

Bow Valley Human / Wildlife Coexistence Roundtable

Terms of Reference (November 9, 2017)

Vision

Wildlife in the Bow Valley are able to effectively utilize their natural habitat with minimal human disturbance while avoiding developed areas such as town sites and campgrounds. Human wildlife conflict management is coordinated and integrated among the responsible agencies and the public understands their decisions and actions.

Principles

The Roundtable upholds the following principles to be supported through its work

1. Effective use of natural habitat by wildlife
2. Safe, responsible recreation and enjoyment of the natural environment by residents and visitors
3. Public transparency in decision making and policy approaches

Objectives

1. Identify current state of human/wildlife conflict within the study area.
2. Identify potential research opportunities to fill knowledge gaps pertaining to human/wildlife conflict.
3. Develop proactive measures to reduce the frequency of human/wildlife conflict in the Bow Valley over the short, medium and long term while maintaining the viability and functionality of wildlife corridors and habitat patches for wildlife.
4. Identify how agencies manage specific incidents of human/wildlife conflict and, if needed, suggest ways to standardize and improve decision making, management actions and public awareness.

Deliverables

1. A report outlining:
 - a. Trends in human/wildlife conflict within the Bow Valley over the past 10 years. Identify mitigation programs currently in place (e.g. Bearsmart/Wildsmart programs, by-laws, etc...)
 - b. Recommendations on ways that Roundtable member agencies and other stakeholder groups can reduce the frequency of human/wildlife conflict over the short, medium and long terms. The recommendations shall be practical and implementable.
 - c. A summary of how each agency responds to specific incidents of human/wildlife conflict and recommendations, if any, on how those responses can be improved.
 - d. Recommendations on the actions of the agencies regarding human/wildlife conflict can be made more transparent to the public, and how public behaviour can be changed to reduce the frequency of human/wildlife conflicts in the Bow Valley.

Timelines

September – October 2017	Formation of Roundtable and development of Terms of Reference
November 2017	Technical group initiation
December 2017 – March 2018	Roundtable meets bi-monthly, Technical Working Group meets bi-weekly
March 31, 2018	Draft report complete
Spring 2018	Public Open House and Stakeholder Engagement
May 30, 2018	Project complete

Various parts of the Roundtable’s work may also continue through other multi-stakeholder groups such as the Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group (BCEAG) or similar groups.

Study Area

The study area extends from the Town of Banff to Seebee west to east, and between the height of land across the Bow Valley. It encompasses all federal, provincial and municipal lands within this area.

Membership

The Roundtable study area includes the Bow Valley from the western end of the Banff town site to the Kananaskis River. Membership therefore includes representatives from:

1. Town of Canmore: Mayor John Borrowman, CAO Lisa de Soto
2. Town of Banff: Mayor Karen Sorensen, CAO Robert Earl
3. MD of Bighorn: has chosen not to participate. The MD is welcome at the table and may choose to adopt any best practices developed. Information from the roundtable will be shared with the MD at quarterly inter-municipal meetings
4. Government of Alberta: Cam Westhead, MLA; Travis Ripley, Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch; Roger Ramcharita and Jay Honeyman, South Saskatchewan Region; Mark Storie, Parks Division, Trevor Miller, Superintendent, Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch
5. Parks Canada: Banff Superintendent Dave McDonough, Resource Manager Bill Hunt

The co-chairs of the Roundtable will be the MLA and the two Mayors.

Roles and Responsibilities of Roundtable Members

Each Roundtable member shall:

1. Represent the perspectives and interests of their constituency
 - a. Liaise with respective constituency and be able to speak on behalf of that constituency in as much as possible.
2. No one roundtable member can purport to speak for the roundtable group; they speak only for their own constituency
3. Each agency shall pay for their own costs associated with attending the Roundtable and any related work. Other costs incurred by the Roundtable will be shared by the Roundtable agencies as much as possible.

4. The Government of Alberta shall provide additional resources for:
 - a. Meeting logistics and note taking
 - b. Meeting facilitation
 - c. Report preparation and planning

Public Transparency

1. Key messages to be shared with the public will be developed at the conclusion of each meeting
2. The Roundtable will hold an Open House in Spring 2018 to share its findings and recommendations with the public.

Technical Working Group

Roundtable members agreed to form a Technical Working Group to assist the Roundtable in achieving its objectives. The Technical Working Group will be composed of representatives from each of the agencies represented at the Roundtable as well as other agencies and stakeholder groups that have an interest in reducing human/wildlife conflict. These representatives shall predominately be subject matter experts.

The Technical Working Group shall:

1. Meet approximately bi-weekly or as required.
2. Explore the Objectives of the Roundtable and produce a report outlining:
 - a. Trends in the number of incidents of human/wildlife conflict in the Bow Valley
 - b. Recommendations on ways that Roundtable member agencies and other stakeholder groups can reduce the frequency of human/wildlife conflict over the short, medium and long terms. The recommendations shall be practical and implementable.
 - c. A description of how various agencies manage individual incidents of human/wildlife conflict, and recommendations on how, if needed, management practises can be improved to result in greater human and wildlife safety.

For example, the Technical Working Groups shall consider, but not be limited to issues such as:

- Ways to increase public awareness and actions that reduce human/wildlife conflict
 - Ways to enhance public transparency and communication of the status of human/wildlife conflict, the policies and procedures that agencies employ to reduce conflicts, and the policies and procedures that agencies use to manage specific incidents of human/wildlife conflict.
 - Land use designations (in general terms, not at specific sites) and the day to day implementation of those designations. For example, are the existing wildlife corridors properly managed to reduce human/wildlife conflict, and conversely, are areas designated primarily for public use being managed as such. Are there practical ways to improve both?
 - Programs to secure or remove unnatural or natural wildlife food sources or hiding cover within developed areas
 - Promoting non-lethal human safety practises in areas of multiple use (e.g. carrying bear spray, travelling in groups, etc...)
3. Use any information that it wishes and be free to meet with any person or organization that it wishes to gather the best available information.
 4. Deliver the report outlined in Section 2 above to the Roundtable no later than March 30, 2018.

Technical Working Group Membership

- Town of Banff – Chad Townsend, Environmental Coordinator
- Town of Canmore – Michael Fark, General Manager Municipal Infrastructure
- Jay Honeyman – Human Wildlife Conflict Biologist, AEP, South Saskatchewan Region
- Brett Boukall – Senior Wildlife Biologist, Bow District, AEP, South Saskatchewan Region
- Paul Frame – Provincial Carnivore Specialist, Policy Division, Edmonton
- Melanie Percy – Ecologist, AEP Parks Division
- Debbie Mucha – Manager , AEP Parks Division
- Ron Wiebe – Inspector , Calgary Unit, Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch
- Bill Hunt – Resource Manager, Banff National Park
- Hilary Young - Y2Y representative
- Tyler McClaron - Wildsmart representative
- Katie Morrison - CPAWS representative

The co-chairs of the Technical Working Group will be Jay Honeyman and Bill Hunt who will also be the primary liaison between the group and the Roundtable.