



RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL

RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL

A NEW MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING MODEL

FOR

FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARK RECREATION

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

September 15, 2002

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS DRAFT REPORT:

The Recreation Stewardship Panel welcomes your input on this draft report. Input received by **October 15, 2002** will be summarized into a report of public comments and considered by the panel in preparing their final report to the Minister (due Nov. 29, 2002). Here are your options to provide comments.

COMMENT FORMS

- Fill out a comment form on the panel website: www.praxis.ca/recpanel
- Fill out the enclosed comment form (or call to have one sent) and send it back by mail or fax to:
 - Mail: c/o Praxis, 3848 St. Georges Ave., N. Van. BC, V7N 1W5
 - Fax: (604) 980-9992
 - Phone: toll-free (1-877-882-1284) or (604) 980-8250

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Prepare a written submission and send it:

- As an e-mail note: RecPanel@praxis.ca
- As an electronic file attached to an e-mail (MS Word or pdf files)
- By mail or fax (only if you are unable to send it electronically):
 - Mail: c/o Praxis, 3848 St. Georges Ave., N. Van. BC, V7N 1W5
 - Fax: (604) 980-9992

The panel looks forward to your input!

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INTRODUCTION

In May, 2002, the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection (the Minister) appointed an expert panel to review the Ministry's fish, wildlife and park¹ recreation services and recommend opportunities to improve the existing management model and funding sources.

This paper provides:

- the background and reasons for the Recreation Stewardship Panel's (the panel) assignment;
- some of the existing policy and direction that guide that assignment;
- the panel's working principles and their consequences; and,
- the first draft of recommendations on new management and funding models.

The purpose of this report is to present some preliminary recommendations on which to generate public comment. From the comments received on this report, the panel will make its final recommendations to the Minister on November 29, 2002.

THE CHALLENGE

British Columbia's fish, wildlife and park resources are without equal in the world. The recreation services provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection - services in parks, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities, and the provincial freshwater hatchery program - are deeply valued by British Columbia residents and a drawing card for visitors from around the world.

Through the Core Review and Service Plan processes, the provincial government has confirmed the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection's (the Ministry) 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. Budget allocations required for existing protection and biodiversity standards will be maintained. Without new sources of funds, or more efficient delivery methods, recreation services will have to be reduced.

The following table provides estimates of the direct revenue from Ministry recreation services (fees and licences) and the current estimated Ministry expenditures to provide those services.

¹ Park, as used in this report, includes all designated areas currently managed by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, including parks, ecological reserves, protected areas and wildlife management areas.

RECREATION REVENUE & MINISTRY EXPENDITURES

Revenues	Ministry 2002/03 Expenditures on the Provision of Recreation Services
Parks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$11M retained by PFOs* • \$1M to CRF* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$11M Retained User Fees • \$15.3M from Vote (CRF)
Fish & Wildlife	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13M to CRF • \$5.5M to HCTF* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$16.4M from Vote (CRF)
Total	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30.5M 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$42.4M

* This table includes estimates expressed in millions of dollars for the 2002/03 fiscal year. “CRF” is the Consolidated Revenue Fund. “HCTF” is the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund. “PFOs” are the non-government park facility operators under contract to the province.

The Ministry has estimated increases to existing fees and some new fees could increase annual revenue, over time, by \$10 to \$16 million dollars. See the “Pricing” section for details on these potential increases.

A key point of this table is that the current expenditures exceed revenue. Additionally, the current expenditures are less than that estimated to achieve the provincial government’s vision for fish, wildlife and park recreation (described below). The panel’s working principles, also described below, state that user fees are not intended to cover the full costs of providing these recreational services, only the incremental costs. These points will be more fully explained in the following sections of this paper but are important points in understanding the financial challenges faced by the provincial government in continuing to provide fish, wildlife and park recreation services.

The public has a keen interest in maintaining and expanding recreational opportunities to use and enjoy fish, wildlife and parks. The provision of these opportunities, however, has to be less reliant on the general taxpayer and more dependant upon those who most directly benefit from their use. While the provincial government remains committed to conserving and protecting its fish, wildlife and park resources, it also needs to enhance tourism, create jobs, and help expand and diversify the economy of British Columbia. Fish, wildlife and park recreation use make important contributions to the provincial economy.

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 provincial government's vision for the future of British Columbia's fish, wildlife and park recreation was conveyed to the panel by the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection:

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 through 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 Recreation Stewardship Panel endorses this vision and has used it as the basis for this report.

THE PANEL'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

The provincial 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, First Nations, recreation service providers and the public at large.

The provincial government is also committed to balancing the provincial budget by fiscal year 2004/2005. 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." It also dictates 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 appointed an expert panel to review these services and recommend improved management models and funding sources.

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PANEL

The Minister directed the panel with the following conditions:

- 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 the ongoing delivery of park, fish and wildlife recreation opportunities.
- The panel's mandate covers the provision of fish and wildlife recreational opportunities on all Crown land (about 95% of the province) and includes ecological reserves and wildlife management areas, as well as parks.
- The panel will investigate and examine the policy and management frameworks that exist 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.

The panel's mandate does not include:

- The review of land use decisions on new protected areas, nor changes or deletions to existing protected areas.
- The review of policies and standards for the conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage values.
- The review of the First Nations' treaty process.

The timelines given to the panel are driven by existing Ministry budget reduction targets which will take place on April 1, 2003. The panel's recommendations need to be available prior to that date, and allow for sufficient implementation time.

REVIEW PROCESS

The panel held preliminary discussions on June 25 and 26, 2002, with province-wide non-government organizations that have an active interest in fish, wildlife and park recreation. The Panel also met with a representative of the Summit of First Nations who provided advice on ways of engaging the First Nations of the province. These discussions assisted the panel in the development of its consultation process, working principles and options for management and funding.

The panel invited First Nations and province-wide non-government organizations to review and exchange ideas on the working principles and options in a workshop held on August 22 and 23, 2002. Comments provided by participants assisted the panel's analysis of the options which led to the draft recommendations in this report.

Throughout, there has been a standing opportunity for the public to submit comments and statements of interest. The panel received numerous responses to postings on its website and to newspaper, radio and television events.

These draft recommendations will be released to the public on September 16th with a corresponding comment form and a general invitation for public comment. The panel will accept written submissions, e-mail notes and completed comment forms until October 15, 2002. The panel's website will assist in the distribution of materials and the collection of comment forms, written submissions and e-mail messages. This input will assist the panel in finalizing its recommendations that will be submitted to the Minister on November 29, 2002.

See the Panel's Website at <http://www.praxis.ca/recpanel/> or call toll-free (1-877-822-1284) or (604) 980-8250 for a complete copy of the terms of reference.

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THE PANEL'S WORKING PRINCIPLES AND CONSEQUENCES

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The panel began its assignment by reviewing existing Ministry and other agency information and developing a thorough understanding of the scope and complexity of the management and funding issues. As a result of this initial work, the panel realized that a set of principles was required to guide their recommendations and serve as a foundation on which to base the ongoing decisions on fish, wildlife and park recreation. It is the panel's belief that good public policy is based on a firm foundation of guiding principles. Much of the panel's initial time was therefore spent on developing a set of working principles.

The following working principles are strongly influenced by the public's long standing and strongly articulated importance of outdoor recreation. While there is a great deal of information imbedded in existing legislation, policies, practices and other written materials, the panel consolidated these ideas into a set of principles that covered the specific scope their assignment.

Based on initial the consultations, it became evident that the principles would be enhanced by an explanation of their general intent. As a result, the panel identified some of the consequences of each of the 17 principles. The consequences outline some of the potential changes to the current management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation. The consequences were an important step in generating a range of options from which the panel's recommendations were developed.

ASSUMPTIONS

The working principles are based on the following assumptions:

- The provincial government will maintain a strong legislative foundation with a clear mandate to conserve and protect fish, wildlife and parks.
- The provincial government in general, and the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection in particular, have made commitments for the maintenance of environmental protection standards and ecological integrity. The panel's assignment has been based on these commitments. The panel has assumed that the provision of existing and new fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities is subject to these commitments.
- The panel recognized the value and importance of the work of the BC Park Legacy Project. While the scope and purpose of that project was different from the panel's assignment, the extent of public involvement provided a solid foundation on which to base the panel's deliberations. The recommendations of the BC Park Legacy Project provide direction that is strong, clear and still relevant.

- The principles apply to all fish and wildlife recreation on Crown land, as well as to parks.
- Specific exceptions to these principles may occur where consistent with the basic objectives of conservation, protection and access to outdoor recreation, and where such an exception is publicly supported.
- All of the principles apply to both consumptive and non-consumptive uses, and to both terrestrial and marine parks. The term land, as used in these principles, applies to both land and water.

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 for the management and funding of wildlife, fish and park recreation. Consequences are shown to provide clarity on the implications of each principle.

WORKING PRINCIPLES AND CONSEQUENCES

Conservation

1 The province's fundamental obligation to conserve and protect wildlife, fish and their habitats, and the parks of British Columbia will guide the development and management of recreation opportunities.

Consequences

- The provincial government's priority is clearly identified.
- This principle provides direction for Ministry budget allocations.
- This principle implies a management model that integrates both conservation and recreation.
- Implicitly includes an obligation for habitat conservation and protection.
- There is a need for a clear categorization system that describes the purposes, ecosystem protection objectives, and appropriate uses of the different types of protected areas of the province.
- The provincial government's commitment to conservation will be clearly articulated 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.

- The type, location or volume of recreation opportunities, and therefore tourism opportunities will be limited.
- This principle will require a process for determining appropriate use.
- Determining appropriate services may result in some conflicts, including legal challenges, around appropriateness and acceptable level of impact (including social and environmental impacts).
- 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.

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

Consequences

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

First Nations

3 First Nations have aboriginal rights related to wildlife and fish, as well as interests in parks. The province will work co-operatively with First Nations in developing, enhancing and managing recreation opportunities.

Consequences

- Given there is a province-wide treaty process underway concerning First Nations' traditional and ongoing rights, the treaty process takes precedence for determining relationships with individual First Nations.
- The principle requires the negotiation of joint management agreements through cooperative processes.
- Over time, this principle will improve management delivery through better relationships with First Nations.
- Additional costs will be incurred for the province and involve more complex management and delivery systems.
- Implementation will build First Nations' management capacity and provide economic opportunities.
- Compliance will improve, 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 financially supported and properly staffed as a priority (e.g. Muskwa Kechika, Central Region Board, and park co-operative management agreements).
- Management of recreational use and access must respect First Nations' cultural heritage and traditional uses. This may limit access.

Education and Interpretation

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

Consequences

- Education and interpretation will strengthen both conservation and recreation.
- Some education and interpretative initiatives will have to be funded solely by the provincial government; others will have to be funded solely by the user.
For example:
 - Education and interpretation initiatives necessary for conservation purposes will be funded by the provincial government.
 - Education and interpretation initiatives for recreation purposes will be funded by user fees and contributions.
- Policy on appropriate provincial government 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.).
- There needs to be a strong link to educational institutes.

Consultation, Co-ordination and Partnerships

5 Recreation management will include explicit and ongoing mechanisms for public consultation.

Consequences

- Management decisions will be more informed and responsive to public interests.
- Explicit consultation processes will entail costs.

- Implementation will 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

- A province-wide outdoor recreation strategy for both commercial and public use is required.
- A renewed commitment between, and agreements among, government and non-governmental organizations responsible for tourism and outdoor recreation to work together is required.
- The principle implies a harmonization of the service plans of those Ministries with responsibilities for outdoor recreation and land use.
- A co-ordinated approach will:
 - Eliminate gaps and reduce duplication.
 - Increases the opportunities to reach the provincial government's goal of doubling tourism revenues to the province.
- Coordination may require legislative change.
- Coordination will result in the more efficient and effective use of existing provincial resources (especially staffing) applied to outdoor recreation and tourism.
- Change in service delivery directed by coordinated efforts will affect the status quo in ministry organizations.
- Requires stronger coordination among current initiatives, such as:
 - The future management of forest recreation sites;
 - Changes to the maintenance of forest access roads; and the
 - Target increase from provincial tourism revenue.

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

Consequences

- Creates opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and volunteer initiatives.
- 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 cost for 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.
- The public will be more involved, better informed and more supportive.

Land and Infrastructure

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

Consequences

- This principle complements the conservation principle (#1) by assuring ongoing conservation and protection.
- A process or mechanism by which exchanges or transfers may take place, and an agency to lead this decision-making (including consultations) process needs to be identified.
- Legislative change may be required.
- Transfers to federal or other levels of government may be included.
- A link to provincial policy for First Nation treaty negotiations is required.
- This principle will result in an increased public confidence and trust in the future of parks and other specially designated areas (such as fish hatchery lands).
- A link to the "British Columbia Trust for Public Lands" initiative is required.

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 provincial government retains significant recreation costs.

- This principle provides some clarification of the government and non-government division of responsibility for recreation supply costs.
- Definitions of “basic” and “enhanced” infrastructure are required.
- In many situations, where users are not prepared to pay for enhanced infrastructure, these services will not be provided.
- Enhanced infrastructure may create opportunities for new users and those individuals not otherwise able to participate.
- Principle #8 is complemented by ensuring that enhanced services do not convey land ownership to the service provider.
- Principle #7 is complemented by 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. This issue needs to be addressed.

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

Consequences

- “Right of Access” requires clarification. Policy on exceptions is required. A process for determining exceptions (including consultations) and needs to be identified and communicated is required.
- 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).
- Policy and a decision-making process for appropriate uses of the private sector (to avoid monopoly control) are required.
- 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 provincial government and an effective collection mechanism are required.
- New services will only occur following an impact assessment that is appropriate to the scale, risks and potential impacts of the service.

Revenue and Fees

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

Consequences

- This principle applies to British Columbia residents.
- Fees charged for non-resident users or commercial service providers are addressed in Principles #13 and #14, below.
- Capital infrastructure repair and replacement costs will be borne by the provincial government.
- Fees for “similar” services will vary because of different incremental 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, including non-consumptive users, will have to pay fees.
- Policy, guidelines and process are required for determining exceptions.
- Some ministry capacity (staffing and finances) will be required to administer site-specific costing.
- There will be a need to identify a role for users’ involvement in the fee setting process.
- There will be a 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 incremental costs.

Consequences

- Fees and revenue will increase.
- Prices for non-residents will generally increase.
- An efficient, effective and easily administered process to determine values and costs are required.
- Raises the issue of what is included in basic costs of operating the service, and infrastructure repair costs (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.

14 Commercial service providers will pay market prices for the right to use and benefit from wildlife, fish and park 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.
- In-government work to co-ordinate agencies / organizations is required.
- New mechanisms linked to Land & Water BC mandate, and their legal and tenure frameworks, are required.
- A positive public response will be generated if prices are viewed as being fair.
- Mechanisms to determine market value are required. These mechanisms will incur costs.
- Existing rights, licenses, tenures and contracts have to be respected.

15 Recreation fee revenue will be dedicated to the provision of recreation opportunities and directly connected to the services provided by the Province.

Consequences

- This will have substantial support from users and may increase users' willingness to pay for services.
- A mechanism to receive money (e.g. special account or trust fund), and policy and process for making allocation decisions are required.
- This principle 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.
- There will be a reduction of revenues going into the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) and a corresponding reduction to the Ministry's voted appropriation from CRF.
- There will be an impact on revenues going into the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund.
- The above impacts may require offsets from alternative sources of revenues.

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

Consequences

- Changes to the fee setting process 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.
- Some cross-subsidization may occur.
- Policy on appropriate discounts and consistent Ministry policy on inability-to-pay are required for effective implementation.
- The primary motivation for using discounts is affordability.
- More people may become eligible for discounts.
- There will be no discounts based solely on age or disability.

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The panel's assignment identified a need for a new approach to the management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation. As a reflection of the scope and complexity of this assignment, recommendations are made on the principles and a subdivision of the elements of management and funding.

Management issues have been subdivided into "authority and governance" and "management" issues:

Authority and Governance issues relate to the authority and responsibility for recreation management, and deals with the scope of that authority, its organizational structure, and the extent to which the province's constitutional authorities are delegated. This section also addresses the way in which the aboriginal and ongoing rights of First Nations are included in decision-making processes and the delivery of recreational services.

Management issues focus on the issues related to the way operating decisions are made, the relationships the managing authority has with other organizations and individuals, and the specific fish, wildlife and park recreation programs to be delivered.

Funding issues are subdivided into two issues:

Funding issues relate to the source of funds to support the provision of recreation opportunities and the funding retention and allocation mechanisms.

Pricing issues deal with costs users pay to participate in recreational opportunities and the resultant financial return to the province.

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

PRINCIPLES

Recommendation # 1

The provincial government endorse the principles and use them to guide all decisions on the management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities.

The panel believes that there will be ongoing decisions related to management and funding of the provincial government's fish, wildlife and park recreation responsibilities. These principles will provide a foundation on which these decisions can be made.

AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

There is an array of options by which the province's authorities for fish, wildlife and park management may be exercised. The panel considered the extent to which this authority might be delegated, the government-to-government relationships with First Nations, and the scope of the authority assigned to the organization responsible for fish, wildlife and park recreation.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Authority for the management of wildlife and parks is constitutionally vested with the province. While the responsibility for the fish management is within the federal jurisdiction, the responsibility for freshwater fishery management has been delegated by agreement to the province. The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia has the authority to delegate these management responsibilities. The panel identified a number of options that were considered to be consistent with existing policy and the working principles.

- i. Ministerial Authority and Accountability
 - 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.

Recommendation # 2

Maintain the current ministerial authority and accountability.

The panel recognizes that while the delegation of authority to a special operating agency or a commission may result in increased operating efficiencies, it may also result in the erosion of the province's primary responsibility for environmental protection and conservation, especially if this new delegated authority becomes too motivated by financial or special interests. Compromising the current conservation and protection priorities through a new delegated management authority is a risk the public loudly and clearly is not prepared to take.

The panel believes Ministerial responsibility will:

- *Contribute to a public trust for the management of the province's natural and cultural heritage values;*
- *Provide a clear accountability for all recreation decisions;*
- *Be subject to First Nations legal and treaty rights; and*
- *Be based on a strong statutory authority as currently provided by the existing suite of legislation.*

The panel believes that the advantages of a delegated authority, particularly in relation to financial management and funding issues, can be achieved in a traditional ministry organization using the suite of recommendations in this report.

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 created that enhance the interests of both First Nations and the province. Within this framework, the panel also considered ways to involve First Nations in the delivery of fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities.

- i. Fully support existing agreements, and new agreements made through the Treaty process.
- ii. Expand opportunities for management involvement and recreation service delivery through new interim or pre-Treaty agreements.
- iii. First Nations' advisory body or participation on an advisory body by mutual agreement.

Recommendation # 3

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection use a combination of the following approaches to meaningfully engage First Nations in the management, funding and delivery of fish, wildlife and park recreation:

- i. Fully support existing agreements, and new agreements made through the Treaty process.**
- ii. Expand opportunities for management involvement and recreation service delivery through new interim or pre-Treaty agreements.**
- iii. First Nations' participation, by mutual consent, on advisory bodies.**

The panel believes there are a variety of substantial benefits of closer working relationships between the province and First Nations. These include environmental, social, economic and improved recreation service delivery benefits.

Recommendation # 4

The provincial government make strong efforts to consult and work jointly with First Nations to protect culturally significant values.

The panel heard clearly about the impacts from increased recreational uses on sites and values of special significance to First Nations. In many cases, existing laws on the protection of these often irreplaceable sites and values are not being enforced. While not directly part of the panel's mandate, the urgency and significance of this issue is one that could not be overlooked.

ORGANIZATIONAL 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 working principles reinforce the provincial government's priority for the conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage values over the provision of recreation opportunities. The working principles also imply that conservation and recreation initiatives cannot be administratively separated. As a consequence, the panel recommends that the managing authority retain a responsibility for both conservation and recreation program delivery mechanisms (i.e. no separate recreation opportunity delivery organization).

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
 - For each of the above options, the fish and wildlife management functions and the more general outdoor recreation responsibilities currently residing with other organizations could be added. Such additional responsibilities might include, for example, the commercial backcountry recreation responsibility currently with Land and Water BC, the forest recreation sites currently with the Ministry of Forests, or the fish and wildlife management responsibilities delivered by BC Hydro.

Recommendation # 5

There should be a fish and wildlife management organization, a park management organization and an outdoor recreation management organization.

In recognition of the inter-connected nature of these three organizational responsibilities, they must be closely linked in a way that ensures coordination and eliminates overlaps and gaps.

The panel recognizes the need to consider streamlining, simplifying or including the following fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation responsibilities in a common organizational structure:

- *Forest recreation currently with the Ministry of Forests;*
- *Fish, wildlife and habitat inventory currently with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management;*
- *Commercial backcountry recreation currently with Land and Water BC ;*
- *BC Hydro fish, wildlife and recreation programs; and,*
- *The outdoor recreation aspects of tourism.*

Any transfer of responsibility must include an adequate budget transfer in order to support the ongoing delivery of the program.

The consolidation of these responsibilities would require significant organizational changes, but would result in increased effectiveness and efficiencies in the management of fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation. This coordination is necessary if the province is to capitalize on the growing value of outdoor recreation and tourism in its changing economy.

Recommendation # 6

The organization structure must have a strong regional presence with a direct reporting relationship to the central authority.

While the panel has recommended the maintenance of strong ministerial authority, it has also identified the need to balance provincial goals and standards with solutions that reflect the special character and interests of the regions of the province.

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Management issues focus on the issues related to the way operating decisions are made, the relationships the managing authority has with other organizations and individuals, and the specific fish, wildlife and park recreation programs to be delivered.

CONSULTATION OPTIONS

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection currently uses a variety of consultation processes. The panel heard strong public and organizational interests in opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes. The range and scope of site-specific and issue-specific decisions points to the importance of new ways to use consultation processes that result in mutual benefits and widely supported outdoor recreation decisions.

The panel considered the following consultation options:

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

Recommendation # 7

A range of consultation mechanisms be employed as a way to reflect the range and complexity of management and funding issues:

- i. A provincial standing advisory body for all fish and wildlife issues and another provincial standing advisory body dealing with protected area management issues.**
- ii. Separate standing regional advisory bodies for fish management and for wildlife management.**
- iii. Site or issue-specific advisory bodies for park management issues where there is public willingness (e.g. park management planning).**
- iv. Continued ad hoc consultations for specific issues.**

The diversity of issues faced by fish, wildlife and park management authorities, coupled with the intensity of interests in the management of these resources, dictates a range of consultation processes be used. These processes need to balance a range of public perspectives with the maintenance of the Minister's authority.

Recommendation # 8

First Nations be an integral part of each of the above advisory bodies without compromising their aboriginal and ongoing rights.

The Regional Wildlife Management Process, currently being piloted in Prince George, should continue to be supported and allowed to develop as a decision-making model that can be used, as appropriate, more broadly across the province.

The value of First Nations' participation as integral member of the above advisory bodies is recognized. This participation is subject to First Nations' aboriginal and ongoing rights, and any formal agreement between the provincial government and a First Nation.

Recommendation # 9

Advisory bodies should provide advice to the Minister. It is acknowledged, however, that certain decisions may be delegated to such advisory bodies without compromising ministerial accountability.

The panel recognizes a need to maintain ministerial accountability while making decisions that have strong community support. The panel believes that certain decisions, such as those guided by clear provincial policy and standards, may be delegated without compromising Ministerial accountability.

Recommendation # 10

Advisory bodies must be supported by adequate staff and financial resources.

Recommendation # 11

Appointment to advisory bodies be based on a willingness to represent the public interest and the protection of conservation and recreation interests.

PARTNERSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERS

There is currently a wide range of partnerships and volunteers participating in all aspects of the management and funding of fish, wildlife and parks. The panel heard a strong interest and value in expanding these partnerships and volunteer relationships in ways that will result in better service delivery.

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.

The panel considered a range of options on the appropriate type of partners and volunteers and the purposes for which these partners and volunteers should be engaged.

The type of partners considered included individuals, for-profit organizations, and not-for-profit organizations.

Recommendation # 12

The provincial government should engage all types of partners and

volunteers that will result in improved service delivery without compromising protection and conservation standards.

The panel recognizes that partner and volunteer opportunities may be limited by available ministry resources required to maintain these relationships. Partners and volunteers need to have a clear expectations of their requirements in order that conservation and protection standards are not compromised.

The panel also considered the options for the acceptable purposes for partnerships and volunteers.

- i. Existing types of partnerships (e.g. BC Wildlife Federation mandated hunter training and certification, the BC Parks Host program, etc.).
- ii. New innovative and creative types of partnerships serving new purposes, some of which entail sharing of financial risks.

Recommendation # 13

Both existing and new partnerships and volunteer relationships should be used when they will result in improved service delivery and where they will not compromise protection and conservation standards.

The panel received a range of suggestions on new partnership and volunteer arrangements that would appear to contribute to the Ministry's goals. Further evaluation and implementation may return important benefits.

Recommendation # 14

The Ministry should enter into selected partnerships with businesses that wish to be seen to support the values and environmental ethic established by the Ministry. Specifically, engage partners that are interested in supporting or funding aspects of the Ministry's mandate for the privilege of aligning themselves with the values that the British Columbia fish, wildlife and park "brands" represent.

As stated above, partners and volunteers needs to have a clear expectation of their requirements in order that conservation and protection standards are not compromised.

PUBLIC INPUT ON FEES

The panel heard a general acceptance of the principle that users should pay for the recreation opportunities they use. Many individuals and organizations appear to understand and accept increased participation costs. Support for increased user fees will be enhanced by a direct and transparent dedication of those fees to the ongoing provision of the recreational opportunities, and opportunities to be consulted on proposed changes.

The panel also recognizes the importance and social value of recreation participation, and the potential impacts from increased fees. Consequently, changes to fees require careful consideration. The panel considered a number of options for consulting the public on changes to fees. These options were directly based on working principle # 16, which states, "Setting of fees will be delegated to the Ministry to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances while protecting the public interest."

Options that were considered included:

- i. Issue-specific consultations.
- ii. Standing advisory bodies to provide advice on over-all policies, standards and guidelines.

Recommendation # 15

Public Input on Fees

- **The provincial government maintain a strong role in setting fees as a way of protecting the public interest.**
- **The role of the provincial advisory bodies include advice on changes to fees.**

SPECIFIC RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The panel sought advice on the appropriateness of a range of existing and new recreation opportunities. A wide array of recreational opportunities, including many different activities, facilities and services, have been proposed at one time or another.

The panel noted a wide range of opinion about the appropriateness of specific recreational activities, facilities and services. Dealing with this range of perspectives and the site-specific nature of these decisions is beyond the capacity of the panel. As a consequence, the panel has focused its attention on a limited range of existing and new programs, and emphasizes the need for an open, fair and comprehensive process for making site-specific recreation decisions.

Recommendation # 16

All decisions on recreation opportunities, including activities, facilities and services, will be subject to:

- **The existing legislative requirements and constraints (e.g. Park Act);**
- **The provincial government's primary responsibility to protect and conserve of the province's fish and wildlife and their habitats, and park values (Principle #1).**
- **Policies and standards recommended by advisory bodies.**
- **An impact assessment processes that is appropriate to the scale, risk and potential impacts of the decision, and includes opportunities for public consultation.**

Many issues brought to the attention of the panel were related to the provision of specific recreation opportunities. In particular, the public remains concerned about the level of impacts that existing and new recreation opportunities may incur. It was beyond the panel's capacity to address the site-specific nature of these concerns. As a consequence, the panel recommends that site-specific recreation use decisions be subject to a process that is based on clear environmental protection standards and incorporates broadly-based public consultation.

Recommendation # 17

The provincial government should prepare a comprehensive outdoor recreation strategy.

The panel recognizes the value of a comprehensive provincial outdoor recreation strategy, and support its development as a means of clarifying and supporting the Ministry's responsibilities and contributions to outdoor recreation as identified in these recommendations.

Recommendation # 18

FISH BASED RECREATION

Increase special angling opportunities to increase participation and economic benefits. For example:

- **Expand “quality fisheries” opportunities on small lakes; and,**
- **New fish stocking programs in areas of high demand.**

Maintain the provincial fish culture program as part of an integrated approach to fisheries management by the Ministry:

- **Ensure ongoing evaluation of specific stocking programs and optimal fishery performance, and make adjustments where use is low and/or costs are subsidized.**
- **Look to further increase efficiencies in the operation of the major hatcheries. In particular, negotiate a more efficient facility operation and maintenance alternative to the current arrangement with the British Columbia Buildings Corporation.**

Interpretation and education be re-instated and, as necessary for conservation purposes, enhanced. In particular:

- **Fish hatchery interpretation and education;**
- **Opportunities related to spawning and special viewing sites.**

Simplify angling regulations.

Recommendation # 19

WILDLIFE RECREATION

Expand special hunting opportunities to increase participation and economic benefits. For example:

- **Increase the number of special hunt auctions.**
- **Develop “targeted hunts” in agriculture – wildlife conflict areas.**
- **Consider additional special season trophy hunts.**

Interpretation and education (wildlife viewing programs) be re-instated and, as necessary for conservation purposes, enhanced.

Simplify hunting regulations.

Implement the Wildlife Harvest Strategy

The panel notes that both angling and hunting regulations are too complex. Simplification, harmonization among regions, and a standardized science-based approach will maintain conservation and protection standards yet contribute to increased participation and revenue.

Recommendation # 20

PARK RECREATION

Develop a clear categorization system that describes the purposes, ecosystem protection objectives, and appropriate uses of parks.

Interpretation and education be re-instated and, as necessary for conservation purposes, enhanced.

Look to increased efficiencies in the current way of contracting camping and day use facility operation.

Encourage new commercial recreation services that:

- **Provide high quality user experiences;**
- **Connect the user with the natural environment and / or their cultural heritage;**
- **Increase accessibility by creating opportunities for individuals that would otherwise be unable to experience the natural and cultural heritage values of the park system;**
- **Have no or low impact on natural and cultural heritage values; and,**
- **Is endorsed in a park management plan.**

Permit a limited number of new intensive, revenue-focused, recreation locations that provide facilities and services that:

- **Generate significant revenue that is returned to province and dedicated to further park management goals;**
- **Are consistent with the park categorization system and are endorsed in an approved park management plan;**
- **Occur in only in a limited number of areas within or adjacent to the provincial system of protected areas;**
- **Are endorsed by the provincial advisory body;**
- **Are within areas specifically designated for such intensive use immediately adjacent to a park or, if necessary, within the park at its periphery;**
- **Directly affect less than 100 hectares of land within the entire park system;**
- **Provide public access and enhance the province's reputation for high quality outdoor recreation opportunities; and,**
- **Are subject to provincial development, appearance and maintenance standards.**

The panel believes that the provision of a limited number of new, intensive, high quality, revenue-focused areas offering recreational facilities and services should preferably occur outside of parks. It is recognized, however, that such arrangements do not directly connect

the facility or service provision with the park management agency. In order to make the management and financial connections, these new facilities and services may have to occur within designated areas. In such cases, a new facility or service should only occur within areas specially identified for such a purpose. The panel envisions that a total area of less than 100 hectares of land in the entire system of parks would be affected. These facilities and services would only be allowed when there was no impact on significant natural or cultural heritage values. The panel understands that the willingness to pay for such high quality opportunities can be very high. The revenue from such facilities and services are particularly important in rural communities, and the return to the provincial government will provide essential support for the Ministry's mandate.

The panel believes that, in total, there may be between three and five such intensive use opportunities in the entire province. Such opportunities are likely to occur in areas currently with high use levels. These new facilities or services will enhance the quality of user experience or introduce new users to the range of more traditional outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the province. For example, areas that could be considered for such development include:

- *Use of the former quarry site on the Cypress Bowl Park road as a special educational facility, restaurant, or special event venue.*
- *The Mount Robson visitor centre provides a special opportunity for all visitors entering the province along the Yellowhead highway. The current information services might be enhanced by additional accommodation and food services.*

Recommendation # 21

OUTDOOR RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

The provincial government continue the equivalent of current Ministry of Forests responsibilities for recreation, including:

- **Maintenance of recreation sites program;**
- **Maintenance of recreation trail program, including “marine trails”, a rails-to-trails program, and the terrestrial system of trails; and,**
- **Maintenance of forest road access to key recreation areas.**

The panel acknowledges that general outdoor recreation on Crown land is outside of its explicit mandate. However, the existing forest recreation sites, trails and roads are integrally connected to angling, hunting, wildlife viewing and park use. Province-wide organizations and the public at large have identified a significant interest and concern about changes to the above programs. The panel believes the maintenance of these programs is essential if the provincial government is to reach its goals for increased tourism revenue. The panel also believes these programs make significant economic and social contributions to the province and have special value to the rural communities.

General Comment:

The panel believes that fish, wildlife and park interpretation and education are central to the development of individuals' environmental stewardship responsibilities. Individuals that understand and appreciate their natural environment are more likely to take personal responsibility for the care and well-being of that environment.

FUNDING ALTERNATIVES

The working principles provide guidance on the sources of revenue to support the provision of the Ministry's conservation and recreation responsibilities. The principles dictate that conservation and protection of fish, wildlife and parks, and the provision and replacement of basic public recreation infrastructure, are the responsibility of the provincial government and will be supported by general tax revenue. The principles also dictate that incremental costs of recreation (operating, managing, facility repair and crowding costs) will be borne by the user.

The panel recognizes the economic value which is derived from participation in outdoor recreation. The direct and indirect benefits to the province have been estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. As an "export" industry, non-resident participation is a particularly valuable source of revenue to the provincial government. While it is difficult to accurately quantify, the panel acknowledges a link between the revenues to the provincial government from participation in outdoor recreation and the expenditures it makes to provide and manage this use.

The panel considered options related to revenue sources, and retention and allocation mechanisms.

REVENUE SOURCE

In general terms, there are three sources of revenue used to support the provision of fish, wildlife and park recreation. The following describes these three sources of revenue and identifies the specific types that are currently used and some of the new types that the panel considered.

- i. TAXATION:
 - Currently Used:
 - General taxation
 - Potential New Taxation:
 - Dedication of Provincial sales tax (PST) on recreation equipment or a new "surcharge" on sale of recreation equipment.
- ii. FEES
 - Currently Used:
 - User fees (e.g. camping, firewood)
 - Licence fees (e.g. hunting, angling)

- Permit fees (e.g. park use permits, possession of wildlife)
 - Royalty fees (e.g. furs, some hunted wildlife)
- Potential New Fees:
 - New user, licence and permit fees
- iii. CONTRIBUTIONS
 - Currently Used:
 - Donations (e.g. donations boxes at interpretation and education facilities and services)
 - Bequests
 - Corporate sponsorships
 - Potential New Sources:
 - Voluntary taxation (e.g. government lottery)
 - After-tax (refund) deduction (“check-off”)

Expenditures on ministry conservation initiatives come from voted appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF), and from contributions. Recreation services provided by the Ministry are currently funded from the CRF, user fees and contributions.

According to the working principles, the incremental costs for the provision of recreation opportunities are to be borne by the user. This will entail increases to user fees. Non-incremental costs (e.g. costs to provide and replace basic public infrastructure) are proposed to be funded from the CRF and by contributions.

Recommendation # 22

The provincial government adopt the following model for the funding of the province's fish, wildlife and park management responsibilities. This recommendation is based on the endorsement of the principles.

Funding for Conservation and Protection:

- **A base level of funding for conservation and protection is provided by general taxation, and allocated to the Ministry through voted appropriation.**
- **Enhanced levels of conservation and protection are provided through a variety of contributions.**

Funding for Recreation:

- **The incremental costs of providing recreation opportunities (operating and managing, annual infrastructure repair and crowding costs) are funded through user fees.**
- **The non-incremental costs of providing recreation (initial basic public facility provision and capital repair and replacement) are funded through general taxation allocated to the Ministry through voted appropriation.**
- **Contributions may be used to fund incremental and non-incremental costs of basic public infrastructure, and enhanced levels of recreation service delivery.**
- **Partners may fund enhanced levels of recreation service delivery.**

Basic public infrastructure and enhanced infrastructure require further definition. The panel believes that examples of basic public infrastructure in parks includes basic roads, parking, camping sites, tables and sanitary facilities. Enhanced infrastructure would include such facilities as showers and sani-stations.

Recommendation # 23

The provincial government implement a “Green Lottery” and a tax refund “check-off” as voluntary contributions that support the province’s responsibility for conservation, protection and recreation.

Recommendation # 24

Non-consumptive users of the province’s fish, wildlife and park resources should contribute to the provision of those opportunities.

Recommendation # 25

The panel supports the implementation of a recreation pass for the non-consumptive personal use of Crown land for recreational purposes. A portion of the revenue generated from such a recreation pass should be dedicated to the Ministry’s provision of fish and wildlife recreation opportunities on Crown lands. If a Park Access Pass is implemented, it should be blended with this broader outdoor recreation pass.

Recommendation # 26

Subject to the direction taken by the provincial government for a “British Columbia Trust for Public Lands,” look to ways such a trust or foundation may be used to support the provision of the ministry’s conservation and recreation responsibilities.

The provincial government is currently considering options related to the New Era commitment to establish a “British Columbia Trust for Public Lands.” The approach chosen for this trust should consider the recommendations of the panel regarding the use of an expanded HCTF, and ensure this trust complements the management and funding of fish, wildlife and parks.

The panel believes that non-government, non-profit organizations are effective and efficient in pursuing environmental conservation and recreation initiatives. The panel heard that if the provincial government is interested in establishing a trust or foundation, it should be structured in a way that does not compete with these organizations for private and corporate contributions.

The panel does not support the dedication of existing PST collected on outdoor recreation equipment nor a “surcharge” on such equipment sales. Revenue collected through user participation is more direct, transparent and efficient.

The panel believes the main solution to the Ministry’s budget issues related to the provision of recreation lies with new and increased revenue from fees. With the Ministry’s budget from voted appropriation now fixed in the Service Plan, additional funds for recreation from taxation cannot occur without impacting environmental protection and conservation standards. In the short term, increased revenue from contributions is not expected to be significant.

REVENUE RETENTION AND ALLOCATION

The public has a keen interest in the way financial resources are retained and allocated. A key issue is the protection of the public interest. The panel heard perspectives related to transparency, accountability, balancing public and special interests, and opportunities for public participation.

Some of the alternatives considered by the panel included:

- 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.

Recommendation # 27

RECREATION REVENUE RETENTION AND ALLOCATION:

- **Expand the purpose and function of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF); The purpose of this expanded trust fund includes receiving all existing, incremental and new recreation use revenue from fees, licences, permits, and the allocation of these funds in ways that support the Ministry's mandate; This expanded trust fund will require a change of name to reflect this new, broader purpose;**
- **Include in this expanded trust fund the opportunity to receive and dedicate contributions;**
- **Ensure the funds are in a non-lapsing account in which the balance carries over fiscal years;**
- **Provide a mechanism for dedicating incoming revenue to specific purposes;**
- **Maintain ministerial authority for allocations from the expanded trust fund based on advice on specific aspects from the provincial advisory bodies.**

The panel heard considerable praise for the efficiency and effectiveness of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund. The level of support for this fund and its operation is outstanding. The panel wishes to build on the strengths of the HCTF, and expand its qualities in ways that support the broader range of responsibilities of the Ministry.

The panel is looking at ways to maintain the current purpose and function of the HCTF as an "envelope" within the expanded purpose. The model being considered by the panel also includes a variety of other dedicated "envelopes" for functions such as ministry recreation services, a park trust, or land acquisition. A detailed implementation plan, included potential changes to legislation, is required.

All existing recreational use revenue currently directed to the Consolidate Revenue Fund will be directed to an expanded HCTF. The Ministry's base budget will be reduced by a corresponding amount of this transfer, leaving no net loss to the CRF.

The expansion of the purpose of the HCTF means that it will become part of the Ministry's base budgeting, and will be used for salaries and other expenditures necessary for the provision of fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities.

The Ministry's dependency on an expanded HCTF for base budget will require a change to the current allocation method.

Recommendation # 28

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTABILITY

- **The Minister retain accountability for expenditures from the Ministry's voted appropriations.**
- **Maintain ministerial authority (as trustee) for allocations from the expanded trust fund based on advice on specific aspects from the provincial advisory bodies.**

Consistent with the recommendation for the delegation of authority, the panel recommends maintaining a strong ministerial authority and responsibility for expenditure decisions. For voted appropriations, the minister is accountable to the Legislative Assembly. For funds allocated from the special trust account, the minister retains accountability but will be advised by the provincial advisory bodies.

PRICING ISSUES

The panel's working principles provide specific direction on pricing. These include (paraphrased):

- Principle #12 – User fees will cover incremental costs;
- Principle #13 – Non-residents will pay competitive market value;
- Principle #14 – Commercial service providers will pay market prices;
- Principle #15 – Setting fees will be delegated to the Ministry; and,
- Principle #16 – Fee discounts will be based on ability to pay.

A basis for these principles is the provincial government's direction that the beneficiaries of the use of recreation opportunities should primarily be responsible for the cost of providing those opportunities. The working principles imply 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.

The panel believes that the pricing for the use of recreational opportunities is the key to the Ministry's budget issues. The movement toward a user-pay pricing system will provide the highest assurance for the maintenance of the Ministry's primary responsibility for conservation and protection of the province's fish, wildlife and parks.

The ministry has provided the following estimates of potential increased revenue from user fees.

POTENTIAL NEW ANNUAL USER FEE REVENUES

Revenue Source	Estimated Increase ¹	
	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Within Existing Ministry Mandate		
• Hunting ²	\$1.5M	\$2M
• Angling ³	\$4.5M	\$5M
• Park Camping ⁴	\$2M	\$2M
• Park Access ⁵	\$1.5M	\$4M
• Park Use Permit Fees ⁶	\$0.5M	\$1M
Subtotal	\$10.0M	\$14.0M
Outside Current Ministry Mandate ⁷		
• Commercial Backcountry Recreation ⁸	\$0.2M	\$1M
• Recreation Pass ⁹	\$0.2M	\$1M
Subtotal	\$0.4M	\$2M
TOTAL	\$10.4M	\$16M

Notes:

1. Estimates are in millions of dollars. Increased revenues might require up to 5 years before full amounts might be realized.
2. Hunting revenues include both increases to existing hunting licences and new, special opportunities such a special hunt auctions.
3. Angling revenues include both increases to existing angling licences and new, special angling opportunities such as those provided on designated waters.
4. Includes increases to existing range of camping opportunities. Changes may include increases from enhanced services.
5. Park access fees have a range of implementation alternatives. These range from a basic parking fee in high use areas to a more general access / use fee applying to all parks.
6. Current park use permits fees do not cover basic administrative nor management costs. Some of these permits are for the provision high value recreation opportunities which are dependant on the maintenance of high quality natural and cultural heritage values. In principle, there is public support for levying fees that are based on the market value of the service, particularly where the revenue is returned to the ongoing management of the resources of the area.
7. There are a number of general outdoor recreation opportunities that are currently outside of the Ministry's authority. Some of these opportunities use, or are dependent on, the maintenance of environmental qualities, including the province's fish and wildlife resources. The public has indicated a desire to more directly connect the

provision of these opportunities with the provincial government's responsibility for managing the opportunities and the protection and conservation of the environment.

8. Commercial backcountry recreation opportunities are currently authorized under the Land Act, as administered by Land and Water BC. The public has told the panel it believes
 - These commercial opportunities have impacts on the environment; and,
 - That the opportunity to provide commercial recreation opportunities should come with a responsibility to contribute to the ongoing management of the environment on which the opportunity is based.

The panel believes that a portion of the revenue from authorizing commercial backcountry recreation should be directly dedicated to the management of the environment on which these opportunities are dependent. The estimate of potential revenue is based on limited technical review.

9. The panel heard proposals for a general recreation pass for all non-consumptive personal recreational use on Crown land. In principle, the panel supports this concept, and if implemented, recommends that a portion of the revenue, equivalent to the estimated use related to fish and wildlife recreation, be dedicated to the management of those resources.

Recommendation # 29

Prices must be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure consistency with the principles.

Recommendation # 30

The provincial government's endorsement of the principles must include approval to expedite the price adjustments necessary to meet the Ministry's budget reduction targets scheduled to take effect on April 1, 2003.

In particular, the Ministry should initiate the identified changes to the fees within its mandate to achieve the estimated increases in revenue.

The panel is aware that the process for changing fees can be lengthy. The Ministry's Service Plan has identified budget reduction targets for the provision of recreation services that will take effect April 1, 2003. In accordance with these recommendations, the panel is recommending that the funding shortfalls be made up from increased revenue from user fees. These fees need to be in place prior to the next fiscal year.

The panel is also aware that continuity of service is important. Interruptions of services will incur significant costs to re-start the service delivery. These services have special value to the rural communities of the province.

Recommendation # 31

Interim funding will be required in order to bridge the gap between the timelines imposed for the Ministry's budget reduction target and the time required to implement and build the capacity to generate the revenue necessary to fully offset that reduction.

DRAFT

APPENDIX ONE

PANEL MEMBERS

Bruce Strachan, chair:

Bruce Strachan is currently a Councillor for the City of Prince George and a Director of the Regional District of Fraser Ft. George. Bruce Strachan is a former minister of environment who served for 12 years as MLA for Prince George South. His political experience includes serving as deputy speaker of the legislature, government house leader and minister of health, intergovernmental relations and advanced education. He was also chair of the school board of District 57 in Prince George, where he has lived for 36 years. Strachan has worked as a newspaper columnist in Prince George and a daily open-line talkback host with Prince George radio station.

Bob Dalziel:

Bob Dalziel has recently retired as assistant deputy minister of the environmental stewardship division of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. He has worked for 31 years in a variety of planning, operations and management positions with BC Parks. He has extensive knowledge of British Columbia's protected area system and the geography and resources of the province, and is active in park and wildland recreation activities. Dalziel is knowledgeable about resource management policies and practices, and park administration in other North American jurisdictions.

Dr. David W. Narver:

David Narver completed his doctorate in fisheries in 1966 and spent 16 years as a fisheries research scientist in Washington state, Alaska, New Brunswick and British Columbia. He retired in 1994 as the director of the British Columbia fisheries management branch. Since retirement, Narver has remained active in the fish and wildlife management field as a volunteer, adviser to governments and member of organizations including the B.C. Wildlife Federation, the B.C. Federation of Fly Fishers, the B.C. Federation of Drift Fishers and the Sport Fish Advisory Board, which advises the federal minister of fisheries..

Chief Harry Nyce Sr.:

Harry Nyce Sr. joined the panel on September 11, 2002. Harry Nyce is Director of Fisheries and Wildlife with the Nisga'a Lisims Government and Chair of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine. His political career includes seven two-year terms as elected Chief Councillor for the community of Gitwinksihlkw, in the Nisga'a territory, and thirteen years on the regional district board. Specific appointments related to the panel mandate include Co-chairman for the Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park Committee, Resources Negotiator for the Nisga'a Tribal Council board for the settlement of the Nisga'a Land Question, and Co-Chairman of the Nisga'a Cultural Artifacts Committee. Harry Nyce studied political science at UBC.

Bob Peart:

Bob Peart is executive director of the British Columbia chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. A professional biologist with a master of education degree, he has also been assistant director at the Royal British Columbia Museum, executive director of the Outdoor Recreation Council and an adviser to cabinet ministers. He is now chair of the Grasslands Conservation Council and sits on the boards of The Land Conservancy of B.C., the Fraser Basin Council and the Yellowstone-to-Yukon Conservation Initiative. Until recently he was provincial co-chair of the central region board in Clayoquot Sound.

Dr. Aidan Vining:

Aidan Vining is a professor of business policy and public policy on the faculty of business administration at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby. He has written extensively on public policy analysis, strategic analysis and cost-benefit analysis for the public sector. His works include comparisons of the performance of private, mixed and state-owned enterprises. Vining was educated at King's College, London, received his master's of business administration at University of California, Riverside, and his master's of public policy and doctorate at University of California, Berkeley.