, trends, and threats. For more information on this process, refer to [B.C. Conservation Data Centre: Methods](#).

1.2.2 Conservation Status of Species and Ecosystems in Canada

At the national level, the [Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada](#) (COSEWIC) conduct detailed assessments of the status of species in Canada. COSEWIC assessments are based on detailed status reports, which summarize the best available information on species biology, population size, distribution, trends, and major threats.

COSEWIC status designations (Extinct, Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern) form the basis of advice to the federal cabinet on species that will be considered for legal listing under Canada’s [Species at Risk Act](#) (SARA).

1.3 What Is Recovery Planning?

Recovery planning is a process used to identify, define, and facilitate implementation of priority actions that enable the recovery of species and ecosystems at risk

Recovery planning is a process used to identify, define, and facilitate co-ordinated implementation of priority actions that enable the recovery or management of a species or ecosystem of conservation concern. Recovery planning provides a logical, science-based foundation to guide decision-making. Developing recovery planning documents are a preferred approach because they help to ensure effective and efficient implementation of recovery activities. In addition to providing specific direction or a “road map” for conservation, recovery planning documents are often used as outreach tools to help interested parties outside of government understand the rationale behind identified recovery needs. In many cases, these documents assist with implementation of recovery and management actions in a shared stewardship approach.

Depending on specific circumstances, recovery planning for species or ecosystems in B.C. may take one of two different paths: a **recovery plan** or a **management plan**.

Note that throughout the rest of this document reference to **recovery planning** includes both recovery plans and management plans.

1.4 What Is a Recovery Plan?

For a species or an ecosystem in B.C. that has been designated as extirpated, endangered, or threatened, the planning process is typically documented in a **recovery strategy**. As needed, one or more **action plan** or **implementation plan** documents may also be produced. These documents (the recovery strategy and action plan(s)) are together referred to as the **recovery plan**.

1.4.1 Recovery Strategy

A recovery strategy is a science-based strategic document that provides advice to government and others on the measures required to recover a species

The recovery strategy summarizes the best available science-based knowledge to facilitate identification of a recovery goal (to define what recovery means for the target), objectives, and strategic approaches/strategies that provide a well-defined, logical, and coordinated framework for species or ecosystem recovery. These documents provide science advice to government and others on the measures required to achieve recovery of a species or ecosystem. Refer to Chapters 3 and 4 for detailed information on the steps involved in developing and publishing a provincial recovery strategy.

1.4.2 Action Plan

An action plan outlines the specific actions needed to achieve the goal and objectives identified in the recovery strategy.

After a recovery strategy has been developed, an action plan may be produced. The action plan builds on the direction specified in the recovery strategy by defining and guiding implementation to help achieve the recovery goals and objectives. The action plan outlines achievable and prioritized actions to be taken within specific time frames and by specific groups or individuals where possible. In some circumstances, more than one action plan may be prepared for a species or ecosystem. For example, separate action plans may be

developed for different parts of a species' range, or to deal with different issues, such as, research, management, habitat protection, and stewardship. Refer to Chapters 3 and 4 for information on the steps involved in developing and publishing a provincial action plan.

An implementation plan outlines the response of the provincial government to the need to manage species at risk for which recovery in British Columbia may have significant socio-economic implications.

1.4.3 Implementation Plan

An implementation plan outlines the response of the provincial government to the need to manage species at risk for which recovery in British Columbia may have significant socio-economic implications. Implementation plans guide and prioritize management actions that are required to meet objectives and goals identified through formal provincial government decisions. Such government decisions are informed by science, but are also made with consideration of socio-economic factors.

1.5 What is a Management Plan?

A management plan identifies a set of conservation activities needed to ensure that the target species or ecosystem does not become threatened or endangered

A management plan identifies a co-ordinated set of conservation activities and land use measures needed to ensure, at a minimum, that the target species or ecosystem does not become threatened or endangered. A management plan summarizes the best available science-based information on biology and threats to inform development of a management framework. Similar to recovery strategies, management plans set goals and objectives to define the desired conservation outcomes, and recommend specific approaches/actions appropriate for species or ecosystem conservation. This management framework is intended to guide implementation of specific management actions on the ground. When management actions are implemented, directly affected parties will be consulted, as required, through existing provincial processes depending on the tools used. Refer to Chapters 3 and 4 for detailed information on the steps involved in developing and publishing a provincial management plan.

1.6 When Are Recovery or Management Actions Initiated?

Recovery or management actions can be initiated at any time during the recovery planning process when they are required; it

is not necessary to wait until the management plan, recovery strategy, or action plan has been completed.

1.7 Why Develop Recovery Documents?

1.7.1 Effective Recovery and Management of Species and Ecosystems

The most important reason to develop recovery and management plans is to ensure effective organization, coordination, implementation, and evaluation of species and ecosystems recovery and management. For any species or ecosystem, many possible actions could be taken to achieve recovery or manage conservation concerns. A well-developed recovery or management plan ensures that the rationale behind the recommended approach is based on the best available information and clearly documented. Prioritizing recovery and management actions helps ensure effective and efficient use of often limited resources.

1.7.2 Meeting National and International Commitments

Preventing species extinction helps meet national and international commitments to conserve biodiversity. Canada is a signatory to the [*United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity*](#) announced at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This convention was the key driver behind the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy in 1995 and the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk.

Recovery
planning helps
meet national
and
international
commitments
to conserve
biodiversity

Recovery planning for species in B.C. has been underway since the 1980s. In 1996, the Province of B.C. signed the [*Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*](#). The goal of the accord was to prevent species from becoming extinct as a consequence of human activity. Key to achieving this goal was the commitment to provide for the development of recovery plans for endangered and threatened species, and to implement these plans in a timely manner. Further to this commitment the Province signed the [*Canada – British Columbia Agreement on Species at Risk*](#) in 2005. This bilateral agreement confirmed the commitments made under the accord.

1.8 How Is Recovery Planning Accomplished in British Columbia?

Recovery planning in B.C. is accomplished by working closely with the Government of Canada, by ensuring that a lead agency is identified, and by setting priorities using the Conservation Framework.

1.8.1 Working Closely with the Government of Canada

The Province works closely with the Government of Canada to provide a coordinated and consistent approach to recovery planning in B.C. The intent of the [*Canada – British Columbia Agreement on Species at Risk*](#) (2005) was to establish a framework within which Canada and B.C. could exercise their respective powers and duties to ensure a co-ordinated and focused approach to the delivery of species at risk legislation, policies, and operational procedures. This agreement established a Canada/B.C. Species at Risk Coordinating Committee (SARCC), which is the initial point of contact for administration and implementation of the agreement.

1.8.2 Assigning a Lead Agency

Responsibility for recovery planning is generally assigned to the agency with legal responsibility for management of a particular ecosystem or species and/or its habitat (e.g., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment Canada, Parks Canada, or B.C. Ministry of Environment). It is also the responsibility of the lead agency to determine the approach to implement a planning process (see Chapter 2, Sections 2.1 and 2.2 for more details on lead agencies and approaches to recovery planning).

Recovery documents led by B.C. are made available to the Government of Canada where applicable to help satisfy requirements under Canada's SARA.

The Province participates in federally led planning processes based on priority and actions assigned under the Conservation Framework.

1.8.3 Setting B.C. Priorities Using the Conservation Framework

The Province uses the priority and actions assigned to species and ecosystems under the Conservation Framework to direct resources to recovery planning.

The Conservation Framework is used to identify and prioritize conservation activities for species and ecosystems in British Columbia

The [Conservation Framework](#) (CF) is B.C.'s approach for maintaining the rich biodiversity of the province. Developed by the Ministry of Environment in collaboration with government, non-government, and conservation organizations, industry, and the scientific community, the framework provides a set of science-based decision support tools to prioritize species and ecosystems for conservation and to determine the most appropriate and effective management actions.

The three goals of the CF are to:

1. contribute to global efforts for species and ecosystem conservation
2. prevent species and ecosystems from becoming at risk
3. maintain the diversity of native species and ecosystems.

The CF has both a species component and an ecosystems component. Under this system, species and ecosystems are prioritized based on global and provincial conservation status, population trend, threats, stewardship responsibility, and feasibility of recovery. High priority species and ecosystems are also assigned to appropriate management actions using a transparent decision-making process. For the full list of action groups that can be assigned under the CF, see the "[How Does It Work?](#)" section of the Conservation Framework website. Species and ecosystems assigned to the Planning Action Group under the CF are potential targets for provincial recovery planning activities as outlined in this guide.

The CF is used to prioritize implementation of conservation activities conducted by the Ministry of Environment. Actions will be implemented by allocating resources to priority species and ecosystems, taking into account other business considerations such as legal obligations, existing commitments, and partnership opportunities. Ongoing monitoring and reporting will inform the re-assessment of priorities, assignment to action groups, and species and ecosystem status.

1.9 Where Can I Find Recovery Planning Documents?

Recovery documents prepared as science advice to the Province of B.C. are published on the Ministry of Environment [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#).

Federally led recovery documents are published on the federal [Species at Risk \(SAR\) public registry](#). Planning processes co-
led by the province and a federal agency may also be posted directly to the SAR public registry.

2 INITIATING A RECOVERY PLANNING PROCESS

This chapter covers common approaches to recovery planning, and the process for implementing a recovery planning process in British Columbia. Appendix 2 contains templates designed to help establish new recovery/management teams including: letter of invitation for potential members, terms of reference, conflict of interest policy, team operating procedures, a first meeting agenda, and a draft work plan. For additional information on initiating a planning process, contact the Recovery Planning Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment.

2.1 Who Initiates a Recovery Planning Process?

Responsibility for initiating and leading a coordinated recovery planning process in B.C. rests with the lead agency. The lead agency for recovery planning is typically assigned based on legal responsibility for management of a particular ecosystem or species and/or its habitat (Table 1). Provincial and federal agencies coordinate recovery planning leads through the Species at Risk Coordinating Committee established under the [Canada – British Columbia Agreement on Species at Risk](#) (2005). It is the responsibility of the lead agency to determine the appropriate approach to implement a planning process in consultation with participating agencies.

Table 1. Agencies responsible for recovery planning in British Columbia.

Species type	Lead agency
Marine species	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Freshwater fish	Fisheries and Oceans Canada & B.C. Ministry of Environment
Most terrestrial species and ecosystems	B.C. Ministry of Environment
Species predominantly on/in lands/waters administered by Parks Canada (National Parks, Historic Sites, and Marine Conservation Areas)	Parks Canada Agency
Migratory birds	Environment Canada

Decisions to initiate a provincial recovery planning process are informed by the B.C. [Conservation Framework](#) (CF). The CF is a science-based tool used to assign priority and conservation actions to species and ecosystems in B.C. (see Section 1.8.3 for details). Decisions to develop recovery plans for species and ecosystems are based on considerations such as: priority,

capacity, partnership opportunity, legal requirements, and budgetary constraints.

The appropriate approach for recovery planning is determined in consultation with species experts, existing teams, and other participating jurisdictions (see Section 2.2).

2.2 Approaches to Recovery Planning

Approaches to producing a recovery document vary depending on the scope of the plan (e.g., single species, multiple species, or ecosystem) and the type of planning team formed. The scope of the plan will usually be decided before a planning team is formed, or before the plan is drafted. However, this may be changed as planning progresses, new information is made available, and/or circumstances change. Decisions on the most appropriate course for recovery planning for both species and ecosystems are made and reviewed regularly.

2.2.1 Scope of Recovery Documents

Recovery and management plans can be designed to address multiple scales depending on the recovery/management needs. A plan may address a single population, a single species, multiple species, or an ecosystem. A discrete population of a species may be addressed separately if it is geographically or genetically distinct from other populations within the province (e.g., North Cascades Grizzly Bear). Single-species plans have been the most common approach to date; however, the benefit of multi-species and ecosystem planning is recognized and these approaches will be used where appropriate.

A multi-species approach may be appropriate if two or more species at risk have similar biological requirements, occur in the same geographic area, or share the same threats. A multi-species approach can also address recovery planning for two or more species whose recovery/management needs may be in conflict with each other (e.g., predator–prey relationships).

The scope of the recovery document to be produced will influence the type of planning team formed (see Section 2.2.2).

2.2.2 Planning Teams

A common approach to recovery planning in B.C. is to form a planning team. The type of planning team formed varies depending on its purpose. Regardless of the approach used to produce a recovery strategy or management plan, individuals or teams are accountable to the Director of the Ecosystem Protection and Sustainability Branch, Ministry of Environment (hereafter the Director).

Planning teams may be formed to provide ongoing coordination of recovery/management activities for species and ecosystems. Although the primary role of this group is to produce the recovery strategy (Recovery Team) or management plan (Management Team), the team sometimes remains active after these documents are completed to coordinate implementation of recovery/management actions, develop partnerships with stakeholder groups, and assist with monitoring/evaluation of the plan.

These long-standing teams are typically put in place for species or ecosystems with complex, ongoing recovery or management needs. An example of this is the formation of a multi-species team to deal with particular groups of species. These “taxonomically based” teams prepare recovery and management plans for several related species (e.g., Southern Interior Reptile and Amphibian Recovery Team, B.C. Non-Game Freshwater Fish Species at Risk Recovery Team, and B.C. Invertebrates at Risk Recovery Team). The formation of a single, taxonomically based team permits efficient use of often limited expertise for particular groups of species. Another example is the formation of an ecosystem recovery team if the ecosystem itself is at risk, or if several species at risk in a particular biotic community rely on similar protection and/or restoration efforts (e.g., [Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team](#), or [South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program](#)).

A recovery or management team may also be established for a shorter duration (1 or 2 years), specifically to develop a recovery planning document. After achieving this task, the team might disband if the species is downlisted, or change its role and membership to take on new tasks (e.g., producing an action plan or implementing actions).

When a particular jurisdiction has most of the responsibility for management of a species or ecosystem, that jurisdiction may form a small internal team or hire a consultant to draft the recovery document. Under this model, other interested parties and experts would still be involved, whether by a peer review process or hosting a workshop with experts. This approach is often used when preparing B.C. management plans.

2.3 Initiating a Recovery/Management Team

New B.C. recovery/management teams may be initiated by the Director of the Ecosystem Protection and Sustainability Branch, Ministry of Environment as required. All teams are accountable to the Director. The Director will designate or approve a team chair. The chair will make recommendations for team membership in consultation with the Recovery Planning Coordinator. The chair will also prepare letters of invitation, terms of reference (including conflict of interest policy and team procedures), a draft first meeting agenda, and a draft work plan in advance of the first team meeting. The team chair will issue the letters of invitation along with the most recent status report(s) and draft terms of reference to prospective team members (see Appendix 2: Recovery Team Initiation Package for team initiation templates). If the Director provides direction, the team may also form one or more recovery implementation groups (RIGs) to lead the various aspects of recovery action planning and implementation.

2.4 Recovery/Management Team Membership

2.4.1 Selecting Team Members

Appropriate team composition is critical to complete an effective planning process. Agencies with management responsibility (federal and provincial governments at a minimum) for the species or ecosystem must be invited to participate on the team. Other members must have relevant knowledge (including aboriginal traditional knowledge) and expertise required to provide science advice on measures required to recover the species or ecosystem. Team membership will vary depending on specific circumstances of the planning process; however, team members will be selected for their knowledge of (1) the species/ecosystem, or relevant disciplines; (2) the threats contributing to the status of the

species/ecosystem (e.g., resource extraction, forestry, hydrology); or (3) elements of plan design or implementation. Although members of a team may come from a diverse array of backgrounds, members may neither represent nor actively promote their respective agency's mandate. Team members bring their expertise together to provide the best available science-based advice on the measures required for recovery or management of a species or ecosystem.

When selecting potential members from agencies that have management responsibility, the distribution of the species or ecosystem and representation from the major land managers throughout the species or ecosystem range should be considered. Other considerations for selecting the appropriate expertise include examining land use measures/threats that affect the species or ecosystem. For example, determine whether the species is likely to be affected by land use planning decisions, urban or agricultural development, forestry, invasive species, range management, tourism and recreational developments, hydroelectric projects, utility corridors, mining, or other industrial developments. Based on these considerations appropriate government, academic, and other experts should be invited as team members. When species cross international boundaries, it may be beneficial to co-ordinate recovery efforts with representatives from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and/or state wildlife agencies.

Contact the Recovery Planning Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment for assistance in determining appropriate team membership as needed. The letter of invitation to participate on the team should be addressed to allow the agency/organization to coordinate their involvement. An appropriate or preferred member can be suggested in the letter.

2.4.2 Reviewing Team Membership

The team will review membership at the first team meeting and thereafter, at least annually. The chair may make recommendations to the Director to add new members to the team (or change team membership) at any time in a manner that is consistent with the team's terms of reference.

2.4.3 Establishing Team Size

The optimal group size for a well-functioning team is 5–7 members

The number of members is an important consideration when assembling a team. The optimal group size for a well-functioning team is 5–7 members. Larger teams will permit a wider representation of expertise, but may not allow full participation and involvement of all members. When there are many potential contributors to the planning process, these experts could be involved through technical workshops, scientific/technical sub-groups, and/or advisory groups that report to the core team.

2.5 Establishing Recovery/Management Team Mandate and Process

All team members will work towards the development of goals and objectives to define recovery or management for the species

Team members will be provided with a clear understanding of their mandate, purpose, and functions at the first meeting as outlined in the letter of invitation and draft terms of reference (Appendix 2). In general, the mandate of a team is to facilitate recovery/management of the target species or ecosystem by providing the best available scientific advice in the form of a recovery document to the Director. Science advice provided by teams does not constitute government policy and the responsibility for making management decisions based on this science advice rests with the lead jurisdiction(s).

The team chair will be in place when the team is formed. A co-chair may be selected at the first team meeting, or may result from two jurisdictions sharing responsibility for the species or ecosystem. The team chair will be responsible for arranging meetings, membership, team activities, reporting on progress and implementation, and team communications as outlined in the terms of reference (Appendix 2). Support for administration and co-ordination may be provided through contract, however, the team chair will be ultimately responsible for these functions.

Other roles for team members may also be designated (e.g., secretary), but ultimate responsibility for these functions will rest with the chair. See Appendix 2 for an outline of general team functions and examples of topics covered in a first team meeting.

Terms of reference provide a common understanding of the task of the group and a basis for decision-

2.5.1 Terms of Reference

Terms of reference describe the purpose and structure of the team. They also define and guide the operating principles and procedures for the team. The main purpose of the terms of reference is to provide a common understanding of the task of the group, and a basis for making decisions. All newly formed provincial teams are required to adopt a terms of reference based on the templates provided in this guide (Appendix 2) and existing teams are encouraged to adopt these updated terms of reference if they have not yet done so. The terms of reference should be finalized at the first or second team meeting. Once all members of the team have signed on, the Director will sign-off on the terms of reference for the team. A copy of the final terms of reference should be provided to the Recovery Planning Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment to facilitate this step.

The ability to make well-considered decisions may be affected by other personal or professional interests. A conflict of interest generally means any situation where an individual has or promotes an interest that can be perceived to result in an interference with their objectivity, or an advantage or material gain to the individual or the individual's personal contacts. To ensure that the team conducts business in an open and equitable manner, a conflict of interest policy is included with the draft terms of reference (see Appendix 2). The terms of reference package also includes team procedures, which describe how members will conduct themselves and how disputes will be resolved (Appendix 2).

2.6 Team Operations

2.6.1 Work Plans

A work plan will be adopted at the first meeting to describe the process and set out a timeline for drafting the recovery strategy or management plan (Appendix 2). Further work plan tasks can be added as necessary such as establishing tasks and timelines for implementation of short-term recovery/management actions, reporting on progress, and ensuring peer review.

2.6.2 Record Keeping

While the chair will be responsible for record keeping, all team members should be aware that a “paper trail” showing how

A “paper trail”
will be
maintained to
record all
decisions and
relevant
communications
of the team

decisions were made will be maintained. All documents and materials directly or indirectly considered by the team in making decisions concerning recovery planning will be included in an administrative record, including those that appear contrary to agency/team decisions. Aside from relevant policy and technical information, also included will be meeting agendas, minutes and transcripts, invitations and outreach material, press releases, decision documents, and any other materials relating to the planning process. Internal and external correspondence relating to the recovery strategy or management plan should be included, including hard copies of relevant emails. Telephone conversation notes may also be added to the record if these notes are not solely for personal use.

2.6.3 Team Support

Decisions about priorities for formation of new teams and funding to support both new and existing teams will be made by the lead agency. The Province will make these decisions annually based on capacity and priority and management actions assigned under the Conservation Framework (CF).

The Recovery Planning Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment is an important resource for teams. The Recovery Planning Coordinator provides a link between teams and government, and is available to assist teams in all aspects of recovery planning including: team formation, providing up-to-date guidance and advice on recovery planning policy and procedure, including advice on plan content. The Recovery Planning Coordinator is also the primary contact for assisting teams with the government review, approval, and publication process.

2.6.4 Intellectual Property and Moral Rights

Recovery planning documents are meant to be “living documents” that will be revised and updated approximately every five years, or more frequently as new information becomes available. When documents are written through a contract with the Province, one of the terms of the contract requires the authors to cede their intellectual property rights and waive their moral rights to the Crown (i.e., the B.C. government will own the final product). Note that recovery

documents produced by a team are advisory in nature, and the responsible jurisdictions may add appendices to meet additional legal or policy requirements.

2.6.5 Training

Some training/instruction on topics related to government policy and procedure, recovery planning best practices, guidance for teams, and implementation may be provided to team members or chairs. The Ministry of Environment Recovery Planning Coordinator will communicate available opportunities to teams as they arise.

3 DRAFTING A B.C.-LED RECOVERY DOCUMENT

This chapter provides direction on preparing B.C.-led recovery strategies and management plans. The body of this chapter explains what should be included in the recovery document and what provincial guidance and templates to use when developing the document. Documents prepared following these guidelines will satisfy provincial content requirements and will contribute, to the extent possible, to fulfilling legal requirements under Canada's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Completed draft documents are submitted to the Recovery Planning Coordinator. Draft recovery documents are reviewed and approved through a two-stage process before they are published on the Ministry of Environment [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#) (see Chapter 4).

3.1 Recovery Strategy

A **recovery strategy** is a science-based document that summarizes the best available knowledge on a species or ecosystem to identify goals, objectives, and strategic approaches to provide a co-ordinated direction for recovery (see Chapter 1). Recovery strategies are typically prepared by a recovery team or practitioners with appropriate expertise to direct the planning process (see Chapter 2).

A recovery strategy prepared for the province of B.C. may contain the following elements:

- ✓ a summary of the conservation status of the recovery target;
- ✓ a description of the recovery target, its populations and distribution, and habitat and biological needs;
- ✓ identification of threats to the recovery target;
- ✓ identification of recovery actions already completed and key knowledge gaps preventing effective recovery;
- ✓ a clear rationale explaining the biological and technical feasibility of recovery;
- ✓ the recovery goal and objectives that define recovery for the target;
- ✓ a rationale for the recovery goals and objectives
- ✓ a general description of the broad approach and strategies needed to meet the goal and objectives;

- ✓ an outline of the existing and recommended approaches to threat mitigation; and
- ✓ identification of performance measures to evaluate the recovery strategy over time.

3.2 Action Plan

The decision as to whether it is necessary to develop an action plan or not will be made on a case by case basis. The approach taken to develop action planning documents will also vary depending on the situation. Generally, the approach that is deemed the most efficient method of documenting what is needed for action planning to aid in the management or the recovery of the species will be chosen.

Guidance supporting the development of action plans is an active area of policy development. Future versions of this guide will include more detailed information and direction on the content requirements and process for developing action planning documents. In the interim, action groups assigned to the species through the Conservation Framework and the direction provided in the recovery strategy provide enough information to guide implementation of priority recovery/management actions. Although temporary policy/guidance gaps exist in this area, implementation is ongoing by government and dedicated conservation organizations throughout the planning process.

Please contact the Recovery Planning Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment for the most recent direction on action planning.

3.3 Management Plan

A **management plan** identifies the conservation activities and land use measures needed to ensure, at a minimum, that the target species or ecosystem does not become threatened or endangered (see Chapter 1). A management plan summarizes the best available science-based information on biology and threats to inform development of a management framework. Management plans are typically prepared by a management planning team or practitioners led by the responsible jurisdiction, but in some cases, a recovery team may be directed to prepare a management plan (see Chapter 2).

A management plan prepared for the province of B.C. may contain the following elements:

- ✓ a summary of the conservation status of the recovery target;
- ✓ a description of the recovery target, its populations and distribution, and habitat and biological needs;
- ✓ identification of threats to the recovery target;
- ✓ identification of actions already completed and key knowledge gaps preventing effective management;
- ✓ an outline of the current management framework in B.C.;
- ✓ the management goal and objectives that define the desired outcome for conservation of the recovery target;
- ✓ a rationale for the management goal and objectives;
- ✓ identification of the specific management approaches/actions needed to meet the goals and objectives with recommended timelines for implementation; and
- ✓ identification of performance measures to evaluate the management plan over time.

3.4 Drafting a B.C.-led Recovery Document

Recovery documents are prepared following provincial guidance and templates. Using these templates ensures that provincial recovery documents are consistent with the requirements of Canada's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) to the extent possible.

Note that any time during the drafting process you may contact the Ministry of Environment Recovery Planning Coordinator for advice on content and process

3.4.1 Before Starting

Before drafting a recovery document:

1. Check-in with the Recovery Planning Coordinator.
2. Ensure that your recovery/management team has current terms of reference signed by all members of the team and the Director, Ecosystems Branch (see Chapter 2 and Appendix 2).
3. Obtain the most recent version of the guidance documents from the [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#) (see Section 3.4.2).

Recovery documents are prepared using provincial guidance and templates

3.4.2 Guidance and Templates

The following outlines the guidance and templates needed to draft a recovery document:

- Appendix 3. Formatting Specifications for Recovery Documents
- Appendix 4. Guidance for Drafting Recovery Strategies and Management Plans
- Appendix 5. Guidance for Threat Assessments
- Appendix 6. Recovery Strategy Template
- Appendix 7. Management Plan Template
- Examples of recently completed recovery documents on the [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#). Please ask the Recovery Planning Coordinator which documents would be the best examples for you to look at.

3.4.3 Submission of Recovery Document

After the team has agreed on a draft recovery document, it is submitted to the MoE Recovery Planning Coordinator. In most cases, the Recovery Planning Coordinator will initially review the document before it enters the formal review. This step helps to ensure that the review and approval process proceeds smoothly. Where possible, the team will seek peer review of the document either before, or concurrently to, this initial review.

Once the draft recovery document is complete (as confirmed by the Recovery Planning Coordinator), it is then reviewed and approved through a two-stage process (see Chapter 4).

4 REVIEWING AND PUBLISHING A RECOVERY DOCUMENT

This chapter explains how a draft recovery document is reviewed, finalized, and published on the Ministry of Environment [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#). These recovery documents are then available to the Government of Canada for adoption and posting on the [SAR public registry](#).

4.1 Review and Finalization of Recovery Documents

When completed, draft recovery documents are submitted to the Recovery Planning Coordinator for government review. Government review is a two-stage process where the recovery document is reviewed and approved at the manager and director levels before publication (Figure 1).

4.1.1 Manager Review

Upon submission of a draft recovery document, the Recovery Planning Coordinator organizes the manager review. This review typically includes provincial and federal government agencies that may be involved in the implementation of the recovery document. At a minimum, the recovery document is reviewed by managers and their technical staff responsible for species at risk at the Ministry of Environment and the SARA responsible agency (Environment Canada, Parks Canada, or Fisheries and Oceans Canada). Additional reviews are often completed by other ministries and departments that have management responsibility for the species or ecosystem (e.g., Ministry of Forests and Range). The manager review ensures the recovery document was prepared following provincial guidelines; is consistent with provincial policy and federal SARA requirements (to the extent possible); and is based on the best available science. Comments resulting from this review are collected by the Recovery Planning Coordinator and returned to the recovery/management team (or author of the draft) for revisions.

After the team/author has revised the recovery document based on manager comments, it is resubmitted to the Recovery Planning Coordinator with an outline of how the major comments were addressed. In some cases, there may be some follow-up between the Recovery Planning Coordinator and the

team/author before the document is moved to the next level of review.

4.1.2 Director Review

Upon submission of a revised draft recovery document following manager review, the Recovery Planning Coordinator prepares briefing materials outlining the drafting process, team membership, and content of the document. The recovery document and briefing materials are sent to directors sitting on the Species at Risk Coordinating Committee (SARCC) (which operates as a coordinating body to implement the [Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Species at Risk](#)) for final review and approval for publication. Membership on this committee includes directors from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Forests and Range, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Environment Canada, Parks Canada Agency, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Following director review there may be some final follow up comments to be addressed by the team/author. The Recovery Planning Coordinator will work with the team/author to ensure any final comments are addressed and approved by the SARCC directors. The final document, with director approval, is submitted to the Recovery Planning Coordinator to start the publication process.

4.1.3 Finalization and Publication

Final recovery documents are published in the Ministry of Environment Recovery Planning website

Before an approved recovery document can be published on the Ministry of Environment [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#), the following steps take place to finalize the document:

1. professional English edit;
2. approval by MoE web staff for adherence to provincial publication standards; and
3. assignment of publication information by the library of Canada.

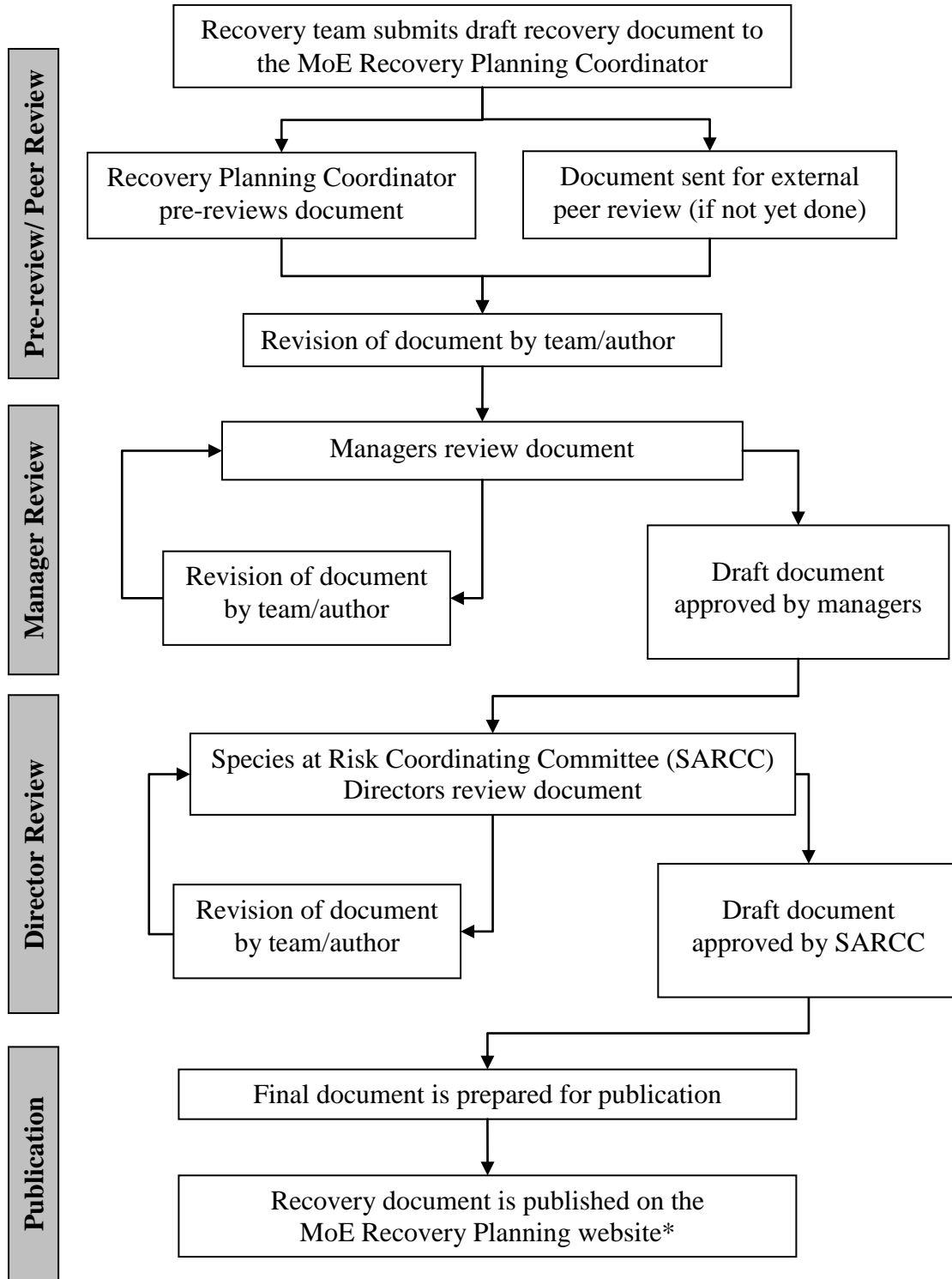


Figure 1. Process for review and publication of provincial recovery documents on the Ministry of Environment (MoE) [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#).

* Available for adoption by responsible federal agency and publication on SAR public registry.

4.2 Federal Adoption of a Provincial Recovery Document

Provincial recovery documents are made available to the Government of Canada for adoption and posting on the SARA registry

In the spirit of co-operation, final recovery documents published on the Ministry of Environment [Recovery Planning in B.C. website](#) are made available to the Government of Canada for adoption and posting on the [SAR public registry](#) as required (i.e., the target is legally listed under the *Species at Risk Act*).

Adopted provincial recovery documents are posted on the SAR public registry, without modification, as an appendix to an addition prepared by federal agencies to address outstanding requirements of the SARA. All recovery documents posted on the SAR public registry undergo a 60-day public comment period, after which the final version is posted.

4.3 Update of a Recovery Document

Recovery documents will be reviewed and updated

Recovery documents should be reviewed and updated as needed to incorporate new information. Any new information on the species or ecosystem and its recovery needs should be incorporated into the document at that time, or more frequently if warranted. Goals, objectives, and recovery approaches may need to be adjusted over time as more information is obtained.

5 IMPLEMENTING A RECOVERY PLAN

This chapter briefly addresses the shared stewardship approach that is necessary for successful implementation of recovery plans and encourages the review and tracking of recovery/management actions that have been accomplished.

5.1 Implementation of Actions

Success in the recovery/conservation of a species or ecosystem depends on the commitment and co-operation of many different constituencies that may be involved in implementing the directions set out in a recovery document. The B.C. Ministry of Environment encourages all British Columbians to participate in the recovery/conservation of species of conservation concern as part of a shared stewardship approach.

Agencies participating in recovery or conservation may fund specific recovery/management actions according to their areas of responsibility, priority, and budgetary capacity. Consultation with directly affected parties will be conducted through existing processes as actions are implemented. Implementation of actions at the Ministry of Environment will be guided by priority and management actions assigned under the Conservation Framework.

5.2 Tracking Actions

A regular review of the recovery/management actions accomplished and those actions still requiring completion should be completed by the recovery/management team and progress tracked for use by the Conservation Framework.