

Together for Wildlife - Interior Universities Research Coalition
Student Research Grant
Final Report

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Principal Investigator: Dr. Kevin Hanna

Project Title: Indigenous methods and cultural approaches for wildlife and habitat stewardship: A case study with Xeni Gwet'in First Nation

What has been achieved over the duration of this grant award period?

Several project milestones have been achieved over the duration of the grant award period. They are listed here according to the applied components (support Xeni Gwet'in in the design of their wildlife management strategy) and academic components (case study analysis of the Xeni Gwet'in wildlife management strategy).

Applied components completed include wildlife management strategy advisory team established; vision, goals, priorities, and objectives established; situational analysis and data review completed; and wildlife management strategy is nearing the final stages before publication. Two forthcoming outputs will be completed before end of the year for the direct benefit and utility of Xeni Gwet'in. The first is a summary report of the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area wildlife management setting, which provides Xeni Gwet'in with management recommendations which will be applied through the wildlife management strategy. The second is the published version of the wildlife management strategy. Community engagement and collaboration have been a cornerstone of the applied work, I have helped host/attended over 15 workshops, presentations, and community events related to wildlife management.

Academic components completed include research proposal approved my committee; comprehensive examinations passed; and the scope and focus of research outputs that will be explored by supporting Xeni Gwet'in in the design and implementation of their wildlife management strategy have been determined (discussed below).

How does this work contribute to the overall project objectives (i.e., to completion of your thesis?)

The work in supporting Xeni Gwet'in in the design and implementation of their wildlife management strategy (including the data review and recommendations report) will serve as the data for my thesis research. My thesis will include three research chapters, each will be published as a separate paper- the research data all comes from my role in support Xeni Gwet'in. The research papers are:

1. A toolbox for Indigenous-led conservation and co-management: this paper will discuss applied options (levers/tools) for Indigenous-led conservation and within co-management settings. This will be based on a best practices literature review which is being completed to identify management options for Xen Gwet'in.
2. Setting wildlife management objectives within landscapes of change and uncertainty: This paper will dig into the wildlife setting of the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area, focusing on the changing wildlife occupancy within the past 300 year (e.g., elk = no long occupy; moose = recently occupy (1900); wild horses = have occupied since mid 1700s). The paper will focus on how culturally appropriate wildlife management population objectives can be established within landscapes where species occupancy has shifted.
3. Indigenous-led conservation planning: a case study analysis of Xeni Gwet'in First Nation Wildlife Management Strategy. This paper will discuss how Indigenous-led/ regionally specific wildlife management planning can improve and avoid some of the issues associated with top-down

bureaucratic wildlife management. This paper will describe how Indigenous-led wildlife management planning can help build upon and achieve the goals listed within the Together for Wildlife Strategy.

How have you communicated about this project and work?

- **Within the academic community?**
- **With project partners including non-academic and community members?**
- **With government staff?**

Collaboration with Xeni Gwet'in community members, staff, and leadership has been vital to this project. The Xeni Gwet'in -UBC project team meets regularly in community and to spend time on the land. Likewise, multiple presentations have been completed for the community during this time.

As the Xeni Gwet'in wildlife management strategy has not been completed yet (including full approval by Chief and Council)- much of the work is currently confidential. This has limited the extent to which it has been discussed with government staff to date.

However, as we are approaching the final stages of wildlife management strategy design, more information will soon be released. Likewise, I am currently starting the writing stages of my thesis research, will be published and shared with the public and academic community. The initial findings will be shared at the T4W Research Symposium in December.

The non-academic community has been made aware of my project through several outreach outputs, including an article in the Wild Sheep Society of BC magazine and through an article on the UBC Centre for Environmental Assessment Research.

In January 2024, I will also travel to Reno Nevada for the annual Wild Sheep Foundation "Sheep Show" to share my research at the Life Membership Breakfast. This will share the scope of work being completed by Xeni Gwet'in with an international audience.

How have you fulfilled the commitments of your knowledge management plan?

All wildlife information review and data on the Xeni Gwet'in (XG) wildlife management strategy is guided by standards of ownership, control, access, and possession. This has been achieved through open dialogue with research partners from XG, assuring that consent is given for all information that will be included within this research (ownership), that information made public is neither confidential or sensitive (possession and control), and that findings are accurate in its representation of XG's intent, beliefs, and values (access and control). XG collaborators are being actively engaged throughout the entire lifetime of wildlife management strategy development and implementation, with an emphasis on results sharing

and validation. Prior to the finalization of any materials or results, everything is being reviewed by the XG wildlife management team, including the XG Nen Ch'eh (Land Code) Coordinator, Nenqay (Lands) Advisory Group (consisting of six community members involved in advising all XG land and resource decisions), XG leadership (Chief and Council), Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG) Biologist, and the TNG DTA Manager. All collaboration with XG, including standards of OCAP is framed within the University of British Columbia-TNG Knowledge Protocol Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding which guides the research process and provides that the values, needs, and expectations of XG are known and respected throughout the entirety of collaboration.

Where will the data and/or information collected from this project be stored?

The wildlife management strategy will be released by Xeni Gwet'in First Nation. Community wildlife and habitat data is being stored with the Tsilhqot'in National Government. Other wildlife data, such as provincial wildlife inventory surveys is stored at the Cariboo regional office for the Ministry of Lands, Waters, and Resource Stewardship. Subsequent research outputs (e.g. publications) will be made publicly available.

Please provide links to any publicly available information on or from your project:

<https://ok- Cear.sites.olt.ubc.ca/2022/04/12/jeff-nishima-millers-work-with-the-xeni-gwetin-first-nation-supports-indigenous-led-wildlife-management/>

<https://issuu.com/wildsheepfoundation/docs/ws23summerdigital/s/28500213>

Page 20: https://issuu.com/wildsheepsocietybc/docs/wild_sheep_society_bc_-_winter_2023

Budget Reporting

Budget Item	Details	Proposed Amount	Actual Amount	Comments
Workshops	Community workshops on wildlife management strategy design.	\$10,000	\$4000	More workshops are still planned.
Honoraria	Honoraria for community members and project partners.	\$4000	\$1000	Honoraria will be provided following project completion to the Xeni Gwet'in partners on the project team.
Extension products	Communication materials for XG, wildlife management strategy graphic design, and a short video production (currently being considered).	\$20,500	\$500	Forthcoming. Money was utilized (in house at UBC) to publish a project description on the CEAR website.
Travel and subsistence	Travel to Xeni Gwet'in community and workshops.	\$15,400	\$17,000	More time has been spent in the Xeni Gwet'in community than anticipated. Seed funding for travel was provided by Xeni Gwet'in to cover additional travel to community and workshops outside of community.