



RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL

**Summary Report on Meetings with  
Province-Wide Organizations  
(Vancouver, June 25 and 26, 2002)**

Report Released July 17, 2002



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## **INTRODUCTION**

On June 25 and 26, 2002 the Recreation Stewardship Panel hosted meetings in Vancouver to elicit initial input from province-wide stakeholder organizations concerning issues within the panel's mandate. The Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, the Honourable Joyce Murray, has appointed the panel to recommend improved management models and funding sources for BC's fish, wildlife and parks recreation services, and opportunities for greater public involvement in decision-making.

The meetings were arranged on the basis of common-interest sectors and involved representatives of the following province-wide organizations:

### ***June 25 Morning Session – Wildlife Interests***

- BC Wildlife Federation
- Guide Outfitters Association of BC

### ***June 25 Afternoon Session – Fishing Interests***

- BC Federation of Drift Fishers
- BC Federation of Fly Fishers
- BC Fish Resort and Outfitters Association (via speaker phone)
- BC Wildlife Federation
- Guide Outfitters Association of BC
- Sport Fishing Institute of BC

### ***June 26 Morning Session – Parks and Wilderness Interests***

- BC Environmental Network – Parks and Wilderness Caucus
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Federation of BC Naturalists (several representatives, one via speaker phone)
- Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC
- Outdoor Recreation Council of BC
- Sierra Club (via speaker phone)

### ***June 26 Afternoon Session – Accommodation and other Commercial Interests***

- BC Lodging and Campground Association
- BC Park Ski Area Operators Association (Mount Seymour and Cypress Ski Area representatives attending)



- Council of Tourism Associations
- Park Facility Operators' Association
- Wilderness Tourism Association of BC

Other organizations invited but either unable to send a representative or declining to attend were the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and World Wildlife Fund

## **Purpose of Sessions**

The two-hour sessions were designed as a phase one preliminary exchange of ideas, to be supplemented with additional targeted consultations with key stakeholders over the next few months. As such, the meetings were structured as a panel listening board and informal in nature. The overall objectives for the session were:

- To initiate dialogue with key province-wide stakeholder organizations with an interest in fish, wildlife and parks recreation services, and
- To receive comments from key stakeholder groups regarding issues related to principles that will shape the policy options developed and assessed by the panel.

Three organizations (BC Wildlife Federation, BC Federation of Drift Fishers, and BC Federation of Fly Fishers) accompanied their verbal presentations with written briefs. These submissions are available through the panel secretariat. The panel invited and encouraged other written submissions throughout the process.

## **Summary Report**

This summary report is based on notes recorded during the four stakeholder sessions. Rather than provide a verbatim account of the informal dialogue, the report clusters input according to several key themes that emerged from the sessions. It describes areas of common agreement as well as items of unique concern.

Additionally, given the informality of the meetings and the fact that some stakeholders had not yet had the opportunity to discuss the issues at hand with their executive and membership, the report does not attribute comments to specific groups. Attribution will occur in subsequent reports on stakeholder submissions.



Participants in these meetings are encouraged to contact the panel secretariat (RecPanel@praxis.ca) if they wish to suggest additions, clarifications or corrections to this summary.

## **PART A: INTRODUCTORY AND OVERVIEW COMMENTS**

### **A1 Passion and Concern**

Whether hunter or angler, hiker, naturalist or conservationist, or a combination of interests, stakeholders spoke eloquently and with great passion about their connection, commitment to, and concern about BC's parks, fish and wildlife. They spoke of parks as a sacred trust and a legacy for the future, of angling as a heritage activity that must be preserved, of our abundant and diverse wildlife as the envy of the world, and of the whole BC experience as a tourism gem. They agreed that it was in everyone's interest to have a healthy system of parks and outdoor recreation.

Yet overriding the pride and appreciation for the province's natural wonders was concern and fear about the future. Stakeholders said they had many questions about the direction government is heading with fish, wildlife, and park services. Several parks and wilderness representatives said they were receiving daily calls from anxious members of the public about recent park closures, loss of programs, and possible further cuts. Other specific concerns included the near extinction of steelhead stocks on many East Vancouver Island rivers, deteriorating standards in parks campsites, and the threat of privatization or dismantling of fish culture programs. Tourism representatives talked about lost opportunity to promote our natural assets because we lack an overall business plan for "SuperNatural BC." They also emphasized how important it is for BC's tourism industry to maintain a world-class park system.

### **A2 Expectation of Involvement**

Stakeholders acknowledged the important work the panel is undertaking. Several said they appreciated the opportunity to meet with the panel early in the process, and they desire and expect to be fully consulted at other junctures in the process. They said they have a high stake in not only preserving what we have in the province, but in restoring the quality of infrastructure and programs to previous levels and in "growing" more wildlife.



### **A3 Economic and Social Benefits**

Many stakeholders spoke about the economic benefits accrued to the province through a multitude of outdoor recreation activities. Sport fishing interests, for example, cited 2000 figures of 600,000 freshwater anglers in BC, contributing \$500 million to the economy and, according to one organization, a 31:1 revenue to cost ratio for sport fishing. Hunting interests said their industry contributes \$30 million annually in taxes, over and above income tax. Tourism interests advised that the industry brings in \$9.2 billion annually, second only to forestry as BC's largest industry. With 112,000 employees, including 15,000 in wilderness environments, tourism is the province's largest land-based employer.

The key message behind these figures was that government needs to understand the substantial and long-term contribution that outdoor recreation makes to the BC tax base and economy. Further, government needs to acknowledge and take that contribution into account in decision-making.

Stakeholders had several preliminary suggestions for improving revenue generation, which will be discussed in Section B5.

Stakeholders also articulated their views about the social benefits that accrue from outdoor recreation. They talked about the rejuvenation and beneficial health effects that people experience when they escape the stress of the city for an angling experience on one of BC's waterways; about the spirit of volunteerism that has helped maintain our parks system, fish and wildlife resources; about the fresh water, educational and spiritual values parks provide; and about the present and future value of our recreational land base. They held that when it comes to fish, wildlife, and parks recreation, government must fully consider social values alongside economic values.

### **A4 Panel Terms of Reference**

#### ***Forest Recreation Sites***

Stakeholders said the panel should look at the issue of Forest Recreation Sites (FR sites) within their overall mandate. The FR sites played a key role in the overall outdoor recreation picture in BC and failing to address the impact of their closure leaves an obvious void. The panel said that, strictly speaking, FR sites were not in their mandate based on activities relevant to the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. FR sites are a Ministry of Forests mandate. However,



the panel acknowledged that even though there may be overlap, they do need to look at FR sites.

Parks and wilderness stakeholders supported the view of two representatives who said that forest recreation sites are one of the keys to enjoyment of outdoor recreation. They said the sites were created to contain people to certain areas and their closure will place additional pressure on parks. People will also go around closed gates, creating a liability issue for the province, or camp in inappropriate areas.

Wildlife interests said people are realizing the importance of the forest recreation sites to their communities both in terms of a means of access to the outdoors and as a draw for tourists to the outdoor experience. Access to many of the province's stocked lakes is now in jeopardy because FR sites were the means of access. Some people called on forest companies to contribute toward maintenance of the sites through stumpage fees, and for the Ministry of Forests to take due responsibility for BC's non-parks land base.

### ***Other terms of reference issues***

Participants had a variety of other questions and comments concerning the panel's terms of reference:

- Q. Is the government going to listen to the panel's findings? A. The panel responded that the Minister is genuinely interested in getting input from the panel and they will be heard.
- Q. Will the panel be dealing with policies concerning allocation of wildlife resources? A. The panel said they had not thought of the issue to this point, but it makes sense since allocation is tied to issues of budget.
- Q. Will the panel result in changes to legislation or new Acts? To structural changes in the Ministry? A. The panel has been asked to consider such changes within their mandate and to provide input to budget issues. Organizational changes could follow.
- Q. Is the scope for the panel the whole Ministry? A. No, just fish, wildlife, and recreation portion of parks.

### **General Comments:**

- Not sure why this panel needs to look at future management of BC parks when, in 1997, the government convened the Parks Legacy Project, a process involving 140 open houses and follow-up workshops around BC.



(Parks and wilderness interests felt the Recreation Stewardship Panel should use the Legacy Panel's report as their framework).

- The panel should be called the "Park" Stewardship Panel because recreation is a different matter.
- The panel needs to consider the new forest practises codes when it comes to special management areas.
- The panel's mandate of recreation stewardship is a difficult concept because recreation and stewardship are two different concepts.
- Biodiversity should be included in the panel's terms of reference, as should interpretive programs and education opportunities.
- Concerned about the time frame for this process.

## **PART B: FUNDING ISSUES**

### **B1 Service and Program Cutbacks**

In addition the closure of Forest Recreation sites, stakeholders expressed concerns regarding cutbacks to other programs and services. Loss of BC Parks staff was high on the list, with participants fearing a resulting degradation in the condition of BC parks. Many of the stakeholders, most notably accommodation and other commercial interests, spoke at some length about the decline in park campground standards over the past decade, alluding to infrastructure that is in need of repair and overall decline in quality. Stakeholders in each of the sessions decried the recent termination of park interpretation programs, emphasizing the fundamental importance of public education regarding our protected areas and resources. Parks and wilderness interests spoke out against the recent cuts to volunteer programs such as Extension Officers, Eco Reserve Wardens and ParkWatch. They also said the Park Hosts program, which is still operating, is nonetheless suffering because there are fewer parks staff to manage and oversee the volunteers.

In the session with fishing interests, the reduction in sport fishing programs was linked to a reduction in the number of anglers, and a concomitant loss of revenue sources and fisheries stewardship to the province. These stakeholders also criticized the cancellation of fish hatchery interpretive programs and the potential privatization of fish culture.

Wildlife interests spoke of the negative impacts from loss of funding for research and data collection on wildlife stock. Those impacts include a lack of information



exchange with other jurisdictions, a loss of science-based decisions, and a resulting mind-set of ultra-conservatism and micromanagement. These stakeholders said there is a much greater capacity for harvesting of certain species but that science based decision-making has been supplanted by politically based decision-making in the absence of good data. Further, they said that regional biologists should be focusing on field and inventory work rather than administration and politics; the latter is the role of regional managers.

Overall, stakeholders expressed a desire for parks, fish and wildlife programs to be restored to previous – even “peak” levels.

## **B2 Core Responsibilities of Government**

The Panel was interested in knowing what fish, wildlife and parks recreation services stakeholders thought should be a core government responsibility, paid for by all BC taxpayers. There was a strong consensus that government has a fundamental responsibility for conservation and sustainability, as well as biodiversity. Stakeholders maintained that conservation activities and programs greatly benefit all citizens and the provincial economy.

Parks and wilderness stakeholders said that nature education and interpretation programs are also core functions. They also held that park management planning should be taxpayer-funded. Asked by the panel about how to pay for park watch programs, which do not generate revenues, a parks stakeholder said this, too should be a core function or funded through other revenue streams.

Anglers and hunters said conservation of fish and wildlife stock is definitely a government responsibility, and agreed with parks interests that government must play a key role in conservation education and environmental stewardship.

Generally, stakeholders felt that government should continue to put “seed money” into fish, wildlife and parks recreation programs. Some said, for example, that government should continue funding parks operations and direct revenue from fee increases or any new user fees to needed infrastructure repairs. The principle of “government funding the science and users funding the maintenance” appeared to have some potential.

## **B3 User Fees**

Stakeholders indicated varying degrees of acceptance or support for fees for use of parks and crown land for outdoor recreation. Several made the point that users



are already paying for access, programs and services through taxes. All agreed on the need for three over-riding principles:

1. That revenue from fees and licences should be directed toward maintaining and enhancing the programs and services from which the fees were derived, and not directed into general government revenue. In other words, incremental fees on fishing licences should go toward fisheries management, conservation and programs; park user fees toward maintenance and enhancement of parks; camping fees toward repairing and improving campground infrastructure; and incremental hunting license fees toward wildlife management and conservation.
2. That stakeholders and the public should have a strong say in how these directed revenues are used (this issues is discussed in more depth under Decision-Making).
3. That information should be made available during the panel process on the actual costs versus the revenues collected for various programs and services. Stakeholders said this information is critical for understanding how to deal with the issue of user fees. Many said that current fees already more than pay for the programs they fund – fishing and hunting licences, for example. The more people understand about the true cost of a program or service, stakeholders said, the more willing they will be to accept user fees.

Stakeholders also cited the need for caution in setting user fees. They said that fees set at too high a level could discourage people from participating. Several stakeholders suggested that accommodation must be made for those who cannot afford to pay. It was also noted that fees must be set at a rate that is competitive in the tourism market.

There was no consensus on the issue of fees for general park access, with some participants expressing a degree of openness to the idea of park access fees and other expressing firm opposition. Similarly, the idea of fees for parking or day use parks sites generated mixed feelings. Some groups felt it would be acceptable to charge car park fees while others did not like the idea of parking or day use fees at all.

Several stakeholders talked about difficulty of collecting and monitoring compliance for parking or day use fees. One park facility operator said that with compliance checks, a 50% recovery rate is the norm for voluntary sani-station



fees; a similar rate might be expected from self-serve parking permit machines. It was suggested that paying for enforcement could be worthwhile in high-use areas, or that user fees at high-demand sites – whether for day or overnight use – be set higher than fees at low-use sites, and revenues be used to support the latter.

### ***Additional sector-specific input on user fees***

#### ***Hunting and fishing***

Hunting and fishing stakeholders told the panel that they believe they are already in a user pay system via the fees they pay for licences. Several stakeholders provided calculations to make the case that anglers contribute more revenue than the cost of the province's fisheries programs. Further, they said hunters and anglers are continually targeted with fees increases and new fees, and were particularly adamant that all users of the outdoors -- users such as hikers, backcountry skiers, heli-hiking operations, commercial tenders, self-supported campers, birders and others -- pay their fair share. If such were the case, they said, they could support some increases to their license fees as well.

The issue was raised about how to glean contributions from non-commercial, self-supported users. Top-of-mind ideas included taxes on gas, food, and outdoor recreation gear.

Specific stakeholders also raised the following points:

- Focus on non-resident anglers and steelhead anglers (current steelhead license fees are seen by some as a real bargain) for any increases in fishing license fees; increase fees to BC residents little if at all.
- Focus user fees on “special fisheries” that require more expensive management such as hatchery stocking rather than on basic recreational angling.
- Target anglers of non-abundant species for substantial fee increases. Consider a system where licences for harvesting fish cost more than licences for catch-and-release.
- Concerning hunting, government has a role to play in setting license fees but not in establishing the overall cost for a hunt.

#### ***Parks and wilderness***

Parks and wilderness representatives indicated reluctant acceptance of fees for use of parks within the three overall caveats for user fees described at the



beginning of the “User Fees” section of this report. They desire additional dialogue on how, where, and for what activities fees should be charged. Several stakeholders said an annual park use fee or day use fee would be preferable to individual activity fees such as one fee for hiking, another for camping, a third for backcountry skiing, etc. Another person said that access and activity fees needed to be looked at separately, adding that the former would be impossible to collect, the latter easier. Parks stakeholders generally found the notion of having to pay to use a trail to be disagreeable in principle.

There was general agreement that the panel and government need to look at a variety of factors when considering user fees – factors such as the benefits parks provide to society both presently and in the future, particularly as other jurisdictions lose their land base. Finally, it was suggested that user fees from parks could flow into a special foundation, similar to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, to which groups could apply for funding to run parks programs.

#### *Accommodation and other commercial interests*

Operators of park facilities and commercial campgrounds suggested both capacity and tolerance for increases to campground fees. Commercial operators said they had a longstanding concern about the rates charged for provincial park campsites. They said the rates did not reflect the true cost of operations, unlike the rates commercial operators need to charge to reflect their overall costs and need for profitability. They felt provincial campsites created unfair competition.

They also suggested that people are willing to pay top dollar for first-class facilities, but the provincial campsites have slipped out of this category.

Operators emphasized that fee increases would need to be small and gradual rather than a major increase after years of steady rates. They said that annual increases of even a dollar per year over the past few years would probably have allowed for upkeep of infrastructure and service standards that have, instead, declined.

Asked about the potential for differential pricing at provincial campsites, private operators said they already price differently according to location of an individual site within a campground, with higher fees for more desirable sites and for weekend and holiday usage. Park operators said there would need to be



province-wide guidelines for rates but that there was potential for differential pricing within a specific park.

#### **B4 Preferential Pricing for BC Residents**

The majority of stakeholders who spoke to this issue supported the principle of preferential pricing for BC residents, with cautionary notes: the need for market-sensitive rates and, from one group, a call for more debate before the principle is finalized. Tourism representatives said preferential pricing is not the norm in the industry. On the other hand, two fishing stakeholder groups encouraged a full review of non-resident fishing license fees with an eye to needed *increases* to reflect market values.

#### **B5 Revenue Generation**

The summary of input thus far has included several points concerning stakeholder views of the pros and cons of various forms of user fees. This section provides a point-form summary of additional top-of-mind thoughts from individual groups regarding revenue generation and funding for fish, wildlife, and parks recreation services:

##### ***Foundations and trusts***

The idea of foundations or trusts as a mechanism for funding fish, wildlife, and parks recreation services elicited a mixed response. It was pointed out that the Parks Legacy Panel had recommended creation of a foundation for BC's parks. Another commenter said any such foundation would need to be arms length from government and ensure parks education and conservation in perpetuity.

There were a number of kudos for the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, with several comments about how stakeholders see direct results from the fund. Others called for even greater direct benefits, such as a mechanism for contributors to choose the area of fish and wildlife to which their license fee surcharge is directed. One group expressed concern about HCTF funds potentially going into general government revenues.

On the other hand, three or four people said so many foundations are now in place it is causing confusion and competition for donors. One stakeholder was adamant that foundations or trusts should not be set up to fund fish and wildlife management.



A directed question from the panel to a stakeholder revealed potential for “Adopt-a-Trail” and “Adopt-a-Park” style programs if government provides sufficient seed money (as an example, the stakeholder referenced seed money provided for park trail-building and maintenance -- \$250,000 twenty years ago, \$11,000 today -- the latter allowing for very minimal maintenance. This example prompted other comments about how government must both factor in the contribution of volunteers yet at the same time not rely too much on the volunteer sector.)

### ***Comments on revenues from fishing licences***

- There is a strong business case for increasing government investment into fisheries programs to expand the sport fishery; the potential for tourist-based recreational fishing is “phenomenal” and we’re not taking advantage of it – that’s why we have to look at user fees.
- Concerning fishing license fees, there is room for an increase to fees for non-resident anglers on classified waters.
- Fund fisheries programs through a reinvestment of sales taxes associated with recreational anglers’ purchases of goods and services.

### ***Comments on revenues and funding for parks***

- Talk to the federal government about recovering the GST paid on park fees for use in park maintenance and enhancement.
- Asked whether delivery of interpretation programs could be worked into provincial campsite fees, park facility operators said there is potential to work program delivery into their contracts and program funding into day use fees.
- Prior to the cancellation of park interpretation programs, parks interpretive staff educated thousands of school students. These students will no longer have access to the programs because schools cannot afford to step in and pay for them. BC and Mississippi are now the only jurisdictions in North America that do not have publicly-funded interpretive programs.

## **PART C: MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES**

### **C1 Commercial Enterprise**

Commercial enterprise is one of several key issues that has surfaced in the panel’s work toward a set of principles to guide development of policy options. Stakeholders were therefore asked to give their initial feedback.



Several stakeholders took a general but firm position that there should be “no commercialization of parks” and “no corporate control of fisheries.” More specific feedback included a strong aversion to the idea of corporate signs in parks, wilderness, and outdoor recreation locations in general. This was characterized as “...brought to you by (corporate name) ...” signage. Generally, many stakeholders were concerned that commercial interests in parks would compromise ecological integrity, submitting that, instead, only crown land should be considered for commercially based activities. Several of the accommodation and commercial stakeholders said it was important to keep the BC parks campsite “brand” distinct from commercial campsites, that is, a more “natural” look and feel free of concessions stands and other activities, and with the larger, more private and unserviced sites people associate with provincial parks. One organization said development in parks would create unfair competition for privately operated lodges.

Other concerns or points stakeholders raised ...

- Private development could reduce public access to land and water recreation resources (Cypress Bowl and Garibaldi – Flute Mountain were named as examples).
- Private interests would likely “cherry pick” the most profitable opportunities – e.g. highest use parks or day use areas, and leave the low profitability or deficit-producing areas to government.
- Through the Parks Legacy Panel in the 1990s, the public said they did not want parks privatized or commercialized.
- Advertising in hunting and fishing guidebooks is acceptable.
- Current park facility operators (pfos) know it is a privilege to operate a park (this perspective from a parks and wilderness stakeholder). One group said the pfos’ uniforms command the public’s respect .
- Another group said that operators do not maintain control over the public or switchback cutting on trails the way park rangers did.
- Parks are “prime real estate” for commercial operations; the private sector should therefore have to “pay dearly” if they are to have the privilege of using them.
- The government has approved 42% of recent application for backcountry commercial applications. Motorized access is a particularly damaging recreational use. The utmost care must be taken to understand the carrying capacity of the land and to watch for overlap of activities.



- Any privatization of recreation opportunities would require strict conditions, such as public review, an adequate inventory of habitat, rigorous monitoring, and the ability to correct any problems expeditiously.

On the other side of the coin, it was pointed out that most British Columbians are not aware that private contractors already operate camping and picnic sites in many protected areas. Operators, however, had a number of frustrations with issues of shrinking funding for parks, declining service standards, and their service contracts. These and other issues concerning park facility operations are discussed in Section C3.

Some of the tourism and commercial stakeholders expressed generalized interest in expansion of commercial opportunities but specifics were not explored in these preliminary sessions.

## **C2 Business and Management Plans**

The need for an overarching business or recreation plan for the province was raised under several guises:

- A business plan for our “SuperNatural BC” product, i.e. who wants the BC experience, (from the gamut of minimalist wilderness outings to luxury experiences), how much are they willing to pay, and who will deliver the products;
- A parks management plan, including an inventory of resources to define the type and duration of commercial operations; and
- A provincial recreation strategy as a model for delivery of recreation in BC.

Such comprehensive approaches were seen as an antidote to dealing with issues in a fragmented way.

## **C3 Park Operation**

Park facility and commercial operators raised strong concerns about current contracting mechanisms for parks. Although contracts are outside the scope of the panel’s mandate, this input was clearly important and will be directed to appropriate sources within the Ministry.

The concerns included:

- Lack of an appropriate contracting mechanism. Currently park facility operators have permits, rather than contracts with the government which require contractors to post bonds, but which the government can cancel at



any time. Commercial interests called for longer-term contracts, subject to performance standards, which would provide enough security for contractors to secure bank financing and, in turn, the ability and motivation to repair and improve park infrastructure. The minimum desired contract period was 10 years with an option for a 10-year renewal based on performance.

- The size of contracts government is putting out for bidding. They have become too large, limiting access by experienced smaller operators, including those with local knowledge. While it was acknowledged that fewer, larger contracts are more efficient for government to administer, operators said the maximum area covered should be a parks district rather than an entire region.

Commercial lodges and operators of skiing facilities in parks also had concerns about how contracts are drawn up:

- For lodges, leases of 20 to 25 years are not sufficient to secure bank financing. For ski areas in parks, the length of tenure is good but there are seasonal restrictions on activities.
- A formalized policy is needed for tenure of ski areas in parks; operators also desire a mechanism for dispute resolution and for resolving the issue of backcountry skiers travelling through downhill ski areas, their position being that backcountry skiers should be contributing to the cost of ski area operations through user fees. (On the other hand, some parks and wilderness interests cited concerns about loss of access to the backcountry in these parks). Operators said the ability to sanction or veto activities within their tenure is of overall importance.

Finally, BC park and private campground operators reported that the new policy of charging for firewood in provincial parks is working well. There has been no backlash from the public; people are tending to use less firewood or bringing their own. The down side for operators is that sale of firewood is not proving to be a revenue generator. As well, people are taking wood from the forest floor, reducing the source of wood duff that feeds the forest.



## **PART D: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING**

A clear consensus emerged across all interests that government must allow significant stakeholder and public input into policies, programs, and services related to fish, wildlife and parks recreation. Stakeholders felt very strongly about this issue, and drew a direct link to the notion of user fees. As one person put it, if “we pay, we say.”

Much less clear, though, was the mechanism for such input and consultation. There appeared to be agreement on the crucial need for input at a grassroots level since residents have the best knowledge of their local area. Some people strongly favoured community-based advisory boards, potentially based on the province’s key ecosystem areas. One group emphasized the importance of First Nations representation, especially concerning wildlife resource allocation. Those advocating regional boards referenced models they felt to be successful, such as certain treaty tables (north-central BC) and the Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB), which advises the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

A number of people had considerable concern about “regional fiefdoms”, where boards and/or government staff could make policy and program decisions contrary to the interests of the local community or of the province as a whole. Overall, the discussion appeared to be heading toward a system of local advisory committees working within clearly defined province-wide policies and standards, with local proposals “vetted through Victoria.”

## **PART E: MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS**

This final section of the summary report captures a variety of miscellaneous comments that the informal sessions elicited.

### **Wildlife**

- The government needs to “think outside the box” concerning wildlife resource allocation. Instead of focusing on dividing up the current resource, focus on how to “grow” more wildlife. Give incentives and motivators to regional managers for effectively managing and “growing their crop” – incentives such as the ability to keep a percentage of incremental revenues within the region.



- Funding needs to be in place to respond to diseases or other crises in the wildlife population.
- BC has the highest moose population of any province yet the lowest allowable percentage of harvest. Harvest levels, and the resulting revenues, could be increased and still be within a conservative range.

## **Fishing**

- Since there are 100 private lodges on fresh water, the industry has a strong interest in the management of the freshwater fishery.
- “This government is not showing respect toward fishing resorts on crown land.”
- The province’s classified water and angling policy needs to be reviewed and strengthened. Possible strategies include mandatory guiding for Class 1 angling for non-residents or electronic licensing. (Written submissions from the Federation of Fly Fishers and the Federation of Drift Fishers include additional specific ideas).
- The government does an excellent job with the money they have for the Fish Culture Program, and could have more funds if they did not have to pay \$3-\$4 million a year rent for hatcheries to BC Buildings Corporation. This is a false cost – one arm of government paying another.

## **Parks**

- Parks are not islands unto themselves. They are connected ecologically to the areas surrounding them.
- There should be no net loss to our parks system. For example, if a park is withdrawn as a result of treaty negotiations, equivalent land should be designated as park elsewhere.
- It is in everyone’s interests, including private campground operators, to have a healthy system of BC parks.

## **Models**

- Stakeholders noted several models for fish, wildlife and/or parks recreation management that may have partial applicability to BC, but articulated the need for a made-in-BC model.