



**Information Gathering and Management –  
Resource Inventories Activity Area –  
Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Mapping Activity –  
Ungulate Winter Range (UWR),  
Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHA), or  
Wildlife Habitat Features (WHF) Designations**

### **General Eligibility**

1. All proposed projects must be in partnership with MWLAP; contact Stewart Guy, 250-387-0060. The primary aim of the partnership is to provide the standards and provide guidance to the licensee regarding the standards. The standards cannot be posted until approved by the MWLAP Deputy Minister, which will happen later this year. Partnerships may or may not involve shared resources.
2. Projects must be designed and implemented using the standards, i.e., there will be no variances accepted to the standards unless the Recipient has proposed and had accepted an alternative strategy. Acceptance must be from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP) Environmental Stewardship Regional Manager (or designate), through a sustainable forest management planning initiative, and must be documented as part of the project submission. Proposals requesting a variance must include a written rationale for the request, and must indicate how the proposed alternative methodology will achieve the same desired results as the original standards.

### **General Standards**

1. The UWR Procedures Manual contains the standards for UWR designation [URL to be added when available].
2. The WHA guidelines contain the standards for WHA designation [http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/identified/wha\\_web.htm](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/identified/wha_web.htm). (For a list of approved WHAs, see [http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/identified/wha/approved/wha\\_approved.htm](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/identified/wha/approved/wha_approved.htm)).
3. The standards for WHFs are at [URL to be added when available].
4. Reference for all work is the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy, <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/identified/>, and the IWMS Version 2 and species accounts [URL to be added when available].
5. The Recipient must design and implement the project with the intent of achieving MWLAP Environmental Stewardship Regional Manager sign-off of the designation.

### **Specific Wildlife Habitat Features (WHF) Eligibility and Standards**

#### **Eligibility**

Projects that are eligible are those that collect information leading to the identification and protection of a Wildlife Habitat Feature (WHF) under the proposed Forest and Range Practices Act for the below listed features. Work will involve planning, analysis of existing information, collection of new information/data, mapping, and approval. If the Recipient will not be following existing inventory standards, a variance must be obtained.

The following are considered resource features. The degree to which a feature needs to be protected will be linked to the significance of that feature as determined by professional judgment and guided by the WHF Best Management Practices (BMPs; under development). Features which are residences of species at risk must be protected according to legislation.

- Mineral licks and wallows
- Ground and bank burrows
- Sharp-tailed Grouse leks
- Ungulate natal areas
- Ground dens
- Mark trees and mark trails
- Snake hibernacula
- Bat hibernacula and maternity roosts
- Large stick nests
- Cavity trees
- Fisheries Sensitive Zones
- Marine Sensitive Zones
- Hot springs
- “Residences” of species at risk (as defined by the federal *Species at Risk Act*)
- Any other feature determined by the Statutory Decision Maker

### Specific WHF Standards

1. A search/review for existing/previously documented records relative to WHFs should be conducted for proposed work prior to implementing operational plans. This data search should include records maintained by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (BC CDC)(see <http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>) and should also include any detections from previously funded or concurrent inventory projects conducted within the boundaries of the operational plan.

Determine the likelihood of WHF occurrences within the operational area based on a review of species ranges and habitat requirements as they relate to the operational area. Many species (and their associated WHFs) may be ruled out if they are not known to occur within the particular geographic area defined by the operational plan.

**NOTE:** Some species with limited populations, (e.g., Spotted Owl), will require more rigorous protection than that afforded by the high significance BMPs. When these species are encountered they may need a species expert to confirm the identity of the species and to coordinate the development of a recommended BMP to adequately address the needs of the species. This approach may not be required if there is an existing strategy in place between the licensee and government for the species (and associated features) within the defined operational area.

2. Formal surveys or inventory may be conducted for WHFs at the discretion of the licensee. It is expected that, in many cases, WHFs will be found opportunistically by other ground crews while operating in the field.
3. In the event that a WHF is found, in order to assign the appropriate significance rating (high, medium or low to the WHF, it is prudent to attempt to determine the identity of the species associated with the WHF based on a feature/site assessment or direct observation (e.g., visual sightings or sign).

If the licensee/field staff do *not* wish to confirm the identity of the species using the WHF, they can treat the WHF as high significance and apply the most appropriate measures to protect the feature.

4. Document and/or track the WHF. This will facilitate future planning and operations in the area of the WHF. As well, a description and accurate location (UTM coordinates) for the WHF should be submitted to regional Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP), and regional Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM) for archival documentation, and the BC CDC (Victoria, BC) for documentation of any Red- or Blue-listed species.

In general, tracking is usually only recommended for high significance WHFs.