

# **RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL**

A NEW MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING MODEL

FOR

FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARK RECREATION

## **WORKING PRINCIPLES AND OPTIONS**

A BACKGROUND PAPER

SUPPORTING INPUT FROM  
FIRST NATIONS & PROVINCE-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS  
WITH INTERESTS IN FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARK RECREATION  
MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In May, 2002, the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection appointed an expert Panel to review the Ministry's fish, wildlife and park recreation services and recommend opportunities to improve existing management models and funding sources.

This paper provides the background and reasons for the Recreation Stewardship Panel's (the Panel) assignment, and the existing policy and direction that guide that assignment. This paper also presents the Panel's working principles that have been prepared as a guide for the identification of options for a new approach to management and funding.

This paper is intended to be the basis for discussion with First Nations and organizations that are province-wide in scope and have an interest in the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities. This discussion focuses on province-wide organizations as a way to directly link to the Panel's mandate to make recommendations on opportunities to improve province-wide management and funding. This discussion is set to take place on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002.

Following the information provided at the August 22 / 23 workshop, the Panel will prepare draft recommendations which will be made available to the general public for comment. These draft recommendations are now scheduled for release on September 16, 2002. Following review of the input received on the draft recommendations, the Panel will prepare its final report and make its recommendations to Ministry Joyce Murray on November 29, 2002.

## **THE CHALLENGE**

British Columbia's fish, wildlife and park resources are without equal in the world. Outdoor recreation is a cultural trademark of the province and a defining characteristic of our quality of life. Recreational use supports significant social, health and economic benefits that are particularly valued in the rural regions of our province.

Through the Core Review and Service Plan processes, the province has confirmed the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection's mandate, which is: 1) to maintain environmental protection standards; 2) to maintain and restore biodiversity; and, 3) to provide fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities. Ministry budgets have now been allocated to reflect the relative order of priority of this mandate.

The public has a keen interest in maintaining and expanding opportunities to use and enjoy fish, wildlife and parks. However, provision of these opportunities should be less reliant on the general taxpayer and more dependant upon those who most directly benefit from their use. While the province must continue to conserve and protect its fish, wildlife and park resources, we also need to enhance tourism, create jobs, and help expand and diversify the economy of British Columbia.

The challenge is to find new ways to involve all users in paying appropriately for the provision of recreational services and to secure the involvement of all communities and interests in the service delivery. This challenge brings with it a special opportunity to significantly increase both the level of conservation and protection of the province's fish, wildlife and parks and the support of all those that use and cherish these assets.

## **THE VISION FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARK RECREATION**

The following is the province's vision for the future of fish, wildlife and park recreation.

Fish, wildlife and park resources continue to be deeply treasured by British Columbians and are a cornerstone of the provincial tourism economy. The province is renowned for its expanding world class outdoor recreation opportunities. Services that support outdoor recreation are supported by the users and are delivered though a variety of public, private, not-for-profit sector and First Nation partners and have direct links to local communities. Conservation and protection of British Columbia's fish, wildlife and parks are not diminished by recreational uses and are a showcase to the world of British Columbia's commitment to sustainable resource management.

The recommendations of the Recreation Stewardship Panel will contribute to this vision.

## **EXISTING PROVINCIAL AND MINISTRY POLICY AND DIRECTION**

The assignment of the Recreation Stewardship Panel is directed by the following Provincial and Ministry policy and direction statements.

## **MINISTRY VISION**

A clean, healthy and naturally diverse environment that enriches people's lives, now and in the future.

## **MINISTRY MISSION**

The ministry helps British Columbians limit the adverse effects of their individual and collective activities on the environment. The ministry works to protect human health and safety by ensuring clean and safe water, land and air; to maintain and restore the natural diversity of ecosystems, and fish and wildlife species and their habitat; and to provide park and wildlife recreation services and opportunities to British Columbians and visitors.

## **CORE BUSINESS AREAS**

The ministry has three core business areas, in order of priority:

- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION – of air, water and land quality.
- ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – of biodiversity, including wildlife, fish and protected areas;
- PARK AND WILDLIFE RECREATION MANAGEMENT – including hunting, angling, park recreation and wildlife viewing.

## **NON- CORE FUNCTIONS**

Fewer ministry staff and funds will be directed to:

- Directly protecting habitat and fish and wildlife species where risks are relatively low;
- Providing camping and recreational services such as hunting and angling opportunities (including stocking of lakes and rivers) where recreational use is low or costs cannot be recovered (cost recovery will be largely dependent on the management and funding model adopted for parks, and hunting and angling);
- Providing face-to-face client service where this can more efficiently be delivered through web-based information.
- In addition, the ministry will eliminate the current subsidies extended to some recreational user groups.

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA'S DRAFT SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES**

The intent of the following principles is to provide British Columbia's resource economy with a practical context for decision analysis. The principles will be used by resource ministries to assist with major policy

and legislative initiatives involving land and water resources. As such, these principles provide fundamental direction to the Panel.

- **Accountability:** Setting performance-based standards and indicators and implementing mechanisms for compliance, auditing and reporting on progress towards sustainable resource management. An effective enforcement regime is a key part of accountability.
- **Certainty:** Making timely and clear resource management decisions within a predictable and understandable regulatory framework.
- **Competitiveness:** Ensuring that British Columbia remains internationally competitive by removing barriers to investment and promoting open trade.
- **Continual improvement:** Learning from the past and looking for new and improved approaches to resource management.
- **Efficiency:** Maximizing the net benefits arising from the allocation, development and use of natural resources.
- **Innovation:** Encouraging innovative approaches, technologies and skills to ensure the sustainability of natural resources.
- **Integration:** Ensuring that resource management decisions integrate economic, environmental and social considerations for the benefit of present and future generations.
- **Science-based decision-making:** Making justifiable decisions informed by science-based information and risk assessment.
- **Shared responsibility:** Encouraging co-operation among First Nations; federal, provincial and local governments; industry and non-governmental organizations in developing and implementing resource management policies.
- **Transparency:** Establishing open and understandable decision-making processes including consulting with key interests prior to making decisions. Transparency also includes the public release of monitoring and compliance records, and tracking of sustainability indicators.

The above principles are currently the subject of a broad consultation process with government agencies, private sector, First Nations and non-government organizations.

## **THE PANEL'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The recreation services provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection - services in BC Parks, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities, and the provincial freshwater hatchery program - are deeply valued by BC residents and a drawing card for visitors from around the world.

Government is committed to improving the delivery of this world-class recreational experience in a way that is financially sustainable and creates benefits for everyone involved - local communities, tourism operators, First Nations and the public at large.

Government is also committed to balance the provincial budget by fiscal year 2004/2005. The three-year service plan for the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, published in February, indicates that "fewer ministry staff and funds will be directed to providing camping and recreational services such as hunting and angling opportunities (including stocking of lakes and rivers) where recreational use is low or costs cannot be recovered (cost recovery will be largely dependent on the management and funding model adopted for parks, and hunting and angling)."

To that end, the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection has appointed an expert Panel to review these services and recommend improved management models and funding sources.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PANEL**

The three-year service plan for the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection calls for the development of "a new management model for park and wildlife recreation that connects fees with services and opportunities and allows greater public involvement in decision making."

To guide the government's review, the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection has appointed a five-member Panel with expertise in the areas of stewardship, recreation and management. The Panel will make recommendations to government on improvements to the management model and funding sources for the recreation services delivered by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. Accordingly, the Panel is required to carry out the following responsibilities:

The Panel will limit the scope of their work to management and resourcing issues facing parks, fish and wildlife recreation programs and work within the scope of previous decisions made in the Core Review, Service Plan and Budget processes.

The Panel will identify and evaluate options for funding, service delivery and public involvement in ongoing delivery of park, fish and wildlife recreation opportunities.

The Panel will investigate and examine the policy and management framework that exists in other leading jurisdictions. This will include reviewing such concepts as the establishment of a supporting foundation or trust and the creation of a governing or advisory authority or board.

The Panel will consult with British Columbians on the options they develop.

The Panel will submit final written recommendations to the Minister no later than November 29, 2002.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

The review process will occur in two phases.

### **Phase 1**

During phase 1 the Panel will work with Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection staff to confirm the principles established in the Core Review, Service Plan and Budget processes.

The Panel will then develop, assess and recommend policy options based on these principles.

The Panel, in partnership with staff from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection will develop a consultation model and process during this time period.

This consultation model will be completed and announced no later than July 1, 2002.

### **Phase 2**

During phase 2 the Panel will undertake targeted consultations with key stakeholders and accept written submissions from the public in response to the policy options developed during phase one.

The Panel will submit draft recommendations to the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection by September 13, 2002, which will be released for public discussion and feedback, resulting in final recommendations by November 29, 2002.

Implementation actions will be initiated in 2003 and completed by the end of 2004.

## **THE PANEL'S WORKING PRINCIPLES**

### ***Preamble***

British Columbia's wildlife, fish and protected areas are a unique world asset. Outdoor recreation is a British Columbia cultural trademark. Participation in outdoor recreation based on these assets is a defining characteristic of the quality of life in British Columbia. Recreational use of the public lands and natural resources of the province has significant social, health and economic benefits. Recreation use also enhances conservation by creating a vested interest in protecting these assets.

Accordingly, the Recreation Stewardship Panel adopts the following principles to guide the preparation of recommendations to the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection on the management and funding of wildlife, fish and protected area recreation opportunities.

### ***Principles***

#### **Conservation**

- 1 The province's fundamental obligation to conserve and protect the wildlife, fish and protected areas of British Columbia will guide the development and management of recreation opportunities.
- 2 Conservation and protection are the responsibility of government and will be supported by general tax revenue.

#### **First Nations**

- 3 First Nations have traditional and ongoing rights related to wildlife, fish and protected areas. The province will work cooperatively with First Nations in developing and managing recreation opportunities.

#### **Education and Interpretation**

- 4 Learning about the natural world is integral to conservation and outdoor recreation and its cost will be shared by the province and recreation users.

## **Partnerships and Co-ordination**

- 5 Recreation management will include explicit mechanisms for public consultation.
- 6 Provincial agencies with outdoor recreation mandates will formally coordinate planning and management to ensure consistency.
- 7 The province will pursue partnerships with First Nations, local governments, the private sector and non-profit sector to increase capacity to manage and provide land and recreation services.

## **Land and Infrastructure**

- 8 Public land designated for wildlife, fish and protected area recreation will remain publicly owned, although land exchanges or transfers will be considered where they enhance conservation and recreation values.
- 9 Basic public infrastructure for recreation services and access, where provided, is a provincial responsibility and will be paid from general tax revenue. Enhanced infrastructure may be provided by the province and others. Non-government ownership of such enhanced infrastructure on publicly owned-land will not confer land ownership in law or in practice.
- 10 The public will have a right of access to Crown land used for outdoor recreation.

## **Private Sector Role**

- 11 The province may contract with, or licence private recreation service providers where consistent with the overall objectives of these principles and where there are no risks of monopoly control or to conservation values.

## **Revenue and Fees**

- 12 Recreational user fees will cover costs, including costs of operating the service, and infrastructure repair and replacement. Exceptions may be made for access, public health and safety purposes, or to maintain services in locations having provincially significant recreation values.

- 13 Non-resident recreational users will pay fees based on competitive market value for recreation opportunities where this value is higher than costs.
- 14 Commercial service providers will pay market prices for the right to use and benefit from wildlife, fish and protected area resources.
- 15 Recreation fee revenue will be connected and dedicated to the provision of recreation opportunities.
- 16 Setting of fees will be delegated to the Ministry to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances while protecting the public interest.
- 17 Fee discounts based on inability to pay may be considered through specific policy, not by compromising the above principles.

Specific exceptions to these principles may be permitted where consistent with the basic objective of conservation, protection and access to outdoor recreation.

All of the above principles apply to both non-consumptive and consumptive uses. The term land, as used in these principles, includes both land and water.

## **WORKING PRINCIPLES AND CONSEQUENCES**

The above working principles are repeated below, with some of the consequences that arise from these working principles.

### **Conservation**

- 1 The province's fundamental obligation to conserve and protect the wildlife, fish and protected areas of British Columbia will guide the development and management of recreation opportunities.**

#### Consequences

- Clearly identifies the province's priority.
- Provides direction for Ministry budget allocations.
- Implicitly includes an obligation for habitat conservation and protection.
- Will limit the type, location or volume of recreation opportunities, and therefore tourism opportunities.
- This principle implies a management model that integrates both conservation and recreation.

- There are implications for organizations that currently deliver some of these types of conservation and recreation services such as BC Hydro and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.
- There is a need for a clear province-wide strategy that describes the purposes and appropriate uses of the protected lands of the province. Determining appropriate services may result in some conflicts, including legal challenges, around appropriateness and acceptable level of impact (social and environmental impacts).
- This principle will require a process for determining appropriate use.
- The delivery of conservation by the province will be clarified through other initiatives such as the Biodiversity Strategy, Living Rivers Strategy, Species At Risk Strategy, BC Trust for Public Lands and the Wildlife Harvest Strategy.

**2 Conservation and protection are the responsibility of government and will be supported by general tax revenue.**

Consequences

- Does not preclude non-government contributions to provincial conservation goals.
- To make this principle meaningful, the province must identify conservation standards and support an appropriate level of funding and management effort toward conservation and protection.
- Does not preclude an obligation for the Province to work co-operatively with the federal and local governments, First Nations, industry, educational institutions and non-government organizations to accomplish conservation goals.
- The public will recognise that the province has conservation as a priority

**First Nations**

**3 First Nations have traditional and ongoing rights related to wildlife, fish and protected areas. The province will work cooperatively with First Nations in developing and managing recreation opportunities.**

Consequences

- Over time, will improve management delivery through better relationships with First Nations.
- Will incur costs for the Province and involve more complex management and delivery systems.
- Will build First Nations' management capacity and provide economic opportunities.
- May improve compliance (enforcement), especially in remote areas.

- Mechanisms have to be developed in order to increase First Nation participation in the provision of recreation opportunities.
- Successful existing agreements need to be supported as a priority (e.g. Muskwa Kechika, Central Region Board, and park co-operative management agreements).

## **Education and Interpretation**

### **4 Learning about the natural world is integral to conservation and outdoor recreation and its cost will be shared by the province and recreation users.**

#### Consequences

- Education and interpretation programs will strengthen both conservation and recreation.
- Some education and interpretative initiatives will have to be funded solely by the province; others will have to be funded solely by the user. For example:
  - Education and interpretation initiatives deemed necessary for conservation purposes will be funded by the province.
  - Education and interpretation initiatives for recreation purposes will be funded by the user.
- Policy on appropriate provincial expenditures and user-pay services is required.
- The public will be better informed and willing to act on their knowledge to conserve the natural values of the province. An informed public will be more supportive of the value of recreation and conservation initiatives.
- Initiatives aimed at youth will develop the environmental stewards of tomorrow.
- Some education and interpretive services will be restored in parks and fish hatcheries.
- There will be overhead costs incurred by the Ministry in fulfilling this principle (contract supervision, policy development, etc.).
- Needs to be a strong link to educational institutes.

## **Partnerships and Co-ordination**

### **5 Recreation management will include explicit mechanisms for public consultation.**

#### Consequences

- Management decisions will be more informed and responsive to public interests.
- Explicit consultation processes will entail costs.
- May require a range of explicit consultation mechanisms to serve specific issues and areas of interest.
- Legislative changes may be required.
- Explicit consultation mechanism requires provincial level policy and goals to strike an acceptable balance with local interests.
- The public will be more involved and better informed.

**6 Provincial agencies with outdoor recreation mandates will formally coordinate planning and management to ensure consistency.**

Consequences

- Requires a renewed commitment between, and agreements among, government, industry and non-governmental organizations responsible for tourism and outdoor recreation management / services to work together.
- A co-ordinated approach will:
  - Eliminate gaps and reduce duplication.
  - Increases the opportunities to reach the province's goal of doubling tourism revenues to the province.
- Coordination may require legislation change.
- Coordination will result in the more efficient and effective use of existing provincial resources (especially staffing) applied to outdoor recreation and tourism initiatives.
- Change in service delivery directed by coordinated efforts will affect the status quo in ministry organizations.
- Requires links to current initiatives, such as:
  - The future supply of Forest Recreation sites;
  - Changes to the maintenance of forest access roads;
  - Doubling provincial tourism revenue.

**7 The province will pursue partnerships with First Nations, local governments, the private sector and non-profit sector to increase capacity to manage and provide land and recreation services.**

Consequences

- Creates opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.
- There will be an increased capacity to deliver a more diverse array of quality services, including more dedicated land.

- Success is directly linked to Principle # 6, the need for a coordinated approach to the provision of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities.
- Partnerships have to be mutually beneficial, and may entail the loss of control (risk) by the accountable agencies.
- There are costs (including a new and increased ministry capacity) to manage partnerships and they must be monitored.
- Partnerships can:
  - bring in outside funding sources that may contribute to both provincial conservation and recreation goals;
  - diversify the range of public support in a variety of ways (e.g. introducing new users; communicating provincial goals, etc); and,
  - can increase diversity of opportunities for users. Special user needs and interests, that are currently not met, may be served.
- Appropriate recognition mechanism for partners' contributions may be required.
- There may be a perception that partnerships weaken provincial responsibility or accountability. This perception needs to be carefully addressed.
- Public will be more involved, better informed and more supportive.

## Land and Infrastructure

### **8 Public land designated for wildlife, fish and protected area recreation will remain publicly owned, although land exchanges or transfers will be considered where they enhance conservation and recreation values.**

#### Consequences

- Contributes to the conservation principle (#1) by assuring ongoing protection.
- Need to identify a process or mechanism by which exchanges or transfers may take place, and an agency to lead this decision-making (including consultations) process.
- May require legislation change.
- May include transfers to federal or other levels of government.
- Requires a link to provincial policy for First Nation treaty negotiations.
- Will result in an increased public confidence and trust in the future of protected areas and other specially designated areas (such as fish hatchery lands).
- Needs to be linked to the British Columbia Trust for Public Lands initiative.

**9 Basic public infrastructure for recreation services and access, where provided, is a provincial responsibility and will be paid from general tax revenue. Enhanced infrastructure may be provided by the province and others. Non-government ownership of such enhanced infrastructure on publicly owned-land will not confer land ownership in law or in practice.**

Consequences

- The province retains significant recreation costs.
- Provides some clarification of the government and non-government division of responsibility for recreation supply costs.
- Requires definitions of “basic” and “enhanced” infrastructure to minimize conflicts.
- In many situations, where users are not prepared to pay for enhanced infrastructure, these services will not be provided.
- Enhanced infrastructure may provide opportunities for new users and those individuals not otherwise able to participate.
- Complements principle #8 by ensuring that enhanced services do not convey land ownership to the service provider.
- Complements principle #7 in identifying specific opportunities for partners to provide appropriate enhanced levels of service.
- This principle has implications on the current discussion on the continued supply and management of the Ministry of Forests’ recreation infrastructure. This principle may set up a public expectation for the Ministry of Forests to adopt a similar approach and resume the full responsibility for the supply of these recreation sites as basic infrastructure.
- Similarly, roads currently maintained by the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Transportation and Highways may be considered as basic recreation infrastructure. This principle may create a public expectation for the level of resources provided by those Ministries.
- Third party infrastructure will generate liability issues, particularly for a provincial authorizing agency, and needs to be addressed.

**10 The public will have a right of access to Crown land used for outdoor recreation.**

Consequences

- “Right of Access” requires clarification. Policy on exceptions is required. Requires a process for determining exceptions (including consultations) and needs to be identified and communicated.
- Many fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities are dependent on access provided and maintained by others agencies, private land

owners, and industry. This principle is linked to a need for a provincial strategy on access.

- There is a strong link to Land & Water BC policy on public access on commercial backcountry recreation tenures.
- Where the provision of access incurs operational costs, some of these costs may be recovered from users.
- Provides a public assurance and will contribute to an increased public trust and confidence.

## **Private Sector Role**

**11 The province may contract with, or licence private recreation service providers where consistent with these principles and there are no risks of monopoly control or to conservation values.**

### Consequences

- Private suppliers must respect conservation, thus safeguarding Principle #1 (emphasizing conservation takes priority over recreation).
- Provides some assurance that users will pay only competitive market prices for recreation services.
- Requires policy and a decision-making process for appropriate uses of the private sector to avoid monopoly control.
- Private sector services will benefit from the quality of the natural and cultural heritage values.
- Private recreation service providers should contribute to the maintenance of these natural and cultural heritage values. An appropriate “rate of return” to the province and an effective collection mechanism are required.

## **Revenue and Fees**

**12 Recreational user fees will cover costs, including costs of operating the service, and infrastructure repair and replacement. Exceptions may be made for access, public health and safety purposes, or to maintain services in locations having provincially significant recreation values.**

### Consequences

- Fees for similar services will vary because of different delivery costs.
- In some cases, the cost of providing the service (without any subsidy) will exceed the users’ willingness to pay, and the service may have to be withdrawn.
- There will be:

- new fees;
- some fee increases; and,
- a broader range of users that have to pay fees.
- Policy, guidelines and process are required for determining exceptions.
- Will take some ministry capacity (staffing and finances) to administer site-specific costing.
- Need to identify a role for users' involvement in the fee setting process.
- Need to communicate and explain fee changes (requires an implementation strategy).
- Some services will not charge the site-specific operating costs for distribution reasons.

**13 Non-resident recreational users will pay fees based on competitive market value for recreation opportunities where this value is higher than costs.**

Consequences

- Fees and revenue will increase.
- Prices for non-residents will generally increase.
- Requires an efficient, effective and easily administered process to determine values and costs.
- Raises the issue of what is included in basic costs of operating the service, and infrastructure repair and replacement (Linked to principle # 12).
- In some cases, the cost to differentiate and collect non-resident fees may exceed the revenue from the competitive market value. In some cases, the collection of site-specific costs may be impractical.
- There will be increased administrative costs (e.g. collection system; enforcement; ongoing determination of market value). There will be overhead costs incurred to determine site-specific and market values, and for implementation.
- Implementation must be sensitive to business needs, especially for communications with clientele where "bookings" may occur a year or more in advance.
- Residents will support preferential treatment where it occurs. Non-residents will resist fee increases.

**14 Commercial service providers will pay market prices for the right to use and benefit from wildlife, fish and protected area resources.**

Consequences

- Many existing fees will increase, resulting in increased revenue.
- Increased costs for commercial providers may be passed on to users.

- Implementation will take time to accommodate business needs.
- Current tenure holders may be affected where these tenures have not been allocated on a market value basis.
- Will require in-government work to co-ordinate agencies / organizations.
- Will require new mechanisms linked to Land & Water BC mandate, and their legal and tenure frameworks.
- Will generate a positive public response if it is viewed as being fair.
- Will require mechanisms to determine market value. These mechanisms will incur costs.
- Existing rights, licenses, tenures and contracts have to be respected.

**15 Recreation fee revenue will be connected and dedicated to the provision of recreation opportunities.**

Consequences

- This will have substantial support from users and may increase users' willingness to pay for services and infrastructure.
- Requires a mechanism to receive money (e.g. special account or Trust fund), and policy and process for making allocation decisions.
- May result in management decisions being motivated to maximise cash flow at the expense of conservation.
- The role of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF) and other special accounts may change.
- Clarification is required on whether surcharges, such as the current surcharge on hunting and angling licenses, are fees.

**16 Setting of fees will be delegated to the Ministry to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances while protecting the public interest.**

Consequences

- May be resisted at the elected level due to the loss of executive authority for "taxation" expenditure decisions.
- Legislative change is required.
- Implementation of this principle is critically linked to Principles #12, #13, and #14, and the need to determine costs.

**17 Fee discounts based on inability to pay may be considered through specific policy, not by compromising the above principles**

Consequences

- Some groups will not support changes that result in the removal of current subsidies.
- May result in some cross-subsidization.
- Requires policy on appropriate discounts and consistent ministry policy on inability-to-pay for effective implementation.
- Primary motivation for using discounts is affordability.
- More people may become eligible for discounts.

## **OPTIONS FOR A NEW MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING MODEL**

### **BACKGROUND**

The following array of options are structured according to the Panel's mandate to provide recommendations on a new management and funding model for fish, wildlife and park recreation for the province of British Columbia. The options presented below include only some of the key alternatives. Other options, including variations of the following, are possible. An attempt has been made to identify the key benchmarks on the widest range of options that are consistent with the above described provincial policy and the Panel's working principles.

It is recognized that many of these options need to be considered in relation to other options. For example, the choice made for the degree of delegation or operating structure (e.g. ministry, special operating agency, commission / crown corporation) will affect the choices for revenue sources (e.g. taxation, fees, contributions).

The Panel is seeking input on the implications of these options and preferences for a new management and funding model that will best contribute to the province's vision for fish, wildlife, and park recreation.

### **GOVERNANCE ALTERNATIVES**

The management of recreation opportunities by the province has to be based on some legal authority and rules for decision-making. The Panel is referring to these characteristics as "governance" issues. Within the given provincial policy and the Panel's own working principles, recommendations on the following three dimensions are required.

#### **1. Scope**

This dimension considers the range of responsibilities for an organization, or organizations, taking on a responsibility for fish, wildlife and park management. The Panel believes that its principles have precluded the separation of conservation and recreation responsibilities. As a consequence, the following options for "scope" assume each has a responsibility for both conservation and recreation.

The scope of responsibility for conservation and recreation management includes:

- i. Fish, Wildlife and Park Management Organization
  - Similar to the existing situation where the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection's Environmental Stewardship Division includes all fish, wildlife and park management responsibilities.
- ii. Fish and Wildlife Management Organization and Park Management Organization
  - Organizational separation of the fish and wildlife management responsibilities from the park management responsibilities.
- iii. Fish Management Organization, Wildlife Management Organization, and Park Management Organization
  - Organizational separation of each element, with organizations responsible for (freshwater) fish management, wildlife management, and park management.
- iv. Fish, Wildlife, Park and Outdoor Recreation Management Organization
  - Similar to option "i" above, but with the addition of some of the more general outdoor recreation responsibilities currently residing with other organizations. For example, such additional responsibilities might include the commercial backcountry recreation responsibility currently with Land and Water BC or the forest recreation sites currently with the Ministry of Forests.

## 2. Delegation of Authority

Authority for the management of wildlife and park is constitutionally vested with the province. While the responsibility for fish management is within the federal jurisdiction, by agreement, the responsibility for freshwater fishery management has been delegated to the province. The legislative assembly of British Columbia has the authority to delegate these management responsibilities. There are a number of options that are consistent with existing policy and the working principles.

- i. Ministerial Responsibility
  - Current situation; delegated authority to a Minister of the Crown, responsible to the Legislative Assembly through the Executive Council.
- ii. Special Operating Agency

- A range of specific alternatives are available in this model, but all are generally reporting to a Minister, and gain some administrative flexibility through an operating agreement. Land and Water BC is a form of special operating agency.
- iii. Commission / Crown Corporation
- Governance parameters of a commission or crown corporation are normally specified by statute.
  - Reporting structure removed from traditional ministerial responsibility.
  - Potential for increased administrative efficiencies as governing rules not defined by central provincial agency.

### 3. First Nations

First Nations have established legal rights in respect to land use and opportunities to use fish and wildlife. On a government to government basis, there are a range of alternatives in which these rights can be respected and opportunities to enhance the interests of both First Nations and the province can be created.

- i. Fully support existing agreements.
- ii. Expand opportunities for management involvement through new agreements.
- iii. First Nations advisory body or participation on an advisory body.
- iv. Mandated First Nations' participation on a commission.

## **MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

The Panel has identified “management alternatives” as those related to the way operating decisions are made, the relationships the managing authority has with other organizations and individuals, and the decisions on specific fish, wildlife and park programs that the managing authority delivers.

The Panel believes that its working principles reinforce a priority for the conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage values over the provision of recreation opportunities. The working principles also infer that conservation and recreation initiatives cannot be administratively separated. As a consequence, there are no options related to the separation of

conservation and recreation program delivery mechanisms (i.e. no separate recreation opportunity delivery organization).

## 1. Consultation Options

Consultation options are closely linked to the governance options.

- i. Current Situation with ad hoc and special purpose consultations (e.g. management planning advisory committees, steering committees, issue-specific consultations).
- ii. Provincial advisory body on all fish, wildlife and park management issues.
- iii. Separate provincial advisory bodies on fish, wildlife and park management.  
Examples include:
  - Sport fishing advisory board
  - Wildlife advisory board
  - Park Management advisory board
- iv. Regional advisory bodies on fish, wildlife and park management.
- v. Separate regional advisory bodies on fish, wildlife and park management.
- vi. First Nations having separate or integrated advisory roles.
- vii. Mix of above alternatives.

## 2. First Nations

The Panel is looking for input on the types of opportunities and relationships with First Nations in the provision of fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities.

- i. Support existing agreements
- ii. Increase number of existing agreements
- iii. Expand agreements into new areas of responsibility:
  - Planning and decision-making
  - Service provision
  - Monitoring and Compliance

### 3. Partnership Options

The Panel recognizes that partnerships have to be mutually beneficial. The Panel also believes that being mutually beneficial does not necessarily diminish the responsibility or authority of the managing agency. Existing contracted service delivery methods are one form of partnership.

The Panel is seeking advice on the type of partners the managing authority should consider. Some of the key options include:

- i. For-Profit organizations.
- ii. Not-for-Profit organizations.
- iii. Mix of Profit and Not-for-Profit organizations.

The Panel is also seeking advice on the type of acceptable purposes of partnerships.

- i. Existing types of partnerships.
- ii. More extensive use of existing types of partnerships.
- iii. New types of partnerships serving new purposes.

### 4. Fee Setting Process Options

Input on the fee setting process is directly linked to the options listed above for general consultations. Options include:

- i. Issue-specific consultations.
- ii. Standing advisory body or bodies.

### 5. Specific Program Options

The Panel seeks advice on the appropriateness of a range of existing and new recreation opportunities. A wide array of opportunities has, at one time or another, been proposed. In particular, the Panel seeks advice on the acceptable level of impacts from such opportunities, and the ability of

the opportunity to generate revenue to support its full management. A few examples of the types of opportunities that have been proposed include:

- Hut-to-hut hiking opportunities.
- Park areas dedicated to the primary purpose of providing high quality outdoor recreation opportunities while raising revenue to support other conservation and recreation initiatives (e.g. facilities such as the Capilano Suspension Bridge).
- Sport fish development program (special high quality angling opportunities with opportunities for increased revenue).
- Special hunting opportunities (e.g. special species auctions used to raise revenues for other management initiatives).
- Rails to trails opportunities.
- Revitalization of a provincial outdoor recreation coordinating body.
- Marine trails.
- Covenants.
- New administrative models (e.g. guide outfitter administration; permit and license administration).
- Land acquisition – province or NGO facilitation of land acquisition / land protection (e.g. covenants).
- New commercial services in parks:
  - Accommodation facilities (from tent frames and yurts to roofed accommodation)
  - Interpretation services
  - Merchandize sales
  - Concessions (food services)
  - Equipment rentals

## **FUNDING ALTERNATIVES**

The working principles provide some guidance on the sources of revenue to support the provision of conservation and recreation services. Most particularly, the principles indicate that conservation and protection [of fish, wildlife and parks] are the responsibility of the province and will be supported by general tax revenue. There are options, however, related to revenue sources, uses, and retention / allocation mechanisms.

### **1. Revenue Source**

- i. Taxation:
  - General taxation
  - “Green” tax (e.g. surcharge or dedication of specified amount on recreation equipment sales)

- Voluntary taxation (e.g. government lottery)
  - ii. Fees
  - iii. Contributions (e.g. donations, bequests, corporate sponsorships, etc.)
  - iv. Combination of Taxation, Fees and Contributions
2. Revenue Use
- i. Conservation Use Only
  - ii. Recreation Use Only
  - iii. Conservation and Recreation Use
3. Revenue Retention and Allocation Method
- i. Revenue administered within existing provincial revenue / expenditure mechanisms.
    - Revenue flow through Consolidated Revenue Fund and returned to managing authority through a voted appropriation.
    - Revenue flows through a special account within the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the managing authority.
    - Province established / controlled trust or foundation (e.g. Habitat Conservation Trust)
  - ii. Revenue administered outside of existing provincial revenue expenditure mechanisms.
    - Non-government trust or foundation
  - iii. Revenue administered by a combination of existing provincial mechanisms and new outside mechanisms.

## **PRICING ISSUES**

The Panel's working principles provide specific direction on pricing. A basis for these principles is the provincial direction that the beneficiaries of the use of recreation opportunities should primarily be responsible for the cost of providing those opportunities. The working principles infer that, in general,

there will be increases to existing fees, there will be new fees for existing services, and there will be new fees for new services.