

A Federal Advocacy Primer

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Canadian Section of
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Executive Summary

This report answers the various advocacy related questions posed by the Canadian Section of the Wildlife Society (CSTWS) contained in Appendix A to this report.

In sum, CSTWS appears to be in a very good position to propose solutions and science-based input on wildlife management issues federally, subject to the organization dedicating necessary time and resources to such work.

In order to leverage its wealth of knowledge and expertise, CSTWS needs to lay a foundation for future advocacy success, including updating its charitable purpose to clearly allow for advocacy work, carving out capacity to engage in advocacy which should include the ramping up of an advocacy working group/committee, engaging with members and TWS in setting advocacy priorities, increasing staff or contract resources dedicated to advocacy (ex. half an FTE to focus on advocacy work), and budgeting for travel to attend meetings and to engage in public facing communications when it is necessary.

CSTWS must also begin to work with others on advocacy for various reasons. There is strength in numbers and other organizations in this arena have ties to government from a history of advocacy work that should be leveraged.

It is recommended that CSTWS establish relationships with a diversity of groups to enable it to work with parliamentarians of all political stripes.

Working with groups that are engaged in the Green Budget Coalition such as Nature Canada that chairs the GBC could also provide a good

opportunity to influence government as this coalition is often trusted to provide distilled advice on budget priorities.

As CSTWS starts its advocacy communications with the federal government, it is recommended that CSTWS identify itself as a 'new' organization at the federal level that consists of wildlife professionals with members across Canada working on wildlife management. It is unnecessary for CSTWS to have any specific priorities initially, but priority setting should be a conducted into late 2025 and beyond.

Whilst establishing vital relationships and learning about what is likely to be of interest to a new federal government and potential partner groups, CSTWS can concurrently start its internal process of identifying its priorities and then begin "field testing" the advocacy advice contained in this report.

It is recommended that at least one organizational priority be a topic that other groups are already focused on or a topic that is a priority for government already so that CSTWS can join or foster the creation of a partnership or coalition to work on these issues. Not only will this help build momentum quicker and establish CSTWS as a helpful player in federal advocacy, but it will also help provide a network of "colleagues" to whoever CSTWS hires or engages to conduct its advocacy work.

A detailed set of conclusions and recommendations is contained in the Conclusions section of this report, while links to important resources and requested edits to the TWS Conservation Affairs Network Policy Toolkit for Canada are contained in the Appendices.

a. The Rules of Engagement: Advocacy Nuts and Bolts

There are three sets of rules applicable to charities engaging in advocacy federally in Canada: the *Income Tax Act*, the lobbying registration requirements, and the system applicable during an election. Each set of rules is explored below.

i. Charities and the *Income Tax Act*

CSTWS is a registered charity under the *Income Tax Act*. CSTWS's charitable purposes currently filed with Revenue Canada provides that.

The following represent the charitable purposes for the CSTWS:

- i. Offering educational programs, courses, learning units, seminars, workshops, conferences, and meetings;
- ii. Developing and evaluating educational resources and programs that increase knowledge, skills and attitudes supportive of the protection of the environment and wildlife conservation among the public and conservation professionals;
- iii. Assisting educators in their understanding and integrating of environmental issues into their educational programs and services;
- iv. Collecting and disseminating information to the public on the protection of the environment through websites, newsletters, workshops seminars and related educational media;
- iv. Conducting research relating to wildlife, its habitat and the environment and disseminating the results of such research; and

- iv. Providing scholarships, bursaries, awards and other forms of financial assistance to students and conservation professionals interested in wildlife and habitat protection and conservation.

Being registered charity allows CSTWS to issue tax receipts for the donations it receives, a very important fundraising tool but one that comes with responsibilities set out under the Act. Detailed explanations of current rules and any updates to the rules applicable to charities under the Act are provided on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

The rules contained in the Act applicable to charities engaging in public advocacy have changed substantially over the past decade. These changes have rendered the process of engaging in advocacy much simpler.

The former rule that allowed the Minister of National Revenue to suspend the ability of registered charities to issue tax receipts for engaging in "political activities" in excess of the quantitative limit (10% of charitable resources) has been eliminated. In fact, the phrase "political activity" has been eliminated from the Act entirely.

This was the former system of rules the Harper government relied upon to audit and revoke the charitable status of several charities critical of oil and gas development, who were found to have exceeded their 10% quota or who had otherwise failed to properly track expenditures dedicated to advocacy work. These audits led many charities to either cease or curtail their advocacy work or implement significant tracking and accounting procedures.

The rule introduced by the Trudeau government in 2018 to replace the political activity limits

then required that all public policy work undertaken by a charity fall under the umbrella of “public policy dialogue and development activities” as defined by the Act.

Public policy dialogue generally involves seeking to influence the laws, policies or decisions of a government, whether in Canada or a foreign country. The advocacy work contemplated by CSTWS is more than likely captured within this broad definition.

To ensure that public policy work was properly undertaken, it had to be documented that it was conducted in furtherance of an organization’s charitable purpose as accepted by the Canada Revenue Agency. There was a requirement to demonstrate this connection annually on the T3010 tax form with a brief description of the work undertaken.

Interestingly, this annual filing requirement has also recently been eliminated. As a result, although CSTWS must still engage in advocacy only in furtherance of its charitable purpose, it no longer needs to specifically report its activities annually and describe how its advocacy meets that purpose.

What remains in the tax filing system is the ability for charities, if they wish, to track their advocacy work and rely on any expenditures dedicated to this public policy dialogue to satisfy the annual spending requirement/disbursement quota (typically 3.5% of the value of charitable property if a charity owns assets in excess of \$25,000). The prohibition maintained in the *Income Tax Act* is that charities cannot devote any part of their resources to the direct or indirect support of, or opposition to, a political party or candidate for public office – charities cannot engage in

partisan political activities, or the Minister may suspend their tax-receipting privileges.

Recalling the work by a previous government to monitor and audit charities and revoke some charitable registrations, after a review of CSTWS’s purpose currently filed with CRA, it is recommended that such purpose be updated to clearly stipulate that engaging in advocacy aimed at policy, regulatory and legislative reform to improve wildlife management is one of the organization’s charitable purposes. Updating CSTWS’s charitable purpose is straightforward and merely requires filing a proposed new purpose with CRA and a statement of activities that describes how CSTWS intends to carry out the activities to accomplish its updated purpose. The CRA would then review and approve the updated purpose. A link to the CRA website and its online charity portal is provided in Appendix B to assist.

ii. Registration as a Lobbyist

Beyond the *Income Tax Act*, there are also rules contained in the *Lobbying Act*. For charities, registration under the *Lobbying Act* is required when lobbying reaches the collective threshold of an equivalent of 20% of a full-time employee across an organization’s entire paid staff.

The purpose of the *Lobbying Act* is to increase public transparency as to whom government is communicating. Lobbying regulated by the Act includes communication with federal officials directly (written, spoken) or indirectly (appeals to the public) about a legislative proposal, bill or resolution, regulation (developing, introducing, passing, defeating, amending) policy or program (developing, amending) or the awarding of a grant, contribution or other financial benefit.

The following types of communications are not considered lobbying: a request limited to asking

TIP – Using the Lobbyist Registry for Research

The Registry can be a useful tool in determining what organizations, companies and individuals have been lobbying the federal government on a particular issue.

As an example, a quick search of the word caribou in the registry reveals that government has received hundreds of points of communication on various aspects of caribou but very few in the past 6 months revealing that new caribou management measures are probably not being considered.

On the other hand, if one searches “global biodiversity framework” and “2030 biodiversity targets”, dozens of recent points of lobbying can be found in the past 6 months from all manner of organizations.

Clearly this issue has recently been active. The registry can also potentially be used to identify partners, those opposed to an issue and the government officials being lobbied to help start planning an approach to advocacy.

for information, asking an official how a law or regulation is enforced, interpreted or applied, making a public submission to a parliamentary committee or in public record proceedings, such as before a board, commission or tribunal (ex. the Canadian Energy Regulator or Impact Assessment Agency of Canada). The reason for exempting reporting on work in these venues is that proceedings already have publicly accessible records so reporting through the registry would be duplicative.

Lobbying of almost all federal employees is captured: officers and executives, members of the armed forces and RCMP, staff of parliamentarians and all designated officials, including parliamentarians (Senate and House of Commons), ministerial staff, and positions established by federal regulation.

Both consultants and employees engaged in lobbying by CSTWS must be registered in the federal Lobbyist Registry.

Employees who lobby on behalf of their employer (CSTWS’s Executive Director for example) must be registered in a single registration once collective lobbying reaches the in-house lobbyist registration threshold of 20% of a full-time employee’s time across an organization.

Volunteers conducting lobbying (ex. CSTWS Board members or members at large who are not paid by the organization) would not be required to register or report lobbying activities, though employees of an organization or anyone paid to coordinate volunteer activities would have to report.

Anyone engaged in lobbying federally must comply with the Lobbyists’ Code of Conduct, which came into effect on July 1, 2023. The Code contains straightforward ethical requirements for those engaged in lobbying. Both the Code and the *Lobbying Act* requirements are administered by the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada where numerous resources are maintained to assist with compliance.

iii. Advocacy During Elections

In addition to the rules applicable under the *Income Tax Act* that prohibit CSTWS from engaging in partisan political activities, during elections the rules under the *Canada Elections Act* administered by Elections Canada add a second regulatory layer applicable to charities.

Ideally, CSTWS would engage parties prior to an election to influence platform promises

before an election begins. Having a platform commitment in hand prior to an election is obviously preferable to trying to convince a party during a busy election to make a commitment when matters other than wildlife management will typically be prioritized.

Charities often avoid engaging in advocacy during election cycles for fear of running afoul of the prohibition on devoting any resources to the direct or indirect support of, or opposition to, a political party or candidate for public office. Or they otherwise tend to avoid the hassle of showing compliance with the “third-party” rules administered by Elections Canada.

Third-party rules apply to organizations that engage in advertising during elections. CSTWS would be required to register as a third-party with Elections Canada if it were to take a position on a public policy issue that is known to be associated with a candidate or political party (even if the party is not mentioned) and were to spend more than \$500 on issue advertising.

The election rules applicable to third parties are not covered here in any more depth as it is not anticipated that CSTWS will engage in election advertising beyond this limit as part of its advocacy work. More detailed and regularly updated information is available on the Elections Canada third-party information page.

The ability to engage in important policy discussions during an election without needing to register with Elections Canada can be accomplished through carefully crafted

work. CSTWS could engage in policy work during elections by:

- Not showing support for or opposition to a candidate, political party, or its leader.
- If hosting events or debates, by inviting all parties to attend (some charities host or organize issues-based debates for example).
- CSTWS could ‘piggy-back’ on the election work of others. For example, GreenPAC regularly organizes debates during federal elections and have all the systems in place to ensure compliance with applicable rules. CSTWS could reach out and seek to have a wildlife management issue included in their debates.

Summary and implications for CSTWS

In order to engage in advocacy, the following should be undertaken or otherwise become part of CSTWS operations:

1. CSTWS update its current charitable purposes to clearly stipulate that engaging in advocacy aimed at policy, regulatory and legislative reform to improve wildlife conservation and management.
2. CSTWS keep its charitable purposes front of mind when engaging in any advocacy and ensure that activities are in furtherance of its charitable purposes.
3. CSTWS can count advocacy work towards meeting any annual disbursement quota requirements.
4. CSTWS cannot devote any part of its resources to the direct or indirect support of, or opposition to, a political party or candidate for public office.
5. CSTWS must register as a lobbyist when the collective work of its employees and consultants engaged in lobbying reach a threshold of 20% of a full-time employee.
6. Although the rules during an election are specific, they should not discourage CSTWS from engaging in important public policy discussions taking place that stay within the limitations placed on it under the *Income Tax Act* and the *Canada Elections Act*.



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b. Federal Jurisdiction for Wildlife

At the outset it is worth defining ‘wildlife’ for the purpose of this report. The TWS wildlife biologist certification program defines ‘wildlife species’ as amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds. TWS’s program excludes fish.

i. Authority of the federal, provincial and territorial governments

Federal and provincial jurisdiction is delineated in the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreements, 1930* and the *Constitution Act, 1982* (referred to collectively below as the “Constitution”). Wildlife and wildlife management are not specifically mentioned in the Constitution. The Constitution does variously grant powers to both the federal and provincial governments related to aspects of wildlife and wildlife management however.

A great deal of authority for wildlife management rests with the provinces as a result of their responsibility for the management of provincial Crown lands, non-renewable resources, and forests, as granted by the *Constitution Act, 1867* for the original provinces that formed Canada, and by the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreements, 1930* for the four western provinces that later joined confederation. Responsibility for these matters has resulted in legislation, regulations, policies and programs for wildlife management in each of the provinces.

Management of fish resources is specifically conferred on the federal government by the *Constitution Act, 1867* through its legislative

authority over the seacoast and inland fisheries, a power that has been interpreted to also include the management of marine mammals. The federal government also has authority over federal lands, including the territories (subject to modern land claim and management agreements discussed below), national parks, reserve lands and military lands.

Federal authority to maintain international treaty obligations entered into prior to 1931 has been utilized as the basis for regulating migratory birds in Canada (i.e. the 1916 *Convention Between the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the Protection of Migratory Birds in Canada and the United States*). The Court in the 2024 case of *Western Canada Wilderness Committee v. Canada (Environment and Climate Change)*, 2024 FC 167 determined that the federal government’s obligations under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* are much broader than the narrow interpretation being applied previously by the federal government.

The federal government also has the residual authority to regulate matters that are not included in the subjects specifically assigned exclusively to the provinces in the Constitution. It is uncertain whether this residual authority could be useful in the wildlife management context, but it could potentially become important as new issues emerge.

As a result of the above, particularly the lack of any specific mention of wildlife in the Constitution, it is somewhat difficult to find a bright line separating federal and provincial



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authority. Jurisdiction over wildlife can be considered a shared responsibility as a result. By way of example in practice, both the federal and provincial governments have established species at risk regulatory regimes. The federal authority to regulate inland fisheries has also been applied to regulate aspects of forest management on provincial lands, particularly in British Columbia, where enforcement of the federal *Fisheries Act* has led to improved landscape level management on both private and provincial owned forested lands. Arguably, the jurisdiction of the federal government to implement the Migratory Birds Convention could now be relied upon to regulate activities on provincial

lands that impact bird species in a similar fashion.

Although federal jurisdiction over wildlife could probably be extended into a large number of areas similar to how the power to regulate fisheries has been applied to forestry in B.C., what is clear at this time, is that the federal government is focused largely on migratory birds, species at risk, and wildlife on designated federal lands including national parks and marine protected areas, national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries, First Nation reserves, and Canadian Forces bases.

The majority of federal Crown land is located in the three territories. In the territories,

wildlife management is a mix of federal, territorial, and Indigenous governance, with territorial authority defined through federal statutory conferrals and land claim and self-governance agreements. For example, fisheries management responsibility has been largely maintained with the federal government, while wildlife management is now led by the territories which have enacted various territorial wildlife statutes. Furthermore, land claim and self-government agreements in the territories define many aspects of wildlife management, including the establishment of various land, water and resource co-management boards that have been taking on increasing regulatory responsibility for various aspects of wildlife management in the north.

The *Constitution Act, 1982* “recognized and affirmed existing rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada”. Throughout most of Canada, Aboriginal rights had been recognized through treaty but there are many areas where treaties do not yet apply (much of British Columbia for example) or where governments’ treaty obligations are still being refined. Although treaty and rights are still being defined in many areas of Canada, the perspectives and rights of Indigenous Peoples are forming a greater and significant part in the larger wildlife framework in Canada and must be considered when advocating for wildlife.

This section has covered the legislative regulatory authority of the federal, provincial and territorial governments. This authority to regulate should not be confused with the ability of all levels of government to fund or implement programs that benefit wildlife generally. Oftentimes various levels of

government either fund or implement collaborative programs that benefit wildlife species regardless of their regulatory authority. For the purpose of advocacy therefore, it is often wise to engage with multiple levels of government and to determine what will be asked of each level of government. If the federal government does not have regulatory jurisdiction in a given situation, for example, the ask of the federal government might be to help provinces by contributing funding to a program.

As a result of the above, it is recommended that as CSTWS chooses its advocacy priorities that it:

1. Collaborate with any Indigenous Peoples potentially impacted by its work.
2. Consider where priorities fit along a jurisdictional spectrum of increasing potential for conflict: a clear jurisdictional area of authority of the federal government where it has always had clear authority, a shared jurisdiction where provincial-federal collaboration will likely be necessary, or it is seeking to have the federal government assert authority in an area that is largely untested and may lead to conflict with one or more province.
3. Consider making coordinated asks at both the provincial/territorial and federal government levels with the goal of having either or both jurisdictions make a desired program, policy or other change.

ii. Federal Departments with Responsibilities for Wildlife

The three main departments with responsibility for managing wildlife in Canada are Environment and Climate Change Canada, (ECCC) Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

and Natural Resources Canada (NRC). Other departments have minor but important responsibilities that also impact on wildlife and are briefly discussed below. Please note that the names and responsibilities of government departments change and evolve so confirming which department has responsibility for a given issue may be necessary.

Environment and Climate Change Canada

ECCC has numerous responsibilities for managing wildlife distributed across multiple offices within the department.

Part of ECCC, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) is the main organization directly responsible for wildlife within ECCC and the federal government more broadly. The CWS is responsible for the protection and management of migratory birds, species at risk, and their nationally important habitats.

The CWS conducts scientific monitoring of migratory birds and species at risk populations and distribution, wetlands and engages in regulatory, land management, policy development, and financial support work.

CWS also reviews and issues permits under the *Migratory Bird Regulations*, *Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations*, *Wildlife Area Regulations*, and *Species at Risk Act* and also reviews impact assessments being undertaken federally or being led by the provinces for impacts to wildlife being managed or regulated by the federal government.

CWS also leads or supports international and interprovincial agreements regarding biological diversity, invasive species, Indigenous wildlife management boards, the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee, and



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Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). CWS also manages various funding programs that support wildlife conservation and species at risk recovery, including the Habitat Stewardship Program, the Critical Habitat Interdepartmental Program, and the Indigenous Partnerships for Species at Risk Program.

Finally, CWS manages a network of protected areas consisting of 57 National Wildlife Areas protecting over 3.5 million hectares of habitat with almost half being marine habitat. CWS also manages 92 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries totaling almost 11.5 million hectares of terrestrial and marine migratory bird habitat.

Wildlife research is conducted by the Science and Technology Branch within ECCC, and is focused on waterfowl and seabird population ecology, reptiles, polar bear, and caribou.

The Strategic Policy Branch of ECCC maintains a leadership role within the Department over strategic policy development, agenda management, policy planning, Indigenous and intergovernmental affairs, economic analysis, sustainable development strategies and indicators, and regional analyses.

Enforcement of ECCC statutes and regulations is performed by Enforcement Branch. Enforcement Branch performs compliance action, patrols, and investigations under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, *Canada Wildlife Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, and *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*.

ECCC also has regional offices working on region-specific issues within the following three large regions: West and North, Ontario, and Atlantic and Quebec.

Parks Canada also is an arms-length agency over which the Minister of ECCC maintains oversight. The *Canada National Parks Act* (“CNPA”) makes Parks Canada responsible for the ecological integrity of all national parks and park reserves and the agency has been formally monitoring for ecological integrity since 2008 as a result. Various regulations under the CNPA specifically set out how wildlife are to be managed generally (ex., *National Parks Wildlife Regulations*), while other regulations add another layer of management specific to certain parks (ex., *Wood Buffalo National Park Game Regulations*).

Parks Canada also manages 5 marine conservation areas established under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

The responsibilities of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (aka the Department of Fisheries and Oceans or “DFO”) are largely set out in the *Fisheries Act*.

The various marine and inland fisheries management frameworks applicable under the Act are complex and beyond the scope of this report but it is worth noting that DFO’s powers under the Fisheries Act can and should be considered as part of the suite of tools available to manage broader landscape issues and to recover food sources of marine mammals of particular interest to CSTWS.

DFO is responsible for the management of marine mammals in Canada through the *Fisheries Act*. The *Marine Mammal Regulations* passed under the *Fisheries Act* contain parts regulating cetaceans, walrus, and seals, in addition to various general provisions relating to marine mammal management.

Finally, through the *Oceans Act*, DFO manages Canada's network of 14 Marine Protected Areas, comprising over 350,000 square kilometers and the 35 Marine Refuges across Canada.

Natural Resources Canada

Although the Constitution confers authority to the provinces over natural resources in most situations, the federal government has jurisdiction over off-shore resources, trade and commerce in natural resources, statistics, international relations, boundaries and federal lands. NRCan administers federal legislation relating to natural resources, including energy, forests, minerals and metals.

NRCan's Forest Service researches forest fire, climate change, forest management and silviculture, soils, insects and disease and remote sensing. The Forest Service also publishes *The State of the Forest in Canada* reports.

Finally, NRCan collaborates with the U.S. and Mexico to produce the North American Environmental Atlas that tracks environmental issues on a continental basis.

Transport Canada

Transport Canada's regulation of marine shipping, including regulation of ballast water and introduction of aquatic invasive species and its work to reduce ship strikes on whales may be of particular interest to CSTWS.

Department of Finance

Although it does not have a specific mandate to regulate or manage wildlife, at times it will be important to engage with the Department of Finance. Unlike the situation in the U.S. where much of the funding for wildlife management is derived from hunting and angling license sales and dedicated excise taxes through the 1937 *Pittman-Robertson Act*, funding in Canada is primarily allocated to wildlife management agencies from general tax revenues. Advocacy efforts will therefore necessarily include asks that government fund new or expanded programs or even simply continue funding programs with budgets poised to expire.

The federal budgetary cycle is explained in more detail in the monitoring section of this report below.

Boards, Agencies and Tribunals

The federal government also has several boards, tribunals and other agencies that will have decision-making powers that affect wildlife, including the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, the Canadian Energy Regulator, the International Joint Commission and potentially, as it builds its body of work, the Canada Water Agency.

From an advocacy perspective, it will be useful to create a plan that identifies which federal

programs and responsible departments could potentially be targeted to assist with an issue. Oftentimes more than one department and more than one office within a department will have responsibilities over an issue.



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Brainstorming Federal Agencies with Responsibilities for Caribou

The recovery of woodland caribou is being led under the *Species at Risk Act* by ECCC but depending on the particular caribou related issue there are multiple offices within ECCC that would be worth speaking with: Minister's office, CWS staff responsible for caribou, staff at the Science and Technology Branch if research would be helpful, Strategic Policy Branch should policy updates be needed, and potentially even Enforcement Branch if SARA is being violated by an activity of concern.

NRCan, having responsibilities for monitoring the state of natural resources in Canada, could be helpful if caribou research is needed.

As with many other species at risk, it should be assumed that there are Indigenous interests in the species, and it may also be worth contacting Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to determine whether they wish to get involved in identifying caribou conservation solutions that meet the duty of the Crown vis-à-vis Indigenous Peoples.

c. Wildlife Agreements

Beyond the territorial agreements already outlined in the jurisdictional section above, there are several agreements in place between the federal government and the provinces and territories relating to wildlife. It is anticipated that these agreements will be added to, change and evolve over time so it will be important to confirm the status of these agreements before relying on them.

Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk

In 1999, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for wildlife finalized the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*. The goal of the Accord is to prevent species in Canada from becoming extinct as a consequence of human activity. To reach that goal, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers expressed their commitment to a national approach for the protection of species at risk and agreed to coordinate activities by creating the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council, and also agreed to develop complementary legislation, regulations, policies and programs to identify and protect threatened and endangered species and their critical habitats.

The Accord also provided that the provinces, territories and federal government were to develop legislation and programs that provide an independent process for assessing the status of species at risk, legally designate species as threatened or endangered, legally protect the species and habitat, and develop recovery plans within a specific periods of time and implement the plans, with

monitoring, assessment and reporting being incorporated into the process.

Since the Accord was concluded, the federal *Species at Risk Act* came into force and many provinces and territories have enacted their own legislation with some provincial statutes being even stronger than the national statute (Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and most territorial legislation for example).

More recently, nature agreements have been concluded by the federal government with various provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples. A summary of each is provided below. The status of these nature agreements could be up in the air with any change in government, but it is worth considering how they can be maintained or even implemented in the event of diminished federal support.

Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation between Canada, British Columbia, and the First Nations Leadership Council

Signed in November 2023, this agreement is intended to strengthen nature conservation and includes four goals: habitat and ecosystem conservation and protection, habitat enhancement and restoration, species at risk protection and recovery, and foundational knowledge and information sharing. In order to achieve these goals, the agreement also contains the following objectives:

1. Protect and conserve at least 30 per cent of lands and freshwater in B.C. by 2030
2. Work with First Nations to identify up to 13,000 km² of low-elevation, productive old-growth forest areas to permanently

protect in three targeted biogeoclimatic zones: Coastal Douglas Fir, Coastal Western Hemlock, and Interior Cedar Hemlock

3. Create an actively managed, B.C.-wide network of connected land through measures such as the Parks Canada National Program for Ecological Corridors
4. Work with B.C. and First Nations to recover the population of spotted owls
5. Continue work in partnership with First Nations to implement boreal caribou conservation measures aligned with the federal recovery strategy target of 65 per cent undisturbed habitat, including restoration for all boreal caribou herds in B.C.

Under the agreement, Canada will contribute up to \$500 million toward the implementation of the agreement and the province has committed to matching every dollar the federal government contributes.

Canada–Nova Scotia Nature Agreement

This agreement was signed in October 2023 and sets out targets and early commitments in six key areas:

1. Increase the amount of protected and conserved areas in the province by 82,500 ha, by March 2026, to increase protected areas to almost 15% of the province
2. Create a pathway to the provincial goal of 20% by 2030, and the federal goal of 30% by 2030
3. Supporting the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia in conservation leadership
4. Species at Risk protection and recovery

5. Foundational knowledge and information sharing
6. Support Canada's domestic and international biodiversity commitments including through the implementation of the GBF.

Canada committed to investing a total of \$28.5 million to implement the agreement and support nature protection and conservation in the province.

Canada–Yukon Nature Agreement

This agreement, signed in December 2022, sets out targets and early commitments in five key areas:

1. Working toward conserving 25 percent of the landscape by 2025.
2. Creating a pathway to 30 percent by 2030.
3. Supporting Indigenous leadership in conservation.
4. Protecting and recovering species at risk.
5. Sharing foundational knowledge and information.

Some key outcomes of the Agreement are intended to include protecting or conserving an additional 6 percent of lands in the Yukon by 2025, advancing efforts to protect species at risk by working closely with Indigenous peoples, managing species at risk, including northern mountain caribou and grizzly bear, and increasing knowledge collection and data sharing. Canada committed to investing \$20.6 million to implement the agreement.

Agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador



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Although this is not a formal written agreement similar to the three above, Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador have committed to accelerate the creation of new

protected areas in the province. In recognition of the importance of biodiversity and nature conservation efforts that can support broader environmental goals and climate change resiliency, the two governments agreed to work together to:

1. Establish Eagle River Watershed protected area, in consultation with Indigenous communities, by 2025.
2. Negotiate a memorandum of understanding by the end of 2022 (it was signed on June 23, 2023) to assess the

feasibility of a South Coast Fjords national marine conservation area and consider an adjacent national park in the Burgeo region.

3. Agree to advance marine conservation opportunities on the Labrador Coast in partnership with Labrador Indigenous communities.

The two governments also agreed to investigate in the identification of additional national marine conservation areas, national wildlife areas, national parks, and Fisheries and Oceans–led marine conservation areas in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Other Agreements and Venues of Interjurisdictional Collaboration

Canada and the provinces and territories have concluded various agreements under the *Species at Risk Act* for the recovery of specific species as well: *Canada-Alberta conservation agreement for the Wabasca and Ronald Lake Bison Herds: In support of Wood Bison recovery in Alberta*; *Southern Mountain Caribou in British Columbia: bilateral conservation agreement between Canada and British Columbia*; and the separate conservation agreements for woodland caribou in Labrador, Yukon, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories.

Beyond formal agreements, there are venues where the provincial, territorial and federal governments have historically engaged in conversations about wildlife and conservation issues. For example, the Canadian Council on Ministers of the Environment (CCME) could be a key collaboration to monitor for joint announcements and commitments as there are typically very few opportunities for non-governmental organizations to engage directly in the conversations of this group.

There are likely more opportunities available to engage with the national collaboration on wildlife and biodiversity management under the auspices of the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC), which is composed of the wildlife directors and agency leads representing the jurisdictions/agencies (13 Provinces and Territories along with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Parks Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada) with responsibility for wildlife conservation in Canada.

The CWDC is a collegial partnership that provides leadership and facilitates harmonization in the development and coordination of policies, strategies, programs and activities that address wildlife and habitat issues of national concern and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. The CWDC works to find ways to proactively engage and influence the broad suite of programs and policies that relate to wildlife and their supporting habitats and often requests presentations from professionals involved in wildlife research and management.

International Commitments

It is also worth noting that Canada has made multiple wildlife and/or biodiversity commitments internationally. There are likely opportunities for provincial and federal implementation efforts and opportunities for collaboration on implementing these commitments.

For example, the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) concluded in Montreal in December 2022 during the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has led to a federal commitment to protect 30% of Canada's lands and waters by 2030 (30 by 30 targets). Several provincial governments have mirrored these commitments following the GBF being announced, including, to varying degrees, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories, Ontario and Manitoba. Importantly, Manitoba's current government committed to 30 by 30 in its 2023 election platform.

d. Monitoring Government for Engagement Opportunities

There are a multitude of formal processes of government that are publicly accessible and available to monitoring to help inform advocacy plans and to identify opportunities to engage government directly.

i. Election Platforms

Election platforms are key to identifying where governments intend to go broadly during their mandates. Being able to influence a platform prior to an election is highly recommended as campaigning to help a government implement a promise is often more straightforward than convincing government mid-mandate that policy reform and/or new budgetary commitments are necessary.

ii. Mandate Letters

Ministerial mandate letters are issued by the Prime Minister when Ministers are appointed and contain the items a Minister is expected to accomplish during their tenure. These letters afford a great opportunity to reach out to and begin engaging with Ministers. Groups will often write to a Minister when they are appointed to congratulate them on their assignment and to offer assistance or suggestions. CSTWS may wish to consider the mandate letters as one input as it chooses priorities. A priority will likely be more achievable in the short term if it is also a government priority for example.

iii. Passage of Legislation in Parliament

Parliament consists of two houses: the House of Commons and the Senate. Passage of bills in both houses is necessary for draft legislation to become law.

The Senate retains the power to reject bills passed by the House of Commons. The Members of the Senate have the ability to introduce bills but that typically occurs far less frequently than the introduction of bills in the House. There are two groups of senators: those appointed by the Liberals who have now become 'independent' and those appointed by the Conservatives who sit as Conservative senators. Conservative senators attend Conservative caucus meetings while the independent senators do not attend Liberal caucus meetings. The Senate has some similar processes to the House with various standing committees where CSTWS can seek to provide helpful testimony and propose amendments to bills under consideration.

Before a bill passes in the House it must be subject to three readings. After a Bill has passed second reading it is usually referred to a standing committee of the House of Commons or a Special Committee or to a Committee of the Whole (comprised of all Members) for a more detailed examination. Committees often review a bill in detail and, after hearing testimony, propose amendments to the bill which would then be considered by the House at third reading. It is at the committee stage that members of the public can request to speak on a bill and provide suggestions for improvement through testimony.

To speak at a committee, ideally CSTWS would contact the committee clerk by email and request to appear. A list of people and organizations requesting to appear would then be put to committee members who would choose from the list of people to provide testimony. As a result, CSTWS should also seek to identify 'friendly' members of the committee who would be willing to ask that CSTWS appear. Identification of which members may be friendly will probably require some research into their party and individual positions on a particular issue and some direct conversations with the members. Providing a friendly member of the committee with a briefing prior to committee hearings and a potential list of questions that could be asked is often helpful for busy committee members.

Email contacts for the clerk of each committee are available on committee websites and a link is provided to the committee lists in Appendix B to this report.

The business of specific standing committees of Parliament can also be specifically monitored for opportunities to engage and affect recommendations to government that would be contained in their reports. For example, if the House Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) were preparing a report on how to better manage whale recovery or marine protected areas, it could be worth reaching out to offer up testimony in the manner described above. Or if the House Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development (ENVI) were to be conducting a study on species at risk, parks or other aspects of wildlife management, again it could be worth

reaching out to the committee members in an effort to influence recommendations.

Brainstorming Avian Flu

Avian flu and other zoonotic diseases have been identified as a potential priority by CSTWS. In developing a suite of proposed changes, it will be necessary to work with other organizations already focused on zoonotic disease and coordinate activities. Assuming that CSTWS will then have a suite of actions identified to help thwart Avian flu spread, the question then becomes how it will work to have these actions implemented federally.

The first question to ask is where the proposed actions would sit in the spectrum of statute, regulation, policy or program change, with statutory change typically being a more complicated and lengthy process than a shift or addition to an existing program.

The second question to consider is who CSTWS should talk to in government. There are a multitude of potential government agencies that could be engaged to address Avian flu, including the Canadian Food Inspection Agency within Health Canada that is focused on the spread of zoonotic disease from wild birds to poultry and humans, but also Environment and Climate Change Canada that has been tracking the effects of climate change on the spread of zoonotic disease. It would probably be worth engaging with both of these departments as part of advocacy as a result and possibly finance and other departments to ensure that funding is made available for any new or expanded program.

The third question is what other advocacy tools are available to engage with the federal government. There are likely periodic studies in the House and Senate where recommendations could be made about Avian flu responses. There are also staff in government at both the political and bureaucratic level looking into the issue and who may be helpful allies. In an effort to spur faster progress on the issue, there are mechanisms available to create pressure, including Environmental Commissioner petitions and even the media.

Specific legislation also contains mandatory review that usually takes place in committees. For example, both the *Fisheries Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* are subject to a period of review by Parliament every 5 years. These reviews provide excellent opportunities to prepare submissions in advance and to organize and plan submissions to government.

iv. Budgets and the Fiscal Cycle

The federal financial cycle begins on April 1 and ends on March 31 annually. This annual fiscal cycle consists of pre-budget, annual budget, and post-fiscal year processes that are detailed in the figure opposite.

The procedures for establishing new and ongoing taxation as part of the budget process (often referred to as the business of ways and means) have been excluded here as it is anticipated that budget expenditure will be most relevant to CSTWS’s advocacy work.

The Business of Supply

The business of supply is the process by which the government submits its projected annual expenditures for parliamentary approval. It includes consideration of the main and supplementary estimates, interim supply (i.e. securing program budget before the full budget is approved), motions include additional items in the estimates, appropriation bills, and other related motions.

Typically, every year the federal government introduces a draft budget in March or April and the budget is usually approved by June. Often government also issues fall economic statements as a mid-fiscal update that may or

may not involve adjustments to the budget and an additional budget bill. Legislative changes needed to support the implementation of budget announcements are often contained in budget implementation acts.

The pre-budget processes in particular, including the department budget planning and the Finance Committee pre-budget consultations, afford opportunities to advocate for necessary funding to support the maintenance of programs and the establishment of new programs for wildlife.



From <https://www.ourcommons.ca/procedure>

Finance Committee Pre-budget Consultations

In the fall, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance holds pre-budget consultations seeking public input on recommendations it should make to the Minister of Finance for the government's upcoming budget.

Departmental Plans

Federal departments prepare pre-budget requests annually that set out the budgetary resources needed to achieve certain objectives. These requests set out the human and financial resources allocated to each program and sub program. This process involves discussions between departments and Finance about budget requests.

Organizations often engage in the budgetary process at the pre-budget consultation and departmental planning stages and also with the Department of Finance with whom responsible departments collaborate and consult to develop and obtain allocations for program budget. Finance will not necessarily include the entirety of a department's request in the next budget. As a result, advocacy efforts can be helpful at this stage to ensure important programs are maintained or new ones are funded.

Budget Speech

The budget speech is the presentation made in the House by the Minister of Finance introducing the government's plans concerning fiscal, economic and social policy (the budget).

Budget Debate

A debate is held in the House on a motion to approve the government's budgetary policy. The motion is moved by the Minister of Finance at the beginning of the presentation of the budget speech and the House votes on the motion.

The budget speech and motion are opportunities to make public statements either congratulating or criticizing government for their support or lack thereof for a given program.

v. Auditor General and Environment Commissioner

Beyond the various machinations of Parliament, there are at least two important offices that report to Parliament directly and that have avenues by which CSTWS can access for advocacy purposes. The first is the Auditor General of Canada, while the second, housed within the Auditor General's offices, is the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (Environment Commissioner). Both act as officers to Parliament with the former tasked with assessing the operations of the federal and territorial governments and providing Parliament with value for money audits and stewardship of public funds audits, while the Commissioner provides independent analyses and recommendations to Parliament on the federal government's efforts to protect the environment, mitigate the effects of climate change, and foster sustainable development.

The Environment Commissioner's office would be a particularly helpful agency to

provide input to and request that specific issues be investigated for response by the government through formal petitions or more informal engagement such as requesting to meet with the Commissioner or their staff to make suggestions on what they could be investigating as part of their annual reports to Parliament.

e. Leveraging CSTWS Structures and Working with TWS

CSTWS has indicated that it will likely begin its advocacy work by hiring someone who will work approximately half time. This is fairly limited in terms of resources, and it is recommended that supplemental resources be found amongst the membership and other organizational structures to support advocacy: the Conservation Affairs Committee and the TWS Conservation Affairs Network for example.

CSTWS appears to have robust member engagement processes, including newsletters, working groups and regular meetings. It is recommended that these be leveraged to help identify advocacy priorities, identify experts and champions willing to help move priorities forward, and identify members that have ties to government that can help open doors and make introductions.

As for a process of choosing priorities, one approach for CSTWS would be similar to that of TWS where chapters and CSTWS Standing Committee on wildlife conservation issues are solicited for potential priorities related to federal policies, provincial-federal agreements and wildlife professionals and then

organizational units rank the accumulated final list with the final set of priorities being subject to board approval.

Updates on advocacy efforts could then be sent regularly to members along with any requests for engagement. As there is broad expertise amongst members, it would be a shame to miss opportunities for members to engage in advocacy directly or at least to support advocacy efforts.

One criterion for choosing priorities could and probably should be whether there are expert members who are available to advise and support the person engaged to conduct advocacy directly for CSTWS. Without this support it is likely that CSTWS's greatest strength, the knowledge of its membership, would be missing from advocacy efforts.

TWS staff in the U.S. have advised that they are currently rebuilding advocacy capacity from scratch and are also in the process of choosing TWS priorities that will be worked on over the next several years. There are likely opportunities for CSTWS and TWS to collaborate on building their respective capacity while also coordinating on cross-border or shared priorities in future.

The Conservation Affairs Network (CAN) could be a venue for sharing information, coordinating some work and planning other aspects of advocacy in a cross-border context.

Given the capacities of both organizations currently, a first step for increasing collaborative engagement would be through information sharing and communications. Currently no Canadian policy headlines are included in the monthly CAN newsletters. TWS has offered to integrate Canadian content into the newsletters if CSTWS is able to provide content and updates

regularly. TWS has a strong communications program and has indicated that support for news coverage and communications on related to Canadian policy issues could be possible if CSTWS would find that helpful.

CSTWS and TWS could also collaborate on identifying priorities for advocacy efforts every two years in the fall which would coincide with biannual U.S. elections.

It is anticipated that having a binational advocacy plan in place would also be very palatable to potential funders in the coming years who will be looking to organizations with a vision and capacity to work both sides of the border.

It is recommended that CSTWS work with TWS to consider whether there are opportunities to leverage the funding and policy solutions being applied in the U.S. to aid in advocacy efforts by highlighting cross-border wildlife management disparities or the need for a coordinated response to wildlife management as many wildlife species utilize habitat on both sides of the border.

Additionally, the federal government has been sensitive to the issue of cross-border disparities and has responded with funding and programming commitments in response (ex. Great Lakes restoration).

f. Choosing Priorities

This report is not intended to advise on what CSTWS priorities should be but rather, provide advice on some potential considerations when setting priorities.

The sections above have already provided advice on engaging like-minded organizations and potential partners, CSTWS members and TWS. It has also provided situational considerations in choosing priorities, such as whether a priority is achievable in the short term in consideration of government priorities (ex. election platforms and mandate letters).

When priorities are either chosen or there are challenges in narrowing down a list to a manageable size, some find it helpful to engage in an analysis where proposed work is assessed against strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and constraints (SWOT-C) to refine priority lists and develop a plan to leverage strengths, improve weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and reduce threats.

Although there are many other campaign planning tools available, this SWOT-C analysis provides an effective framework for organizing and synthesizing information. The process often helps to identify issues or blind spots that may have to be addressed.

A plan resulting from such an analysis can include strategies for campaign messaging, targeted outreach, fundraising, or threat management.

An example related to migratory birds is provided in the discussion box opposite.

Example SWOT-C on Migratory Birds Protection

Strengths

- clear federal jurisdiction to manage migratory birds
- new Court case directed ECCC to take a more active role in managing threats to migratory birds through SARA
- many organizations to partner with on this issue including Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Birds Canada, Ducks Unlimited, etc.
- science of bird population declines is fairly clear and habitat loss and habitat degradation needs to be addressed

Weaknesses

- habitat ranges of many species are on provincial land so federal-provincial cooperation probably needed on some level

Opportunities

- new Court case creates opening to advocate for improvements
- federal government and many provinces have committed to 30 by 30 which could be leveraged for habitat protection for birds
- local, regional and national hunting groups would likely be supportive of efforts to increase certain migratory bird populations

Threats

- the provinces and businesses are likely to push back against any constraints on extractive industries
- some provinces and industries likely to oppose increased protection for migratory birds on provincial lands

Constraints

- Migratory bird regulations were updated in 2022 so unlikely that ECCC will want to revise these again soon
- funding for new or improved ECCC programs is unlikely for the foreseeable future
- CSTWS has limited resources so assessment needed to determine whether a regional or species-specific approach may be more achievable from advocacy and monitoring perspectives

g. Advocacy Partners & Coalition Building

It is generally beneficial to work in coalitions as part of advocacy to share ideas, collaborate on engagement, leverage the strengths of various members and to build greater momentum and pressure on a specific issue. There are many other organizations in Canada working at the federal level that have a deep history and understanding of wildlife advocacy. Amongst these groups are the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Nature Canada, the World Wildlife Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Canadian Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy Canada, and Ducks Unlimited. These organization, with many others, have historically organized around specific issues and priorities to advocate for change.

When CSTWS begins its advocacy work, it would be beneficial to begin connecting with individuals with these groups to determine what their priorities are and begin collaborative efforts where there are common priorities.

Once CSTWS has chosen priorities, it will become clear who the organization should begin partnering with as a quick scan of the websites and communications and media work of the organizations listed above will identify who is already working on an issue, who has secured some advocacy wins for wildlife and who is already partnered with other important allies. Conversations with those organizations will then undoubtedly lead to the identification of other potential partners.

It is also important to consider the party in power at any given time in determining both who to partner with but also how to engage in advocacy. It will be important to assess what the government priorities are and to assess which groups are most likely to have access to that particular government.

CSTWS should consider diversifying its partners to ensure that it will have the ability to work with any party that forms government.

It is also often important to work with organizations with offices or a presence in Quebec in order to ensure that a Francophone voice is part of your work. At the very least, having a French-speaking member of a coalition will be important when working on a national issue as the first language of many members of Parliament is French.

Indigenous organizations must also be partners in any work that may impact their interests. It will be important for CSTWS to build relationships with national or subnational Indigenous organizations working directly on wildlife management issues. For example, connecting with staff working on aspects of wildlife management and species at risk at the Assembly of First Nations, the various regional Métis governments, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to learn about their work and priorities and to determine if there are any opportunities to collaborate will be very important.

Partnering with and engaging in discussions with varied organizations will also help meet strategic plan objective of ensuring that priorities are not only chosen but also

implemented in consideration of a diversity of perspectives.

In consideration of CSTWS's limited resources, it is recommended that existing coalitions be leveraged to help with CSTWS priorities. Many of the organizations listed at the beginning of this section are members of the Green Budget Coalition (GBC). The purpose of the GBC is to provide advice to government on funding priorities for environmental protection coinciding with the annual budget cycle.

Although it is unlikely CSTWS could become a member of the GBC at this time given that many other conservation organizations are already members, any of these conservation members will likely be willing to propose that CSTWS priorities be championed considered by the GBC in its annual budget recommendations and submissions to government. CSTWS should contact the GBC lead (currently Andrew Van Iterson with Nature Canada) to ask which groups and people are leading the development of wildlife-related priorities for the budget recommendations and then speak with these people to ask that CSTWS priorities be brought forward in the GBC document. Engaging this effective coalition in this manner will be a good opportunity to create connections, learn what others are working on and start collaborating on joint priorities even outside of the budget cycle.

Case Study: CEPA Reform

A 5-year review of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* was conducted by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development between 2016 and 2018, leading to the 2023 legislation, *Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act* (Bill S-5) amending CEPA as follows: (1) requiring the government to respect a right to a healthy environment, (2) the creation of a publicly available "Watch List" of substances determined to be capable of becoming toxic, (3) directing Ministers to develop a new plan of chemical management priorities to manage toxic substances of highest risk and (4) a plan to replace, reduce or refine the use of vertebrate animal testing when assessing the potential harms that substances may pose to human health and the environment.

These amendments were made possible by organized advocacy by a broad spectrum of organizations, including a large number of NGOs, legal experts, health experts and others coordinating efforts by sharing submissions in advance, trying to coordinate who would stress issues in oral submissions and organizing to respond to pushback by industry and others. Many submissions made to government relied on successful approaches to chemical management and human rights found in other jurisdictions and many organizations stressed similar priorities to ensure that key issues were addressed.

Groups worked to convince both government staff and politicians that these changes were necessary through a large number of meetings and also engaged in public education and media work over many years to ensure the amendments were introduced. Although not every recommended reform was adopted, these were the most significant amendments to CEPA in over 20 years.

Many of these same groups continue to work on the implementation of these amendments by continuing to engage with government and tracking progress.

Case Study: Seal Watershed Protection

Sayisi Dene First Nation is leading an initiative to protect the entirety of the 50,000 km² Seal River watershed from industrial activity in partnership with its neighbours, Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Barren Lands First Nation and O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation.

The Qamanirjuaq caribou herd winter in the watershed with the latest estimate that the herd consists of 288,200 animals. The area is also recognized as an Important Bird Area.

First Nations have partnered with various other organizations to support the creation of an Indigenous Protected Area recognized through Manitoba legislation. The Indigenous Leadership Initiative, Land Needs Guardians and CPAWS Manitoba have partnered with First Nations to assist with the project forming the Seal Water Alliance, while various other organizations have helped by providing support at various junctures.

Although the Seal Watershed is not yet protected, interim protection was secured in January 2024 to allow planning to occur. It is anticipated that the region will be recognized under provincial law as an Indigenous Protected area in the coming years.

Key to success has been the hard work and ongoing advocacy by the Alliance, the historic 2023 commitment by the provincial government to protect 30 per cent of the province by 2030, support at both the provincial and federal levels for the planning process and funding obtained from various sources to support the Alliance's efforts. It is also beneficial that no industrial tenure (forestry or mining) exists in the watershed that could complicate planning and protection efforts as they progress.

h. Internal Capacity Building to Support Advocacy

This section touches briefly on some additional matters to consider in building CSTWS capacity to engage in advocacy. From the various discussions held with CSTWS, it is clear that organizational capacity (human resources and funding) to carry out advocacy and technical capacity (skills, knowledge and best practices) are currently the main areas of interest for CSTWS.

In terms of organizational capacity, it is clear that CSTWS needs to increase its staff capacity to properly engage in advocacy. It is not necessary to hire a large team to do effective advocacy. With approximately 3 priorities to work on initially, it is possible that a staff member could make good progress half time.

There are alternatives to hiring a staff member, including the use of contractors or volunteers. But most NGOs that engage in advocacy have staff working on issues and hire contractors or engage volunteers to assist with advocacy work on specific issues and with specific tasks.

It is unlikely that the Board or a Committee will be able to function as the primary organizational advocacy point of contact with government and partners. Advocacy work routinely requires organizations to provide quick responses to inquiries and it is doubtful a volunteer board or committee member will be able to pivot and respond as quickly as may be needed. It is also doubtful that board

and committee members will be able to commit to advocacy work half time or more.

Assuming CSTWS increases its staff to assist with advocacy, this individual will need the support and assistance of the Board, Committees, members and possibly contractors to assist at specific points of time. Ideally the Executive Director would also collaborate in advocacy efforts with any new staff and possibly even be the public spokesperson on specific priority issues.

Face-to-face meetings with politicians and partners will be an essential part of advocacy work. CSTWS should consider either hiring staff located in Ottawa or budgeting to allow for travel to Ottawa to ensure meetings can be carried out with partners and government to advance priorities.

It is also highly recommended that the people engaging in advocacy for CSTWS are able to commit to the work for several years as the bulk of advocacy involves relationship building with partners, government staff and politicians, media and others. Having people turnover regularly can be an impediment to impactful advocacy.

It is highly recommended that grant opportunities be identified that can assist with general capacity building at CSTWS. There are many foundations that are willing to assist small organizations build a solid foundation for future work (up to date funding opportunities are available through Environment Funders Canada). For example, a grant could be sought to hire staff to help lead the organization's initial priority identification process, build some internal

communications structure around advocacy and to begin outreach to potential partners.

With regard to technical capacity, there are various organizations offering resources to help with NGO capacity building. For example, both the Canadian Environment Network (RCEN) and the Sustainability Network offer venues and programs that will assist CSTWS increase its skills, knowledge and overall capacity to engage in meaningful advocacy. The various learning opportunities provided by the Sustainability Network in particular can be invaluable. Working with these organizations will also create opportunities to connect with other organizations with similar interests and continue to grow a list of potential partners for future work.

i. Professional Certification in the Advocacy Context

CSTWS has requested recommendations for potential models for leveraging and implementing the TWS certification framework for wildlife biologists in Canada. This question is very broad and beyond the scope of a report focused on advocacy. It is also beyond the expertise of the author of this report. The question has therefore been approached with a view to providing advice on the importance of professional certification in the realm of engaging in advocacy. Beyond the advocacy context, CSTWS may find professional certification valuable to foster better linkages internationally, and with other professional groups, including engineers and foresters, with whom CSTWS may seek to collaborate.

Although there are some jurisdictions in Canada where professional certification is

probably an expectation for anyone claiming professional credentials and making recommendations in that capacity to government (biologists in Alberta and British Columbia and professional engineers in most provinces for example), there are no such expectations specifically at the federal level.

Although obtaining professional certification as a wildlife biologist through TWS is not a prerequisite for members of the organization or the organization itself to engage in persuasive and impactful advocacy pertaining to wildlife management federally, the TWS certification process will be beneficial in demonstrating that CSTWS is a professional organization whose advice should be trusted and given full consideration by government policy-makers.

As mentioned above, it is recommended that the expertise of CSTWS members should be leveraged as part of advocacy activities.



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CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Wildlife management is not specifically mentioned in either the *Constitution Act, 1867* or the *Constitution Act, 1982*. In contrast, the regulation of natural resources is assigned to the provinces while fisheries (including marine mammals) are a responsibility assigned to the federal government. Although the provinces have jurisdiction over natural resources, which touches on many aspects of wildlife management, the federal government retains significant responsibility over aspects of wildlife management including migratory birds, species at risk, and wildlife on designated federal lands.

2. As the lines of jurisdiction are blurry between the provinces and federal government, from an advocacy perspective it is often wise to coordinate efforts at the provincial and federal levels in the hopes that one of the other, or ideally both, will take action to address an issue. It is appropriate that CSTWS dedicate time and resources to begin a more focused advocacy program at the federal level as a result.

3. No legal impediments exist that would preclude CSTWS from engaging in advocacy at the federal level but there are constraints and procedures applicable that can be summarized as follows:

a. CSTWS will have to ensure that advocacy undertaken is aligned with its charitable purpose described in documents filed with Revenue Canada. An update to CSTWS's charitable purpose to include advocacy is necessary to provide clarity in this regard.

b. CSTWS cannot devote any part of its resources to the direct or indirect support of, or

opposition to, a political party or candidate for public office (i.e. stick to the issues and avoid partisan politics).

c. Any CSTWS employee or contractor engaged in lobbying government officials will need to register as a lobbyist and report activities to the lobbyist registry (volunteers do not need to report).

d. CSTWS can engage in advocacy during elections but will need to carefully craft messages and work to ensure that it does not appear to support or oppose a specific party or candidate.

4. CSTWS has a unique expertise beyond a typical charity working on wildlife conservation in Canada and there is a significant opportunity for CSTWS to contribute to positive outcomes for wildlife nationally. CSTWS's unique "value set" should be leveraged and highlighted both within the conservation community and with government officials and decision-makers to ensure CSTWS becomes known as an organization that can be relied upon for solutions. Once this trust is established it will become much easier to engage in advocacy and to also, as CSTWS's resources are limited, leverage aligned partners to collaborate to achieve CSTWS's goals.

5. The Green Budget Coalition would typically be an ideal point to start advocacy work federally. The GBC has members engaged in wildlife conservation already and there are opportunities to feed suggestions to the GBC directly through these organizations rather than attempting to become a member directly. Engaging at this level will save resources but also, importantly, allow CSTWS to develop its own unique identity and relationships with government decision makers outside of this

coalition. Direct membership in the GBC could be pursued in future if it is viewed as necessary to CSTWS's work.

6. Although the GBC will be a good point of initial engagement, CSTWS should engage with and collaborate with a variety of organizations to ensure it is able to work with any party that forms government.

7. Engaging directly with departmental staff is as important as discussions with ministers and their political staff. Engaging with departmental staff and finding internal champions on an issue is often essential to success. Regular meetings with department staff responsible for an issue is crucial as they often maintain carriage of issues beyond cabinet shuffles and elections and will be responsible for informing political staff and ministers on issues of importance.

8. The Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC) is composed of the wildlife directors and agency leads responsible for wildlife conservation in Canada, including the 13 provinces and territories, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Parks Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Although CSTWS already has ties to this organization, relationships could be strengthened. The CWDC's national collaboration on wildlife and biodiversity management (and similar working groups as they are created and evolve) would be one venue CSTWS could seek to engage and influence agenda topics and outcomes.

9. The *Constitution Act, 1982* recognized and affirmed existing rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Canada also recently recognized the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* through statutory adoption. The perspectives and rights of Canada's Indigenous Peoples are increasingly

forming a significant part of the wildlife management framework as a result.

Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples is increasingly important to effective, equitable and resilient outcomes and has recently become a pre-requisite to action on an issue by the federal government. CSTWS should seek to engage with Indigenous organizations – national level organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, Metis National Council and/or Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami perhaps – on priority setting and advocacy approaches.

10. Although there may be the perception within CSTWS that its U.S. counterpart has an established advocacy apparatus, TWS has advised that it is currently rebuilding its advocacy capacity from scratch. There are likely opportunities for CSTWS and TWS to collaborate on building their respective capacities while also coordinating on cross-border or shared issues. CSTWS and TWS could collaborate on identifying priorities for advocacy efforts every two years in the fall which would coincide with biannual U.S. elections. CSTWS should work with TWS to consider whether it would make sense to leverage the funding and policy solutions being applied to aid in advocacy efforts by highlighting cross-border wildlife management disparities.

11. CSTWS appears to have robust member engagement processes. It is recommended that this be leveraged to help identify advocacy priorities. A list of potential priorities could be sent to members, and they could vote or identify other potential priorities, with the final set of priorities being subject to board approval. Updates on advocacy efforts could then be sent regularly to members along with any requests for engagement. As there is broad expertise amongst members, it would be a shame to miss

opportunities for members to engage in advocacy directly or at least to support advocacy efforts. One criterion for choosing priorities could and probably should be whether there are expert members who are available to advise and support the person engaged to conduct advocacy directly for CSTWS. Without this support it is likely that CSTWS's greatest strength, the knowledge of its membership, would be missing from advocacy efforts.

12. It is recommended that CSTWS increase its capacity by increasing staff capacity to engage in advocacy and that the organization engage with capacity building organizations that will be able to support staff develop advocacy skills, knowledge and best practices. The Board, Committees and members should establish direct points of internal engagement to ensure that this individual is supported by CSTWS in their advocacy efforts.

13. Offering professional certification as a wildlife biologist is not a prerequisite for members of the organization or the organization itself to engage in persuasive and impactful advocacy pertaining to wildlife management federally but certification can be helpful in demonstrating professionalism. The existing expertise of CSTWS members should be leveraged as part of advocacy activities. Beyond the advocacy context, as some members have stressed, CSTWS may also find professional certification valuable to foster better linkages internationally, and with other groups of professionals.

APPENDIX A – REPORT SCOPING QUESTIONS

Research and recommend approaches on how to most effectively build capacity in addressing Canadian federal wildlife issues within the limitations of CSTWS charitable status. The key deliverable of this Contract is a report that includes the following:

- a. **Legal basis.** Describe the legal basis by which CSTWS can engage in federal policy given the federal context and CSTWS' non-profit status.
- b. **Federal jurisdictions.** Identify the federal ministries that have key conservation priorities and describe the basis of their jurisdictions and constitutional oversight relative to the provinces.
- c. **Federal-provincial agreements.** Identify the key relational agreements between the federal and provincial government, describe their influence on federal policy, and how they may influence CSTWS engagement in federal policy.
- d. **Monitoring federal conservation issues.** Identify the best means of monitoring top federal conservation issues and establish policy priorities on which CSTWS should focus.
- e. **Approaches for input.** Identify the points/best avenues in the parliamentary procedures and budgetary procedures for CSTWS government engagement for providing direct input into federal policy.
- f. **Tools.** Recommend the best tools and avenues for broad membership engagement to provide input on federal conservation policies.
- g. **Charitable status constraints.** Detail on the constraints on lobbying for registered charities in Canada; and develop a model and proposal for Phase II in consultation with CSTWS Board of Directors.
- h. **Partnerships.** Identify key potential partnerships with the Canadian

environmental community and describe their mission, capacity, approaches, recent efforts and their effectiveness in engaging in federal policy.

- i. **Linkages to TWS's capacity.** Explore and recommend how CSTWS's federal policy engagement can best link to TWS's framework for policy priority setting and engagement.
- j. **CSTWS-TWS working together.** Identify approaches to best develop cross-border capacities for CSTWS and TWS's to collaborate on support conservation issues of mutual interest.
- k. **TWS Toolkit.** Update the TWS Conservation Affairs Network Policy Toolkit for Canada as needed to ensure linkages to provincial legislative processes.
- l. **Certification.** Recommend potential models for TWS certification across Canada.

APPENDIX B – USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

a. Federal Government Departments and Offices Mentioned in this Report

Prime Minister’s Mandate Letters to Ministers: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters>

Canada Revenue Agency charity portal: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/operating-a-registered-charity/making-changes/changing-a-charitys-purposes.html>

Elections Canada: <https://www.elections.ca/>

Lobbyist Registry: <https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/>

House of Commons Standing Committees: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/committees/en/Home>

Senate Standing Committees: <https://sencanada.ca/en/committees>

Auditor General of Canada and Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development: <https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/>

b. Networks, Coalitions and Organizations

Green Budget Coalition: <https://greenbudget.ca/>

Canadian Environmental Network: <https://www.rcen.ca/>

Sustainability Network: <https://www.sustainabilitynetwork.ca/>

GreenPAC: <https://www.greenpac.ca/>

Assembly of First Nations: <https://afn.ca/>

Métis National Council: <https://www.metisnation.ca/>

Manitoba Métis Federation: <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/>

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami: <https://www.itk.ca/>

c. Potential Funders

Environment Funders Canada: <https://environmentfunders.ca/membership/members/>

APPENDIX C – CONSERVATION AFFAIRS NETWORK POLICY TOOLKIT FOR CANADA

The following document is an edited version of the Conservation Affairs Network Policy Toolkit section applicable to Canada. The edits are fairly minor and reflect the common parlance used in the Canadian system of governance.

5.4 CANADIAN FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Your advocacy efforts are key to helping shape federal, provincial and territorial laws and budgets. There are many points in the legislative process at which you can become involved - from even before bills are introduced, to introduction, consideration, and passage into law. The importance of getting involved cannot be overstated; most legislators know very little about wildlife related issues and the impact their policies can have on wildlife conservation and wildlife professionals. They have much to learn from you as a wildlife professional intimately familiar with the issues.

It is important to remember that your provincial, territorial and federal representatives work for you and the other constituents in their riding. Members of the House of Commons (MPs) are elected by a majority of their constituents and remain interested in local issues and how they can work to benefit the community. Most also want to be re-elected and recognize the need to keep constituents happy. At the same time, they must balance competing interests, including the need to support effective programs while remaining fiscally responsible.

The following is a summary of the typical legislative process for bills and suggestions on how you can become more involved in the process at each step. The legislative process is generally the same at federal, provincial and territorial levels, with the key exception that the federal Parliament is a bicameral legislature, meaning there are two legislative bodies: the House of Commons and the Senate. In order for federal legislation to be enacted, it must be passed by a majority in each body. The majority of government bills are introduced in the House and after achieving approvals there are then considered in the Senate. Private bills are often introduced in both the House of Commons and the Senate.

Provincial legislatures are, by contrast, unicameral as there is only one legislative body (referred to as the legislative assembly, national assembly, or house of assembly) that considers bills.

Please note there is some variation in the legislative processes in each province and territory and every legislature have specific rules of procedure that are typically put in place at the beginning of each legislative cycle.

1. Drafting and 1st Reading

Most legislation originates with the government in the form of a government bill. Government bills are typically considered by Cabinet prior to introduction and are usually introduced by a Minister in the House. Bills introduced by individual MPs are known as private members' bills. Private member bills can cover any topic but cannot be "money bills" that either impose taxes or impose spending requirements on the government. Similarly, the Senate does not have the power to introduce money bills.

Government bills typically go through the following process of introduction:



- a) If the Cabinet approves a policy proposal, the responsible Ministry issues drafting instructions to the Legislative Section of the Department of Justice that is then responsible for drafting the bill.
- b) Draft bills are prepared in two official languages and then approved by the responsible Minister and Cabinet prior to being introduced in the House.

Getting Involved:

Units can go to a friendly government MPs and request that a bill be drafted to fund programs or projects, address a problem, change policy, etc. Units can also work with MPs, Ministers or their staff to influence proposed or existing bill language. Private member bills do not pass very often but they often lay the ground work for future government bills when there is a change in government so their utility should not be ignored.

When the bill is introduced for first reading in Parliament is it then considered formally introduced and is given a number: C-# for House bills and S-# for Senate bills.

Getting Involved:

When favorable legislation is introduced, units can issue a press release and/or write letters applauding the bill's introduction. Legislators appreciate public acknowledgment of their work, especially when it comes from constituents and is shared with others in their district.

If unfavorable legislation is introduced, it is important to begin submitting feedback to government and opposition parties at your earliest opportunity. Formal suggested changes can be made at committee.

A Minister may also move that a bill be referred to a committee before second reading. This allows members of a committee to examine the principle of a bill before approval by the House and to propose amendments to alter its scope. The resultant next stage is a combination of the report stage and the second reading.

2. Second Reading:

During second reading, the contents of the bill are debated and generally referred to committee for a clause-by-clause examination.

Getting Involved:

If an unfavorable bill is introduced, it is also important to speak to your MP and others MPs in government to request that the bill either be amended in committee or defeated at the earliest reading opportunity.



3. Consideration in Committee

Once adopted, the Bill is referred to a legislative, standing, or special committee, or to the Committee of the Whole.

Committee Steps

1. Consideration of the bill through a clause-by-clause study.
2. Hearings may be held where witnesses and experts are either invited or summoned to provide the Committee with information and help in improving the bill.
3. Each committee can hold a “mark-up” session during which it makes recommended revisions and additions.
4. After the bill has been reviewed and amended, committee staff prepares a written report explaining why they favor the bill, and what amendments were made (if any).
5. The Committee provides this report to the House and the House considers the amendments proposed and votes for or against them.

In the House of Commons, committees that regularly interact with legislation concerning wildlife include:

- Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (ENVI) – Oversees the activities of Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada. Administers environmental legislation including the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Species at Risk Act, the Migratory Bird Convention Act, and the Canada Wildlife Act
- Committee on Natural Resources (RNNR) – Provides oversight on the Department of Natural Resources (NRCan)
- Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) – Oversees operations covered by the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNAC) and the Department of Indigenous Services (ISC)
- Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) – Oversees legislation affecting Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Canadian Coast Guard
- Committee on Government Operations and Estimates (OGGO) – Key to the consideration of budgets and is roughly equivalent to the US House Appropriations Committee

In the Canadian Senate, committees of interest include:



- Committee on Energy, the Environment, and Natural Resources (ENEV) – Interacts with legislation relating to Canada’s National Parks, migratory bird protections, threatened wildlife, and the Species at Risk Act
- Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO) – Legislation impacting federally managed forests
- Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (APPA) – Similar jurisdiction to INAN in the House of Commons
- Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (POFO) – Similar jurisdiction to FOPO in the House of Commons
- Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration (CIBA) – Similar to the Senate Committee on Appropriations in the U.S., and OGGO in the House of Commons

Getting Involved:

A more common way to influence the content of a bill is to write a letter to the committee while the bill is under consideration. (See [Section 3.3](#) for tips on writing letters to legislators). You may also consider meeting directly with MPs or Senators, as appropriate, who serve in important or influential roles on the committee. In person meetings can be very effective at expressing your position and hearing feedback from the member and their staff on the proposed legislation. Units may also write to Committee members and encourage a hearing on a bill that is important to them. You may also consider providing suggested questions or comments for friendly MPs on the committee to ask of witnesses. It is also important to coordinate efforts at committee with other aligned groups or people.

In order to take advantage of the opportunity to provide testimony at committee meetings, you should contact the clerk of the committee to request to speak and they will add you to the list of potential speakers. MPs on the committee then get to request who they would like to appear so speaking with friendly MPs to ask that they make such a request is often necessary.

4. Third Reading

This reading is the last opportunity for the House to amend the bill. The House debates and votes on the final bill as amended and the bill is printed for the last time. Once the bill has been passed it is sent to the other House (i.e. if passed in the House, it is referred to the Senate) and the process starts again from first reading.

Getting Involved:

Advocates can contact MPs or Senators directly with suggestions to improve the bill for wildlife.



5. Conference Committee

If language within House and Senate bills differs, the House may elect to accept the Senate's amendments. If the House does not agree with the Senate, it can adopt a motion stating the reason for disagreement. If the Senate wishes to alter the amendment, it sends a message back to the House, which then accepts or rejects the proposed changes.

If an agreement cannot be reached through this exchange, the Parliamentary House with possession of the bill can request a conference. The objective of the Conference Committee is to reach a compromise – which must be approved by both the House and the Senate. Although this practice is available, it has fallen into disuse.

Historically the Senate has reviewed legislation from a less partisan standpoint, and is likely to pass bills that the House proposes but the Senate does amend House bills in some instances.

Getting Involved:

See section 3 (above) for suggestions on how to interact with Committee members.

6. Royal Assent

After a bill has passed in both the House and Senate, it is presented to the Governor General for assent. It is only after royal assent that the bill becomes law. This process is mostly a formality and there are no meaningful opportunities to influence or change a bill at this point in the process. Once the Governor General gives a bill Royal Assent it becomes a law and is assigned an official Chapter number (i.e. Bill C-7 became Chapter 1 of the Statutes of Canada, 2000).

Getting Involved:

Units may wish to congratulate government on the passage of good bills into law at this point or give an award to legislators or other elected officials who support their work and mission. Elected officials need to know when they are doing something favorable just as much as when they are doing something unfavorable.

More importantly, all laws only as effective as their implementation. It is at this point that the efficacy of a new law will become apparent. It is through the subsequent drafting and enactment of regulations (typically enacted by Cabinet's own processes) and program spending that laws are truly put into place. The impacts of laws on wildlife and wildlife professionals can be influenced significantly at these junctures. In fact it can be argued that engaging with the development of regulations and spending plans is at least as important, if not more so, than the wording of the law itself as these points dictate on-the-ground implementation of the law.



5.5 CANADIAN FEDERAL BUDGETING PROCESS

Canada's annual federal budget cycle begins following a recess of Parliament in June of each year. The federal budget sets the government's fiscal agenda for the coming year, and lays out a plan for how priorities will be addressed to fulfill that agenda.

Step 1: Cabinet Budget Preparation

Purpose: The Cabinet is tasked with reviewing information on the federal economic and fiscal outlook, public issues/concerns, and any likely fiscal policy or major government priorities for the coming year, to help inform agency and department budget preparations later in the process.

Process: Two Cabinet retreats occur between June and September, where the Cabinet engages in discussions around major fiscal priorities for the coming year. The Minister of Finance is responsible for providing reports and key policy areas to inform these discussions.

Getting Involved:

Contact ministers to promote your priorities (e.g. increased funding for specific programs, broader department strategies, etc.) during the budget preparation process.

Step 2: Pre-Budget Consultation

Purpose: Budget consultation incorporates needs and feedback from central agencies and departments, provincial finance ministers, the Standing Committee on Finance (Standing Committee), and members of the public, into a final budget strategy.

Process: The Standing Committee facilitates public participation in the federal budgeting process with a call to all interested parties to submit their thoughts on federal spending priorities during budget consultation. Input received during the consultation process, recommendations made by the Standing Committee, and proposed needs identified by central and provincial agencies and departments, are utilized by the Minister of Finance to create the final budget strategy.

Getting Involved:

Submit requests for funding of relevant legislation and programs during the prebudget consultation process. Template language or guiding questions are often provided to help craft these requests. Requests may entail calls for specific funding allocations to agency and department programs, or broader calls for the implementation of new policy or amendments to existing legislation.



Chapter 5.5

Step 3: Review and Approval of Budget

Purpose: The Minister of Finance and Prime Minister must approve a final Budget strategy following a review of the strategy by the Cabinet. Budget estimates are presented to Parliament for debate and final allocation.

Process: As part of the approval of the Budget strategy, the Department of Finance produces estimates of funding allocations required to meet the policy priorities identified for the upcoming year. This information is reviewed for approval by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. This process typically culminates with the Minister of Finance's Budget Speech, which formally announces the government's Budget. The main estimates presented in the government's Budget are immediately tabled for debate and review by the House of Commons and all relevant subcommittees.

Step 4: Appropriations Acts for Main and Supplemental Estimates.

Purpose: Estimated allocations within the Budget are reviewed within the House of Commons to inform all necessary Appropriations Acts. Appropriations Acts are reviewed and passed by both chambers of Parliament before being presented to the Crown for final assent.

Process: All relevant standing Committees within the House of Commons review the detailed estimates included in the federal Budget. Although standing committees do not have the power to increase these estimates, they may vote to approve, reject, or decrease them. This review must be completed by May 31st of each year.

Concurrent with standing committee review of Budget estimates, the Secretary of the Treasury Board produces Appropriation Act No. 1, an interim supply bill to fund the government in between the tabling of the Estimates and May 31. Appropriation Act No. 2 will then allocate the remaining funds required to meet the agreed-upon Estimates.

Getting Involved:

Contact MPs during their review of the Appropriations Acts to provide input on specific program allocations contained within the bills.

