
What We Heard Report

CSTWS Symposium, Panel, and Workshop (13 April 2025)

Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, ON

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1. Introduction

The Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society (CSTWS) hosted the Wildlife Policy Symposium in Ottawa, ON, April 12-13, 2025. The symposium explored current trends in Canadian Wildlife Policy development and implementation from the perspectives of invited panelists and participants representing non-governmental (NGO) and governmental organizations, Indigenous Nations, academic researchers, and industry. Together, the group explored the following symposium theme:

As a professional organization, how can we make the transformative change needed to promote effective wildlife and ecosystem management and policy in a changing Canadian context, working with Indigenous and other partners?

Symposium speakers, a keynote speaker, and five invited panelists presented short talks on wildlife policy initiatives, and successes and challenges in promoting change over the two days. On the second day, the panelists and symposium attendees discussed specific questions related to policy development and implementation in a workshop world café format. The workshop questions aimed to help CSTWS identify means to expand its influence in wildlife policy, singly or in cooperation with other potential partners, and to share these ideas and approaches among participants. This report summarizes the symposium's approach and comments from the workshop, which were compiled as 'best practices' for influencing federal (and other jurisdictional) policy as an NGO. These symposium discussions helped to identify next steps for CSTWS, which are summarized at the end of this report.

2. Symposium Approach

The symposium comprised submitted talks on day one and a panel discussion on the following day. Submitted talks provided insights into various initiatives and challenges for wildlife policy development and implementation, through research; Indigenous, NGO and government conservation initiatives; and industry operations. A keynote by Dr. Christina Davy of Carleton University set the stage well, by describing the efforts to conserve Canadian bat species in the face of a rapidly spreading disease across Canada, white-nose syndrome.

The panel presentations on the second day provided tangible aspects of policy transformation from the professional experiences of the five invited panelists:

- Paul Okalik – Lead Specialist, Arctic – World Wildlife Fund
- Justina Ray– President and Senior Scientist, Wildlife Conservation Society

- Mark Boyce - Professor University of Alberta, Alberta Conservation Association Chair
- Marlene Liddle - Haida Nation Stewardship Director of Lands
- Justin Duncan- policy lawyer and consultant, CSTWS federal policy contractor

Panelists were asked to incorporate the following themes and subthemes into their presentations:

Themes:

1. Federal government role in wildlife management
2. Developing a voice to influence federal decisions or activities
3. Establishing and promoting good partnerships and stewardship
4. Taking specific actions: CSTWS's and other professional organizations' role in supporting on the ground action for conservation and management

Subthemes:

1. Influence of separate jurisdictional roles of provinces and territories, vs the federal government
2. Emerging influence of Indigenous governments (e.g., through Indigenous protected areas, self-governance and research projects)

During the afternoon workshop world café session, participants explored these topics further, drawing on the panelists' presentations and their own experiences in working with federal conservation policy. These discussions helped to identify specific areas where professional organizations like the CSTWS could work with other partnering organizations to promote more effective management of wildlife and ecosystems, on areas within and beyond Federal control, and through policy change or program / agency delivery change.

Four stations were established with a facilitator to guide discussion and record notes. Participants rotated through each of the four stations, discussing the themes identified above, and responded to the accompanying questions.

Theme 1: Federal Government Role in Wildlife Management

Recognizing that there is a shared responsibility, co-governance, or co-management arrangement in Canada between Federal, Provincial, and Indigenous governments:

- Are there examples where shared co-governance or co-management has benefited wildlife (e.g., migratory birds, environmental assessment, species at risk)?

- Are there examples where Indigenous science and land management practices have been effectively incorporated into Federal wildlife policy? Through what types of partnerships or policy mechanisms?
- Was there a role of professional organizations like CSTWS or other NGOs in situations where shared responsibilities have been attempted? What worked or did not?

Theme 2: Developing a Voice to Influence Federal Decisions or Activities

Recognizing the limitations of federal jurisdiction on non-Federal lands, and the various other organizations that can influence conservation on these lands:

- In your experience, what could the Federal government do to promote evidence-based, sound wildlife and ecosystem management in areas not on Federal lands?
- How can professional organizations and NGOs contribute to wildlife management and stewardship where Indigenous co-management and/or self-governance exists?
- What organizations and agencies inside the federal government have been key to access as part of your work (e.g., legislative branch, executive branch, public service)?
- How could professional organizations like CSTWS help to advocate for more Federal led legislation, regulations, stewardship initiatives? Which of these mechanisms have worked best in your experience?

Theme 3: Establishing and Promoting Good Partnerships and Stewardship

Recognizing that other groups do some of this work already (e.g., WCS-Canada conducting science, Nature Canada supporting coordination):

- What gaps exist in coordinating groups/organizations in advocacy work for wildlife and ecosystem management at the Federal level?
- Are there gaps in engagement with the Federal government specifically (e.g., bringing branches of Federal government together), or are they related to bringing people from other non-governmental agencies together?
- How can professional organizations like CSTWS and other NGOs support evidence-based management efforts (e.g., through science development, science dissemination, policy development, etc.)?
- What mechanisms can we use to translate research and management experience into training/development from science programs, policy programs, and Indigenous management perspectives?

Theme 4: Taking Specific Actions: CSTWS's and other professional organizations' role in supporting on-the-ground action for wildlife conservation and management

Based on your experiences in wildlife and land management work, how can research, management, or teaching professionals contribute more effectively to this work?

- What specific barriers need to be addressed to improve wildlife and ecosystem management in Canada?
- How can wildlife professionals, Indigenous communities and other NGOs work with government agencies and legislation more effectively?
- What processes are needed to engage the branches of government, agencies, or people identified above (e.g., conferences, position papers, new research areas)?
- What training gaps exist? How do we develop high-quality wildlife policy advocates and what skills are needed to navigate this new political context (e.g., public communication skills, collaboration skills to work across disciplines and with youth, Indigenous, and other communities)?
- How can professional organizations like CSTWS work with Indigenous experts to address problems together and incorporate co-creation of knowledge in a meaningful way? How must current processes change?

3. What We Heard

Notes captured during the world café were transcribed from flip charts and were used to summarize key comments and suggestions related to each of the four themes. Appendix A provides the compiled notes from participants' discussions at each of the four theme stations. Key points and suggestions for next steps are summarized for each theme and associated sub-questions below. Analysis of this discussion helped to identify some best practices related to conservation policy efforts by NGOs in Canada. These best practices are summarized in Section 4 and informed the next steps for CSTWS to be more active in this space, provided in Section 5.

Theme 1. Federal Government Role in Wildlife Management

1. Examples where shared responsibility has benefited wildlife?

Past examples of beneficial, shared management depend on the definition of benefits and success (e.g., organizational collaboration, improved conservation outcomes?). Examples provided highlighted the importance of involvement of relevant parties, and a shared understanding of desired outcomes. For example, in work on wetlands and turtle mortality in Ottawa: key players were identified (e.g., NGOs, federal government and National Capital Commission), federal funding was supplied, and government permit writers and

others were involved in surveys, which contributed to informed decisions (organizational collaboration).

The Nunavut Treaty, on the other hand requires territorial Wildlife Board input to federal regulatory decisions, thereby establishing a framework of organizational collaboration. However, the Chair is appointed by the federal government, and could be perceived to be biased, despite doing good management work. The federal government retains decision-making power, and other factors are balanced against input from the Wildlife Board. The resulting decisions may not achieve consensus, despite efforts for inclusion of all relevant parties.

2. Examples where Indigenous science and land management practices have been effectively incorporated into federal wildlife policy? What types of partnerships or policy mechanisms?

A few examples were provided in this discussion. The Seal River Watershed Planning proposed by four First Nations resulted in protection of 40,000 km² by legislation via the Seal River Watershed Alliance. Participants noted that member organizations each have a niche of expertise in such initiatives. Organizations that understand their capacity, resources and potential contributions and are able to articulate their positions effectively can increase visibility and form effective collaborative initiatives.

3. Was there a role of professional organizations like CSTWS and other NGOs in situations where shared responsibilities have been attempted? What worked or did not? [This question was reframed by participants to provide advice to CSTWS on creating its own niche and expanding its influence.]

CSTWS should start small and use existing structures and connections to help reach decision makers. For example, the Conservation Affairs Committee can prioritize initiatives and decide how to implement them. Existing networks and connections to individuals and organizations can help promote concerns and potential solutions (e.g., the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS) has a connection to an Alberta NDP Opposition MLA with environmental interests; and CSTWS has connections with the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee, which represents provincial and territorial wildlife agency managers). Note though, that implementation of conservation priorities must be negotiated with the membership, based on explanation of goals and means, to gain their informed consent and support for partnering arrangements.

Other suggestions included leveraging members' knowledge and expertise as expert witnesses and for public talks. Supporting and encouraging access to qualified individuals

by creating a list of experts and posting on the CSTWS website would build a reputation for expert and professional advice.

Theme 2: Developing a Voice to Influence Federal Decisions or Activities

1. In your experience, what could the federal government do to promote evidence-based, sound wildlife and ecosystem management in areas not on federal lands?

In general, participants felt federal government staff and agencies should be encouraged to embrace a leadership role, rather than serving only as facilitators. This approach requires the federal government to have (a) a bold, well communicated vision, (b) critical thinking in synthesis and reporting, and (c) accountability, reflected in their mandate, hiring, organizational structure, and accountability processes, which is supported by stable funding mechanisms. The federal government's role should also include facilitating coordination among provinces.

2. How can professional organizations and NGOs contribute to wildlife management and stewardship where Indigenous co-management and/or self-governance exists?

Participants noted that pressure from organizations like CSTWS can promote action toward shared management goals in areas where Indigenous management or governance applies. For example, as with this symposium, CSTWS could obtain funding, hire experts, hold meetings or investigate current wildlife management issues and / or stewardship opportunities, and share results publicly. Public debate of potential solutions, and potential partnering organizations can build popular support and understanding of management alternatives. Other initiatives could include building partnerships and strengthening conservation and Indigenous networks through targeted letters to government (especially to a new government), or communication procedures that identify concerns and alert members and affiliated organizations. Participants in several theme discussions noted though, that letters to elected officials alone are not as effective as efforts to promote open discussion and broader awareness of issues.

3. What organizations and agencies inside the federal government have been key to access as part of your work?

Participants identified a broad range of federal departments and agencies with whom have worked, or who they perceived, could be helpful for wildlife conservation initiatives. These organizations included Canadian Culture and Parks, ISED – NSERC, ECCC Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, DFO, Infrastructure Canada, Department

of Finance, DND, CSW Science and Technical Biodiversity Unit, Public Service, National Capital Commission, and any department or Crown corporation.

4. How could professional organizations like CSTWS help to advocate for more federal led legislation, regulations, stewardship initiatives? Which mechanisms have worked best in your experience?

While some existing legislation (e.g., the federal Species at Risk Act, SARA) does not adequately protect wildlife habitat, participants recognized the need to work with existing tools to promote solutions, including collaborations with other organizations. Participants noted the expertise gap that can exist within land management agencies: necessary specialists may not be accessible within agencies, but trust-building is needed to ensure external contributions are heard. Other methods discussed include the following:

- **Government lobbying efforts:** Targeted letters do not work well but do create a paper trail. Introductory letters to agencies, MPs or Ministers, explaining the group's mandate and asking to meet can be more effective. Input into government finance committees in particular has been helpful.
- **Public outreach:** Outreach that builds public awareness and support is also important (e.g., media, film, op-eds and other public and media communications, or events). It is critical to have a 'hook' for engaging ministers or the public service as well as the public, which means messaging must be accessible. Outreach requires skill in blending art, storytelling and science (e.g., the Signal Fire film shown at this event).
- **Amplifying efforts of others:** Support for collaborative projects (e.g., films, books, events) can reach a broader audience about a particular issue, by combining the communications, scientific and funding expertise and networks of partner organizations. Consider advertising and public outreach that can celebrate successes and inspire others (e.g., a conservation success story). Example partners might include educational organizations (e.g., Royal Alberta Museum, Nature Alberta, Royal Ontario Museum, Canadian biospheres), filmmakers, and writers. Even undergraduate classes could be used to develop a public awareness project; some participants shared stories of broad public interest generated by student projects.

Note that external tensions among environmental organizations, such as competition for funding are challenges to collaboration. Work-arounds include actively exploring synergies, and developing collaboration skills to build trust with potential partners.

Theme 3: Establishing and Promoting Good Partnerships and Stewardship

Many existing groups and organizations are working in conservation today, and, as noted in the Theme 2 discussion, establishing and building partnerships can be a challenge, despite implicit benefits. This theme discussed some of the challenges and approaches to building effective partnerships.

1. What gaps exist in coordinating groups/organizations in advocacy work for wildlife and ecosystem management at the federal level?

Participants noted that many conservation groups are small, operate on limited funding, and work in local or regional areas (e.g., Canadian Biosphere Reserves). A lack of CSTWS and TWS Chapter representation in eastern and northern Canada is a limitation for growing partnerships with local groups. However, participants recognized value in having additional unbiased expert voices at the table, including science-based organizations, to generate solutions, connect with federal agencies, and present collaborative solutions. A key barrier to coordination is the lack of an accessible platform or venue for connection and sharing information. Also, government agencies and staff might be blocked from open communication due to confidentiality concerns or departmental communication bans, thus limiting their participation in collaborative programs. Annual conferences exist to provide collaborative venues, but more frequent meetings would be beneficial to build connections and share ideas among science-based government and professional organizations and conservation groups.

CPAWS may offer a potential governance model useful to CSTWS, with a focus on a coordination role that brings organizations together through more frequent meetings or joint initiatives. TWS certification was also discussed as a mechanism for unifying the wildlife profession across Canada. To be successful, the benefits of certification to industry and professionals must be clear (“certification must mean something”). Involving schools and institutions in promoting certification would also be useful.

2. Are there gaps in engagement with the Federal government specifically (e.g., bringing branches of Federal government together), or are gaps related to bringing people from other non-governmental agencies together?

Understanding with whom to engage with is a challenge in working with any government agency. Government websites are not helpful for identifying key contacts, especially with frequent department reorganizations and movement of people across positions. Engagement relies on relationships with individuals who can provide influence, information, or additional connections, and frequent departmental changes can disrupt longer term initiatives, in particular. The current US political situation is a major challenge,

as government agencies have other priorities than conservation, which affects initiatives, funding, and staff resources.

The federal government policymakers typically do not solicit information from conservation organizations, and manage them as stakeholders rather than potential collaborators with expertise to share. Some governmental agencies assume sole 'ownership' of the natural resources they are mandated to manage, an attitude reinforced by resource legislation wording that assigns resource ownership and management responsibilities to the Crown. As a result, some agencies are reluctant to share decision-making power by involving external organizations, and rely more on internal information and expertise.

Potential solutions suggested to bridge these gaps included the following:

- Use professional networks to find the right government contact or 'champion'. This approach requires a broad network to connect with gatekeepers who can facilitate introductions as well as access to government policy makers and potential partners outside of government.
- Use science publishing and other means of communication and/or public engagement to promote expertise or alternative management solutions that can prompt government agencies to seek out external partners or experts. Such efforts could be from an academic research or applied management perspective, promoted through a partnership of organizations and/or researchers. As a participant noted, "people are drawn to a collective voice when leadership is shown."
- Every issue has its own path toward a solution, which requires a unique strategy. Prioritize issues to provide focus and leverage internal resources effectively. Identification of priority areas of concern for an organization, and the resources it can offer creates a 'value proposition' that can attract potential partners. "Pop-up issues" can be dealt with if resources are available but can also be a distraction. Identifying and maintaining focus maximizes effectiveness of efforts.
- Foster existing or new partnerships with potential partners (NGOs, industry organizations or Indigenous and other government agencies) and periodically evaluate partnerships for continual improvement.

3. How can professional organizations like CSTWS and other NGOs support evidence-based management efforts (e.g., through science development, science dissemination, policy development, etc.)?

CSTWS has access to resources that can generate and share science-based information through established communications platforms and share information among and on behalf of partner organizations, once they are identified. For example:

- TWS journals and publications, discussion papers, technical reviews, and position statements can promote and amplify member biologist, or other organizations' science, management proposals or conservation successes.
- Consider expanding beyond current communications to develop and promote Best Practices publications on key management topics, thereby drawing on member expertise or collaborations with partner organizations.
- Member biologists belong to other organizations that form an extended network of potential connections for funding, access to decision-makers, or connections to other potential partner organizations. Creating processes that can draw on member networks to address key management topics of concern can help leverage resources for prioritized issues. Look to other organizations for examples of how to set up such systems (e.g., TWS in USA, or other international industry and conservation groups in the EU and Australia).
- CSTWS and Provincial Chapter meetings offer opportunities for public interactions, and sharing of research and conservation initiatives to broader audiences (e.g., by making presentations publicly available, or generating and sharing symposium reports, including this report).

4. What mechanisms can we use to translate research and management experience into training/development from science programs, policy programs, and Indigenous management perspectives?

Suggestions largely focused on public-facing (accessible) communication and training programs.

- Encourage students and members of organizations to write or prepare popular communications on conservation or policy topics to raise profile of specific issues, and the wildlife profession (e.g., for conservation magazines and newsletters).
- Incorporate public communication training in undergraduate and technical school curricula to build both scientific and accessible communication skills.
- Prepare short videos highlighting graduate student research to share with funders, and put these videos on CSTWS and other organization websites to raise profile of the organization as well as conservation research and management initiatives.
- Support training of Indigenous Guardians and promote the results of such programs.

- Create mentorship and training opportunities for exchange of information and management perspectives for students, practitioners, and/or the public (e.g., through education and EDI workshops, training days, project tours).
- Support citizen science initiatives, such as getting citizens involved in camera trap data collection and analysis.
- Encourage government and potential funders to attend events or wildlife projects (e.g., reintroduction release events, bioblitzes).
- Use existing award programs or create new awards to help recognize initiatives and promote successes and work of researchers, conservation managers and communicators (e.g., “National Champion in Wildlife Conservation” recognition at CSTWS AGMs and annual meetings).
- Collaborate with other partner organizations to comment on management or policy issues together, with “one voice”.

Theme 4: Taking Specific Actions: CSTWS’s and other professional organizations’ role in supporting on-the-ground action for wildlife conservation and management

1. What specific barriers need to be addressed to improve wildlife and ecosystem management in Canada?

Comments focused on two separate issues related directly and indirectly to accountability:

- Management policies such as EIA and cumulative effect assessment approaches, which focus on individual projects and rather than strategic regional land management.
- A reluctance to engage with Indigenous peoples, including recognition of Indigenous Protected and Conservation Areas (IPACs), and slow follow-through on industry commitments to Indigenous Nations, or overuse of economic benefits to gain consent of Indigenous Nations for development.

2. How can wildlife professionals, Indigenous communities and other NGOs work with government agencies and legislation more effectively?

Recognize the limitations and constraints linked to management issues and find champions and partner organizations to help frame the context and issue to best present problems and recruit relevant expertise to solve them. Inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and co-creation of issue and management framing can build a broader basis of support for action and may also produce innovative solutions.

3. What processes are needed to engage the branches of government, agencies, or people identified above (e.g., conferences, position papers, new research areas)?

One-on-one engagement with individual agencies has worked well for some participants, as have issue-specific initiatives (e.g., marine mammal conservation initiatives). CSTWS is not well known in the broader population; therefore a first step is to create more awareness of the organization. Consider expanding the membership base to include NGOs, government agencies and corporations to broaden perspectives and connections.

4. What training gaps exist? How do we develop high-quality wildlife policy advocates and what skills are needed to navigate this new political context (e.g., public communication skills, collaboration skills to work across disciplines and with youth, Indigenous and other communities)?

Accessible and context appropriate science communication is a key gap in training for students, researchers, and practitioners. Most wildlife professionals do not have training in translating science for effective communication for audiences with differing goals and perspectives, an essential skill to find common ground to build consensus. An understanding of how policy is developed and implemented is also necessary to advocate for change effectively. Science alone is not the only factor influencing policy.

Developing high-quality wildlife policy advocates can start by recruiting interest in the wildlife profession from more diverse groups, including high school students and Indigenous communities. Field-based experiences to build an understanding and interest in wildlife and conservation, and support to Indigenous Guardians programs can help develop field skills and system-based understandings vital to conservation management. Training in policy as part of undergraduate and post-graduate training and internships that offer practical experience with policy (e.g., in government organizations, consulting, and resource industries) can build an understanding of the competing interests affecting policy implementation and processes for change.

Developing employment opportunities that promote workplace satisfaction, and peer mentoring can help with retention of experienced practitioners in the field and foster the depth of experience to make change. Policy and resource management experience, for example, requires progressive exposure to different scenarios to understand fully the challenges and weaknesses in existing systems, and to build the network of resources necessary to influence change.

5. How can professional organizations like CSTWS work with Indigenous experts to address problems together and incorporate co-creation of knowledge in a meaningful way? How must current processes change?

Indigenous communities and the interests, expertise and resources within them vary across Canada. The first step in working with a given Nation is to recognize these regional differences and the influence of historical interactions with governments and non-Indigenous communities. That context has and will continue to shape specific community interests and capacity to work together on an initiative. Co-creation of knowledge about a management concern and potential solutions can be more effective than offering to address the problem based on Western science only. Co-creation offers incentives for Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties to participate, particularly if both sides are open and adaptable to the process and outcomes.

Initial proposals should follow established lines of communication through Chief and Council for discussion and approval, with a dedicated long-term commitment to relationship-building and meaningful engagement. Look for (or support or create) opportunities with Indigenous groups and self-governing Nations to draft policy for joint presentation to government built on comparison of priorities and solutions.

4. Best Practices

This symposium highlighted various methods of policy influence from the perspectives of organizations active in conservation work in Canada. Through workshop discussions, these perspectives generated Best Practices, or lessons learned that can help CSTWS and other organizations who wish to contribute to conservation through policy change.

The narrative below summarizes methods discussed by participants and comments on the effectiveness of these approaches in driving change. In general, the methods fell into four categories: advocacy, communication, partnership, and training. Each category had suggestions that could be implemented by CSTWS or other similar organizations as appropriate to their interests, resources, and spheres of influence.

Advocacy

Advocacy approaches ranged from active participation in policy and management (e.g., in policy decisions or government management initiatives) to indirect influence as expert advisors to government, agencies, and the public. Advocacy through unsolicited comment (e.g., letters to Ministers) was not seen as effective, particularly if no relationship with a Minister or broader recognition of the organization existed previously. Approaches varied by organization, and were dependent on existing government-managed mechanisms for active participation in policy and management. In all cases, resource demands were a

challenge, as financial support was limited to the organization's own human and financial resources, or funding available for short-term program initiatives. For example, ENGOs, professional organizations, Indigenous land management agencies, and academic researchers were each dependent on internal funding or grants to sustain their participation in policy development or land management activities. Changes in government, political direction, or staff made government projects vulnerable to cancellation or redirection, while processes that mandate Indigenous participation (e.g., co-management at Haida Gwaii, or EIA processes in Nunavut) had more sustained and meaningful input.

Mechanisms of policy influence used by participant organizations included consultation for policy development projects led by the federal government, land management initiatives arising from Indigenous co-management, or applied research conducted with government agencies. Indigenous organizations participating in the symposium have had good success in promoting and incorporating their interests and perspectives in such initiatives. Co-management and legislative requirements for consultation provide a regulatory pathway to discuss land and resource management relative to cultural, economic, and scientific objectives of all parties, and such approaches are more likely to achieve consensus on management decisions. This success is particularly true when communities have internal consensus on development goals. However, as Paul Okalik mentioned in his talk, where management decisions are ultimately held by another jurisdiction with lower weighting of conservation objectives, consensus can be more difficult to reach.

Academic researchers felt they had mixed success in incorporating their findings into policy development and resource management, again because decision-making is held by governments attempting to balance scientific evidence against other social and economic needs. Research can inform, but not necessarily drive policy directions. Changes in governmental partnerships on joint research projects, due to staff turnover or redirection of funding objectives was another challenge for researchers. Sustained program support is necessary to explore ecological management impacts, which may materialize over longer timeframes. Initial results provided to decision-makers may inadvertently lead to unintended management or policy impacts.

ENGOs have had some success in influencing policy change after participating in multiple consultation events for policy or project reviews. Ongoing participation in specific issues also helps establish credibility and expertise, thus leading to inclusion on future consultation events. This approach requires sustained effort (and passion) by dedicated personnel, and adequate funding for participation (e.g., for travel, supporting research).

Case-by case, or longer term partnering between groups like CSTWS and NGO groups advocating for shared goals may help promote change through shared expertise, resources and credibility. Such partnerships can also help build ‘voice’ and reputation for CSTWS.

Industry organizations have means to develop standards on their own, legitimized by their professional standing (e.g., presentations on Sustainable Forest Initiative and Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) best management initiatives). Expert testimony by professionals or applied research by academics independent of government programs can also have influence, as suggested by some symposium speakers. However, expert testimony is by invitation and limited to select professionals or researchers with recognized expertise, as well as case-specific opportunities offered by project reviews or policy consultation. Support to industry associations is typically also through consultants, industry professionals and researchers with recognized expertise. Given the prevalence of ‘misinformation’ and ‘junk science’, helping to raise awareness of available expertise and credible experts available in professional organizations like CSTWS is a form of indirect advocacy. Suggestions from workshop participants included developing and sharing lists of expert witnesses as contacts for specific issues. Similarly, supporting development of or promoting industry guidance documents developed by society members or industry associations can build a reputation as a source of credible information to support management. These suggestions are discussed further under the next section, Communication.

Suggested actions for CSTWS and other organizations interested in expanding their advocacy influence included the following:

- Seek opportunities to participate in shared decision making through joint projects and land management activities led by Canada, other levels of government and/or Indigenous governments.
- Explore opportunities to participate in activities of existing connections (e.g., territorial Wildlife Management Boards, and Canadian Wildlife Directors Association) as expert advisors.
- Engage in Federal regulatory decision making, for example provide input at government finance committee meetings.
- Promote stable funding mechanisms for wildlife and conservation concerns.
- Identify and engage politicians open to building working relationships. Organizations with charitable status may be able to use fundraising initiatives to foster better relationships (e.g., through fundraising for specific projects).
- Promote and host public talks.
- Get funding to hire experts to build reports addressing specific concerns.
- Develop and promote a list of experts as potential expert witnesses or policy advisors.

Communication

Academic research that is shared with the public by researchers and industry associations was mentioned by several participants and speakers as means to build the political, industry and public support needed for adoption of improved management techniques, and potentially also management funding. Persuasive public communication is dependent on communication skills and the speaker's ability to translate technical information effectively to non-technical audiences. As noted during symposium talks, university and technical science programs have not traditionally included training in public communication. Public communication is also not typically part of most professional or researcher roles. Developing effective communication skills and encouraging outreach by those who can communicate effectively to broader audiences can help inform and mobilize public opinion for more political leverage. Newly emerging partnership opportunities such as UNESCO biosphere reserves offer means to present to broader audiences, as well as involving the public in research and management through citizen science.

Suggested communication actions for CSTWS and other organizations to consider included the following:

- Increase development and promotion of CSTWS policy-based publications (e.g., policy statements and analysis).
- Host meetings to investigate specific management issues and stewardship opportunities with other organizations, researchers and agencies (similar to this symposium).
- Promote Best Practices and policy position publications on key management topics generated by other science-based and industry organizations.
- Promote successful management outcomes and stewardship activities of other organizations, governments, and agencies to share 'best management' and promote management creativity and innovation.
- Create alerts to members and partners to raise awareness of 'hot button' issues.
- Create processes that can draw on member networks to identify key topics of concern and leverage resources to address prioritized issues. Look to other similar organizations for examples of how to set up such systems.
- Promote more public engagement at CSTWS and Provincial Chapter meetings.
- Support other forms of public engagement such as citizen science initiatives, built on research or management projects, or larger initiatives (e.g., Biodiversity Bioblitz events).

- Encourage popular communications on conservation or policy topics by CSTWS members, and the wildlife profession more broadly. Engage with ‘storytellers’ who can help communicate about wildlife management issues with broader audiences. Examples included supporting filmmakers directly, or through film festivals, as well as books, podcasts, or other media.
- Prepare short videos highlighting graduate student research, conservation research, and management initiatives to share with funders, government agencies and the public.
- Use existing award programs or create new awards to help recognize communication initiatives and promote successes and work of researchers, conservation managers, and communicators.

Partnership

The need for sustained funding and the human and social capital (trust, networks, and reputation) necessary to be effective in improving wildlife conservation was raised by many participants. Partnering with other organizations that have similar management concerns can help amplify issues, leverage existing contacts or access to key decision makers and funders, or build on existing initiatives. The organizations and researchers participating in this symposium had strong interest in working together toward shared objectives, which would require building a deeper understanding of each other’s resources, capacity, and key areas of interest.

Suggestions raised regarding partnerships with CSTWS and other organizations included the following:

- Collaborate with other partner organizations to comment on management or policy issues together, with “one voice”.
- Connect with other organizations to build an extended network with access to funding, statutory decision makers, researchers, etc.
- Expand CSTWS’s presence to currently unrepresented areas (e.g., eastern and northern Canada).
- Identify government agencies and industry organizations receptive to CSTWS professional and research expertise (e.g., BC Wildlife Collision program, Transportation Association of Canada).

Education/Training

Familiarity with or development of new management techniques would be necessary to describe and address emerging wildlife conservation concerns. Workshop discussion and several symposium talks recognized the need to develop ‘ecological literacy’ among members of the public, politicians, and government agencies to build support for

conservation efforts. Support for training of young professionals and active practitioners would help develop the expertise and resources needed to implement management programs. Inclusive training that brings underrepresented groups into the wildlife profession can broaden the perspectives of the wildlife profession relative to concerns of the public.

Suggestions raised regarding training for CSTWS and other organizations included the following:

- Support training of Indigenous Guardians and promote the results of such programs.
- Create mentorship and training opportunities for exchange of information and management perspectives among students, practitioners, and/or the public (e.g., through education and EDI workshops, training days, project tours).
- Support citizen science initiatives for research and management.
- Encourage government and potential funders to attend events or wildlife projects (e.g., reintroduction release events, bioblitzes).

5. Next Steps

This symposium and the workshop generated many ideas that CSTWS could use to expand its participation in wildlife policy and management in Canada. The central theme was education and public awareness, through training sessions or demonstration projects, and collaborations with other organizations. These approaches were thought to promote management change more effectively than lobbying efforts to politicians and senior bureaucrats, and they fit well with CSTWS's mandate, resources, and potential sphere of influence.

CSTWS, as a part of The Wildlife Society (TWS) and through connections to established Provincial and Student Chapters across Canada has internal resources that could be tapped for these initiatives. These resources include the Conservation Affairs Network represented at the TWS, Section and Provincial Chapter levels, that have been active in conservation advocacy but could also collaborate with other NGOs on specific policy initiatives or conservation projects. Other committees at the CSTWS and Provincial Chapter level are active in member education, training, Indigenous awareness and public outreach, all of which were identified as high impact areas during this symposium.

Yet, resources are limited within these TWS groups, as in similar organizations; therefore prioritizing sustainable initiatives would be key. Initiatives consistent with the mandate of CSTWS would be more readily supported by members and with necessary resources. The mandate of CSTWS includes providing expert advice to inform policy initiatives, offer student and professional training, and build public and member awareness and trust in

wildlife management science. Suggestions for advocacy, communication, partnership, and training arising from this symposium fit well with this mandate.

CSTWS updated its 5-year Strategic Plan just prior to this symposium (April 2025), and it identified initiatives that could incorporate the findings and suggestions arising from this symposium. The CSTWS Executive Board will use this report to identify Advocacy, Communication, Partnership, and Training activities compatible with the Strategic Plan. The Board can work with its committees and those of Canadian Chapters, or TWS, to build on existing programs and resources, where synergies exist.

Specific initiatives that CSTWS could explore include the following:

- Work with the Conservation Affairs Committees (CACs) at the Canadian Section and Provincial Chapter levels to develop partnerships with other NGOs active in conservation advocacy.
- Work with the Education; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and conference organizing committees to develop and promote talks, training seminars and dedicated conference sessions on policy topics, including critiques, successful policy and conservation projects. Cross promote these opportunities with other NGO organizations with which partnerships are established and growing.
- Work together with Provincial and Student Chapters to promote training in policy development for professionals and students (e.g., strategic planning methods, legislation, co-management) through talks, training sessions, or dedicated conference sessions.
- Foster cross-organizational collaboration on specific issues or policies through symposia and joint conferences, including work with Indigenous groups.
- Amplify the work by individuals and organizations that are promoting new management approaches and research to CSTWS members and ideally also to government agencies (e.g., developing Best Management Practices and Guidelines; developing resources distributed through CSTWS and other TWS organizational webpages).

Specific next steps for the CSTWS policy initiative include the following:

1) Present findings from this symposium at the upcoming TWS Conference in Edmonton in October 2025. A symposium on this initiative is part of the conference program. It will start with an opening talk that includes a summary of findings from the commissioned policy primer by Justin Duncan (*A Federal Advocacy Primer*), the Ottawa symposium, and this *What We Heard* report. The rest of the symposium includes invited talks and one

contributed talk that highlight examples of policy change efforts through advocacy, communication, partnerships and training.

2) Circulate this report to the workshop speakers and participants to share observations and encourage additional comments. This follow-up would also foster relationships initiated with these participants and CSTWS through the Ottawa symposium.

3) Share findings and suggestions in this report with the CSTWS Executive Board and TWS executive and staff, including the TWS Conservation Affairs Network, to build on internal strategic initiatives that could enhance CSTWS participation in wildlife policy and management in Canada.

4) Update initiatives in the current CSTWS Strategic Plan resulting from these internal discussions. These updated initiatives would be shared with the CSTWS membership and Canadian Provincial Chapters to inform and recruit support and participation in implementing finalized initiatives.

Appendix 1. Symposium Discussion Notes

Symposium Notes from the World Café discussions of four themes about engagement with federal government agencies and policy makers on wildlife management follow, transcribed verbatim from session notes.

Theme 1: Federal Government Role in Wildlife Management

Recognizing that there is a shared responsibility in Canada between Federal, Provincial, and Indigenous governments:

1. Are there examples where shared responsibility has benefited wildlife (e.g., migratory birds, environmental assessment, species at risk)?

-Depends on perspectives (e.g. successful co-management in the north depends on which side of the table you're on)

-Example 1. Wetlands and turtle road mortality – identified key players and brought government permit writer to the field, plus NGOs to help with surveys with money from the city of Ottawa, National Capital Commission, Crown Corporation, feds and identified key people and levers

-Example 2. Nunavut Treaty

– The federal government can't regulate and must go through a Wildlife Board. The downside is the Chair is appointed by the government, but the board is good and helps to manage the population of whales and holds hearings.

-Habitat protection

-Legislated enforcement must go through the Board

Example 3. Bottom-up management with MECP-COSSARO – but the final decision is made by the Minister.

2. Are there examples where Indigenous science and land management practices have been effectively incorporated into Federal wildlife policy? Through what types of partnerships or policy mechanisms?

-Seal River Watershed Planning – proposed by four First Nations for protection with legislation

-Seal River Watershed Alliance

-40,000 square kilometers that will get protection

-All organizations have their niches

-What is the niche for CSTWS (need to increase visibility)

3. Was there a role of professional organizations like CSTWS or other NGOs in situations where shared responsibilities have been attempted? What worked or did not?

How to choose priorities as CSTWS?

- start small
 - Conservation Affairs Committee – discuss how to put ideas forward and which ones
 - Sarah Elmelegi can bring things onto the Alberta Opposition MLA floor at the legislature (has been a champion for ACTWS)
 - WWF plays a supportive role, specifically in that the communities don't have resources in Nunavut, and WWF provides experts and resources
 - It must be negotiated control
 - Look at the details and explain to membership so they can make informed consent
- How to get to the table?
- Expert witness through membership expertise
 - Expert lists on website
 - Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee
 - increase connections
 - get on speaking list for government committees and meetings
 - Mentorship needs to be increased throughout the organizations – increased awareness of CSTWS, especially in areas without professional certification
 - Start with mentorship on connections that already exist

Theme 2: Developing a Voice to Influence Federal Decisions or Activities

Recognizing the limitations of federal jurisdiction on non-Federal lands, and the various other organizations that can influence conservation on these lands:

1. In your experience, what could the Federal government do to promote evidence-based, sound wildlife and ecosystem management in areas not on Federal lands?

- the federal government could be leaders – embracing leadership – leaders not facilitators
- need (a) bold vision, well communicated; (b) critical thinking in synthesis and reporting (c) accountability in reporting
- hiring
- mandate
- organizational structure
- facilitate coordination between provinces
- ensure accountability – Ministers councils

-stable funding mechanisms

-long-term

2. How can professional organizations and NGOs contribute to wildlife management and stewardship where Indigenous co-management and/or self-governance exists?

- pressure from civic organization

-what can CSTWS do? – get funding, hire people, hold meetings, “what we heard” report, targeted letter at new government, focused priorities, collaborative watch dogs/alerts, build partnerships, strengthen conservation network and Indigenous networks

3. What organizations and agencies inside the federal government have been key to access as part of your work (e.g., legislative branch, executive branch, public service)?

-Canadian culture and identity and parks

-ISED – NSERC

-ECCC Impact Assessment (IAAC)

-DFO – infrastructure Canada and other departments

-NR – Dept of Finance

-DND

-Canadian Directors Council, Western Council, 3 to 4 levels of senior wildlife managers, West Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

-Cernac/INAC – Northern Indigenous Affairs

-Departments such as CWS Science and Tech Biodiversity Unit

-Public Service

-Any department or Crown corporation

-National Capital Commission

4. How could professional organizations like CSTWS help to advocate for more Federal led legislation, regulations, stewardship initiatives? Which of these mechanisms have worked best in your experience?

-targeted letters don't work well, but leaves a paper trail

-graded response/public or not

-letter of who we are and ask to meet – mandate letters response

-Paul will deploy MPs – request Zoom meeting with ministers

- Input to finance committee
- Make this work accessible to federal workers
- Hook for engaging ministers or public service
 - meetings/invites to meeting
 - invites to ministers
 - media, films, social media, opeds...public communications – radio/CBC/podcasts
 - events – outside for public service
 - promote media like Signal Fire to agencies, schools and universities
 - prompt other collaborative projects
 - consider advertising and public outreach (pd films/ads) – celebrate successes and inspire others
- ACCESSIBLE outreach – blend art, storytelling and science – Signal Fire example
 - collaborate with educational groups, such as Royal AB museum, Nature AB, etc.
 - film nights (Singing Back Buff), etc.
 - use to connect biologists and public
 - use small theatres to help promote
 - use UG(?) classes to do this as project
- SARA – tool that we have but it’s not the tool we need (e.g. habitat conservation) – but how do we work with the tools we have?
- external tensions between environmental organizations – competitive environment (funding, recognition, etc.) but challenge for collaboration = scarcity environment
 - pause and find synergies
 - improve collaboration skills
- Areas off federal lands
- gap between land management agencies and expertise – fill the gap

Theme 3: Establishing and Promoting Good Partnerships and Stewardship

Recognizing that other groups do some of this work already (e.g., WCS-Canada conducting science, Nature Canada supporting coordination):

- What gaps exist in coordinating groups/organizations in advocacy work for wildlife and ecosystem management at the Federal level?

-Lack of communication among organizing NGO's (ideas?) operating at the national level

-gaps:

-talks

-talks about Indigenous and industry

-working with biosphere

-small organizations working in local areas (a lot of small groups left out of conservation that are doing hands-on work)

-teaching – small organizations provide good opportunities for entry-level jobs (solutions – identify all groups...sit down and talk to each other, slow down, build connections)

-not a good platform for all groups to communicate with each other – an annual conference isn't good enough (suggested solutions – invite them to CSTWS/TWS meetings, invite the small organizations too)

-funds – small NGOs don't have sufficient funding and are missing work - logistics are challenging (suggested solution – have more local/AB policy meeting only – scale down to local level; why was CAC created? Need to operate CAC at three different levels – local, provincial, federal)

-government and gag orders – government employees can't speak out or participate (solution – need to use CAC/advocacy to speak for government employees)

-need more voices at the table

-lack of representation in eastern Canada (language laws in wildlife, disconnect between provinces)

-bringing everyone together - Strathmere...group – big NGO (during election, bring together climate change)

-bringing together all the SCIENCE-based groups – if we don't have a solution, they may

-CPAWS – potential governance model – could do the same for CSTWS – coordination role

-certification – way to unify across Canada – BC/ASPB – how can we bridge the two certifications?

-reach out to industry – how can certification help their requirements for their biologists?

-certification has to be useful and mean something

-approaching schools/institutions – how can we implement certification in those schools

-TWS – “CWB in training”

- Are there gaps in engagement with the Federal government specifically (e.g., bringing branches of Federal government together), or are they related to bringing people from other non-governmental agencies together?

-less federal knowledge

-difficult to apply real working examples/models across provinces/jurisdictions

-difficult to know who to talk to

-who is responsible for what?

- constant changes in who/what is responsible and people in those positions

- government and websites are purposefully not good and difficult to navigate

- always about relationships – but you build one and then that person moves positions and then what?

-trump – has created chaos on a major scale

- cannot do everything, perhaps need to focus just on survival-level issues

- do we just need to get through now?

- SAR becomes a lower priority

- political landscape impacts us all, especially in uncertainty and funding

-federal government doesn't solicit information from outgroup (?) – manage them as stakeholders, gag order/no discussions, not recognizing expertise from outside, consultation is stilted, you propose something, then they reduce (?) feedback and no follow through (they're checking a box, but it's not meaningful consultation)

– this system is detrimental overall – government employees restricted by arbitrary rules such as “stay in your lane”, and that can't do “science” (need to outsource this), can't talk to policy people – science isn't what they need to inform policy

-DFO and ECCC do same thing but with vastly different impact – ECCC could learn from DFO (with caution, i.e. be careful over “owning waters” and unintended impacts to First Nations and infringing on rights) and not reinvent the wheel, they could learn from each other

-the stakeholders are the only voice, but there's no back and forth – government researchers are not allowed to speak

-what we NEED is to listen and listen to what all the stakeholder voices are

-how do we get government to come to US? (“we have expertise on this”, ask for a meeting, sue them, or they may come to us)

- people are drawn to a collective voice when leadership is shown – positive outcome to publishing
 - use network to find government champions or the RIGHT contact
 - create an inventory of values of individuals and know those people in different departments (i.e. I can talk to my boss, you talk to yours, etc.)
 - feds/gov – ask them outside to “make noise”
 - use community/local outrage
 - every issue has its own pathway – have a different strategy for each issue
 - e.g. CSTWS member wants to help with an issue
- TWS – bring info, rank, decide on priority issues with deadline (2 yrs) and have “pop up” issues that can be dealt with right away.
- who the partners and champions are will be different
 - face to face meetings (sometimes)
 - have experts leading
 - Use TWS as model in Canada and translate model
 - partners will come out and find us when we decide on our priorities
 - when you make partnerships – first see how successful the partnership is/was.
 - How can professional organizations like CSTWS and other NGOs support evidence-based management efforts (e.g., through science development, science dissemination, policy development, etc.)?
 - CSTWS take lead on communications between partners – need to find the people to connect with and use network
 - special edition – contacts within CSTWS – dissemination of internal works that can be shared broadly
 - discussion papers – background and generate discussions, technical reviews, issue statements/positions/platforms
 - hunters – local knowledge – good to have them so they know what will be accepted by both parties
 - reach out to certain contacts/partners
 - biologists coming from those same organizations
 - does TWS provide funding? Not for research but for student travel awards
 - highlighting what is being done

-create a report from THIS symposium – send to potential partners and get feedback on why they didn't attend

-making videos publicly available will help with easy dissemination of information

-make THESE recordings publicly available – snowball marketing

-guideline/BMP docs helpful

-clear thresholds lacking

-lack of training/knowledge in smaller municipalities

-finding the right person – things can fall through the cracks – so how do we change that?

Money – giving advice, guidance

-can use US guidelines as template (or EU, AUS) – take what is good and customize it – don't reinvent the wheel

-we're catching up, but we're far behind

- What mechanisms can we use to translate research and management experience into training/development from science programs, policy programs, and Indigenous management perspectives?

-need to get the word out (e.g. Outdoors magazine) – require students to write an article

-grad students do video, shown to funders at banquets and fundraisers – i.e. what we've been doing – 2 minute videos – see why they are spending money

-trained deploying audio/ and monitoring Guardians – Guardian programs

-trained to go to the mine sites and take samples – learn those skills and use them

-citizen science

-e.g. invited funders out to release of wildlife – get people excited and involved

-get volunteers to look at thousands of camera trap data – citizen science – getting community invested

-can we submit 2 min videos to government? They may not open it.

-get government out to events or wildlife projects

-awards – get them out that way

-every AGM, recognize “National Champion in Wildlife” and use it as an opportunity to talk to them (photo opp)

-ECP – looking for other experiences – mentor program with exchange of knowledge

-TWS – Out in the Field

-education workshops/training days

-put spot on CSTWS website with training clips

-connect with Green Budget Coalition – may not want to be a member (time consuming) BUT submit recommendations to be brought forward

-connecting cross Canada experts would be useful

-too many groups, constantly trying to create new committees

-commenting on legislation/new policy

-collective voice to put forth one recommendation

Theme 4: Taking Specific Actions: CSTWS's and other professional organizations' role in supporting on-the-ground action for wildlife conservation and management

Based on your experiences in wildlife and land management work, how can research, management, or teaching professionals contribute more effectively to this work:

1. What specific barriers need to be addressed to improve wildlife and ecosystem management in Canada?

-Funding

-Understanding cumulative effects and how to apply management and timelines instead of the current system that is piecemeal and not focused on the long-term (it's a system issue)

-Impact assessments (although this is both a challenge and a tool)

-Reluctance to engage Indigenous people

-Industry dragging their feet on commitments

-Industry doing payouts to change community dynamics and cohesion

-Accountability

-Proper recognition of IPCAs

2. How can wildlife professionals, Indigenous communities and other NGOs work with government agencies and legislation more effectively?

-Ensure advocating includes Indigenous perspectives (co-creation)

Manage expectations (there are limitations)

-Find internal champions to help frame the context and issue – need to plug into the right people and also the right groups

3. What processes are needed to engage the branches of government, agencies, or people identified above (e.g., conferences, position papers, new research areas)?

-One on one engagement is key

-Can be issue specific – consider marine mammals

-Specific to the CSTWS – there is a lack of awareness of the organization, and therefore, the first process/step is to create more awareness about the organization – perhaps expand membership base and have an NGO rate, a government rate and a corporate rate?

4. What training gaps exist? How do we develop high-quality wildlife policy advocates and what skills are needed to navigate this new political context (e.g., public communication skills, collaboration skills to work across disciplines and with youth, Indigenous and other communities)?

4a. GAPS

– knowledge of CSTWS (solution – create knowledge sharing opportunities (half days or full days) to share what CSTWS is doing

-media training

-skills on communicating science (policy briefs, etc.) – most people working in wildlife science don't have the skills to transfer their work into effective communication

-consider these gaps also as opportunities

-differing goals and perspectives – need to find commonalities to bring people together

-mindset – differences, changing perspectives and context – what is the foundation for policy implementation and then how to immerse people in it and garner interest

4b. How to develop high-quality wildlife policy advocates?

-field-based experiences at high school level (although there are challenges with funding for this)

-Guardians program

-word of mouth

-employment

-workplace satisfaction

-peer mentoring

-grad schools – consider including more training on policy, and what is the best way to “train” for policy work? It’s hard to teach without practical applications – perhaps creating internships as a practical policy component, potentially through government and NGOs?

-Perhaps consider a supervised policy analysis as part of a grad program? (there are timing considerations for this)

-Policy isn’t exciting to most wildlife scientists but work experience can inspire policy interest, i.e. there is a natural progression in policy and need to create policy learning opportunities for scientists working in the field

5. How can professional organizations like CSTWS work with Indigenous experts to address problems together and incorporate co-creation of knowledge in a meaningful way? How must current processes change?

-Create a list of experts with clear expectations

-Can do this in-person or online

-Joint fundraising to create capacity and look for opportunities

-There are regional differences and varying capacities that would affect this

-Mentorship – help the Guardians program, help with linkages, and connect Guardians with wildlife professionals

-Start the co-creation of knowledge well in advance as it will take a lot of time

-Going through established Indigenous communicates (?), keeping in mind the context of past history (what has happened in the past and how may the offer of help be perceived, i.e. in context with example from Signal Fire film)

-Need to do a proper approach and work through Chief and Council

-Be open and have no perceived outcome – listen and be adaptable – AND co-creating projects is more fun!

-For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members – they will need to be given reasons to participate

-Indigenous engagement must be meaningful and not just a checkmark

-Look for longer-term relationships and put efforts into relationship building

-Look to (or support/create opportunities) Indigenous groups and/or self-governing Nations to develop draft policy for government review, then compare priorities and inform, then approach government

Appendix 2. Specific Action Suggestions from Workshop (Board to review)

Theme 1. Federal Government Role in Wildlife Management

1. Participate in shared decision making – shared projects led by Canada, land management activities.
2. Participate/support Wildlife Management Boards (territorial?)
3. Engage in Federal Regulatory decision making (how?)
4. Shared land management activities – especially including and respecting indigenous input
5. Identify and engage politicians (charitable status?)
6. Identify and engage Canadian Wildlife Directors
7. Promote and host public talks
8. Providing a list of experts as expert witnesses.

Theme 2: Developing a Voice to Influence Federal Decisions or Activities

1. Promote altered role in public service to Federal executive
2. Promote stable funding mechanisms for wildlife and conservation concerns
3. Input at government finance committee meetings.
4. Get funding to hire experts, to build reports
5. Host meetings to investigate wildlife mgmt issues and stewardship
6. Promote outcomes of mgmt and stewardship activities publicly
7. Building networks – in conservation community and indigenous networks.
8. Targeted letters, introductory letters to government and departments
9. Policy statements - pushed out, developed in partnership.
10. Alerts to members and partners to hot button issues.
11. Extended outreach to members, partners, public (film, books, events, etc. – partner with story tellers)
12. Push out outreach from other organizations.
13. Target/partner with these agencies in government; Both federal and provincial

Theme 3: Establishing and Promoting Good Partnerships and Stewardship

1. Work to establish presence in eastern Canada (North?)
2. Work with other agencies to engage Federal Government (BC Wildlife Collision example)
3. Create venue/platform to share information between groups
4. Continue annual conferences
5. More Frequent meetings than annual – targeted topics? Engaging govt.
6. Focus governance on coordination role, bringing organizations together with more meeting and joint initiatives.

7. Increase TWS certification push across Canada, must involve schools' institutions and existing certification programs.
8. Find ways to maintain contact with statutory decision makers, despite constant change in those organizations - find gatekeepers through broad networks
9. Increase role as 'go to' or 'broker' of scientific info? (Is this still wanted? Useful?)
10. Use publishing and engagement to establish as trusted partner and expert. Build 'best-practices' publications. TWS journals and publications, discussion papers, technical reviews, and issues statements can amplify member biologists, or other organization's science, management proposals or conservation successes.
11. Set and work on key priority of issues, develop strong and dynamic prioritization program for issues inhouse – CRC? Stick with a vision and strategy
12. Build partnerships with other organizations

Theme 4: Taking Specific Actions: CSTWS's and other professional organizations' role in supporting on-the-ground action for wildlife conservation and management

- Focus on management policies such as EIA and cumulative effect assessment approaches,
- Overcome a reluctance to engage with Indigenous peoples
- Find partner organizations, for one-on-one engagement in individual agencies
- Promote accessible and context appropriate science communication - key gap in training for students, researchers, and practitioners.
- Recruit and develop high-quality wildlife policy advocates including high school students and Indigenous communities.
- Retention programs, including peer mentoring to retain staff
- Policy training for post-graduate and interns
- Develop program for working with Nations, recognizing regional differences and historical interactions