



WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY BC?

Biodiversity BC and its process to develop a biodiversity action plan grew out of the October 2004 announcement of a new partnership between government and non-government organizations called the B.C. Conservation Lands Forum. The Forum's biodiversity conservation mandate includes securing and improving the management of private and public lands as well as developing a comprehensive, science-based biodiversity strategy for B.C.

The biodiversity action plan will look at the full range of land and freshwater biodiversity in B.C., including species such as salmon and seabirds that also spend time in the ocean environment. The completed plan will provide a roadmap of coordinated actions for non-government organizations (NGOs), resource industries, all levels of government including First Nations, and everyone else with an interest and a stake in conserving B.C.'s diverse natural wealth.

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT BIODIVERSITY?

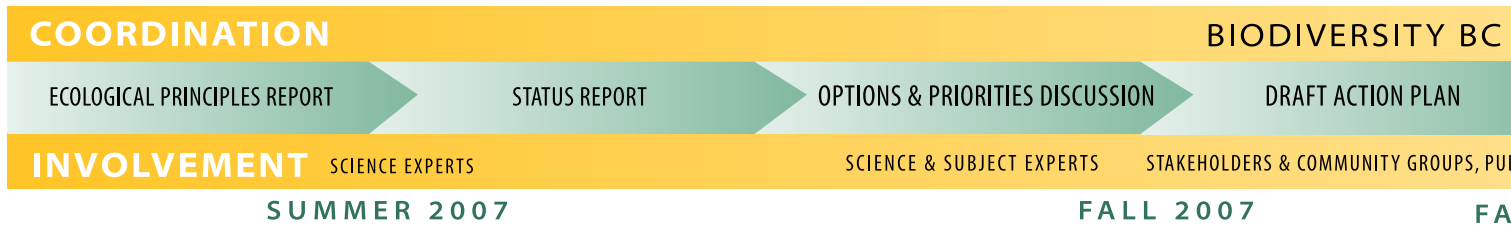
Biodiversity is the variety of living things, the ecosystems in which they live and the ways they interact with each other – continually adapting in order to survive under constantly changing conditions. Few of us give much thought to the many benefits we enjoy from our healthy and diverse ecosystems, such as:

- providing oxygen for us to breathe, food to eat, clean water to drink and medicines to keep us well, productive soils and nutrient cycling which support renewable resources such as timber, and much more
- regulating local climate, flooding, disease, water quality and pollution
- enriching our lives through recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, and spiritual enrichment opportunities.

B.C.'s natural wealth helps keep these benefits flowing to us, but only as long as the ecosystems continue to be healthy and functioning properly. Unintended interference with the functioning of ecosystems and the species within them can put those benefits at risk. Governments, industry, communities and NGOs have recognized these risks and taken many steps to conserve species and their habitats, and restore damaged ecosystems. But despite these efforts, pressures on biodiversity continue to grow and the number of species at risk continues to increase. Some of those pressures include:

- climate change
- ecosystem loss and alteration
- invasive alien species.

BC BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PROCESS



BUILDING AN ACTION PLAN

British Columbians have long recognized the relationship between our own health and well-being and the health of the environment around us. B.C. has been a leader with land use planning, the protected areas strategy and related initiatives. Now, issues such as climate change are bringing this crucial relationship into sharper focus. *British Columbia's Biodiversity Action Plan: Draft for Discussion* will build on the strength of actions already taken by industry, governments, communities and the public to conserve and protect the well-being of humans and nature for the future.

In the fall of 2005, Biodiversity BC invited leading scientific and planning experts from British Columbia and other jurisdictions to provide advice on building an effective action plan. These discussions led to a framework, which defined the key components of the biodiversity action plan and the process for gathering input, and set the timeline for completion.

In April 2006, process experts from B.C. and other jurisdictions where biodiversity strategies have

been completed provided advice and feedback on the proposed action plan framework. This advice is helping us prepare a draft vision and goals for discussion with stakeholders and the public. We are also working with First Nations to ensure that the action plan reflects the values and needs of aboriginal people in B.C. and is informed by traditional ecological knowledge.

STATUS REPORT

Before we can determine where we need to go, we needed to understand where we are now. Our action plan process began with an assessment of the current state of biodiversity in B.C. – *Splendour Without Diminishment? The Status of Biodiversity in British Columbia* – based on the best scientific information available. A technical expert advisory group was formed to provide ongoing advice on the development of the status report and in February 2006, scientific experts reviewed the proposed components of the status report and the proposed methodology for its development.

WE ALL HAVE A STAKE IN CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY

B.C.'s renewable resource-based industries have a direct stake in the healthy ecosystems that support them. All economic sectors have a stake in preserving B.C.'s quality of life and meeting the expectations of both the B.C. public and international markets for sustainable management of our natural resources. Working with Biodiversity BC will provide an opportunity for industries to influence how the action plan deals with challenges such as habitat connectivity. Completing the plan will also enable government and conservation NGOs to focus their energies more effectively for the benefit of everyone.





LL 2008

JANUARY 2009

The Status of Biodiversity in British Columbia includes:

- 1 **Talking about Biodiversity:** provides definitions and context for the discussion of biodiversity in British Columbia. What is biodiversity? Why is it important?
- 2 **British Columbia's Natural Legacy:** summarizes the current status of species, ecosystems and their functions and processes; identifies areas of global significance, and areas of overlap with the marine environment and with other jurisdictions; and identifies gaps in our current knowledge about B.C.'s biodiversity.
- 3 **Threats to Biodiversity in British Columbia:** examines the pressures on biodiversity in British Columbia, and where the gaps are in the "safety net" to protect biodiversity.
- 4 **Status Assessment:** provides major findings that will guide the development of the priority actions in the *Draft Action Plan*.

These analyses have been subjected to stringent peer review – including two workshops with scientific experts in June 2007 – to ensure scientific soundness and provide us with the best available information on which to base our action plan proposals.

The Status of Biodiversity in British Columbia will be released in December 2007.



DEVELOPING A DRAFT ACTION PLAN

The Biodiversity BC steering committee is developing options and priorities for conserving biodiversity, based on the key findings in the status report and advice from science experts and other interested stakeholders. *British Columbia's Biodiversity Action Plan: Draft for Discussion* will include:

- vision and broad goals of the action plan
- objectives and priority actions for meeting each goal
- proposals for performance measures.



LET'S WORK TOGETHER

No one group, organization, company or government alone can do the job of protecting B.C.'s biodiversity. But by working together to meet urgent biodiversity conservation needs, we can find solutions that will provide long-term protection for B.C.'s economic and social well-being as well as our natural legacy.

Early in 2008, Biodiversity BC will release its *Draft Biodiversity Action Plan*, and begin soliciting feedback and ideas from the stakeholders, government and the public.

By the end of 2008, Biodiversity BC will finalize a 5-year action plan with input from stakeholders and public. The plan will include actions for everyone committed to biodiversity conservation – government and non-government organizations, private industry and individuals.

IMPLEMENTING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The implementation of the *Biodiversity Action Plan* will begin in 2009. This will include monitoring actions and results, reporting on progress and making recommendations for ongoing improvements as new information becomes available. We expect to review and update the plan every five years.

CONTACT US

Our website is now up and running. It provides detailed information about the development of the action plan process and all its component parts – including the *Status Report* and a biodiversity atlas of related maps.

You can contact us by e-mailing info@biodiversitybc.org or by visiting our website at www.biodiversitybc.org.

“The preservation of biodiversity is not just a job for governments. International and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and each and every individual have a role to play in changing entrenched outlooks and ending destructive patterns of behaviour.”

— UN SECRETARY GENERAL
ON THE 2003 INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

WHO IS BIODIVERSITY BC?

Representatives of the following organizations have come together on Biodiversity BC's Steering Committee to start the job of building a science-based action plan:

- The Nature Trust of British Columbia
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- The Land Conservancy of British Columbia
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
- Pacific Salmon Foundation
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (BC) – representing other environmental non-government organizations
- BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- BC Ministry of Environment
- Environment Canada
- Union of British Columbia Municipalities – represented by Metro Vancouver

