



2023-01-30

Céline Davis Executive Director, Ecosystems Branch  
Land Use Policy, Planning, and Ecosystems Division  
Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, Victoria, BC  
Phone: 778-698-4060 Email: biodiversity.ecosystemhealth@gov.bc.ca.

**RE: Draft B.C. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework**

Dear Céline Davis:

In the *Message from the Minister* inviting comment on the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework (Nov. 2023), Minister of Water Lands and Resource Stewardship, Nathan Cullen, celebrates British Columbia's world class biodiversity and laments the fact that it is under threat. He correctly asserts that "healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are essential" for human health, economies, and communities to flourish (let alone persist); manage and adapt to climate change, mitigate impacts and costs related to floods, droughts, wildfires and extreme weather.

As a charitable non-profit Society with a mission is to protect biodiversity in the Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District for the benefit of humanity and all life, the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association (SCCA) applauds the Minister and the BC Government for acknowledging these realities.

**We are excited that the BC government is finally advancing legislative changes to address the far reaching harms caused by poor land use management practices in BC, over the last 150 years. However, we are also concerned about critical missing pieces in this Framework.**

Over the last several years, the SCCA has participated in the Old Growth Strategic review process, and the Marbled Murrelet Habitat Recovery Implementation Strategy; BC Watershed Security Strategy and Fund engagements; 2021/2022 Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Review Data Package and 2023 Timber Supply Analysis Discussion Paper, including a comparison with the 1990 Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Options Report and the 2011 Timber Supply Analysis Discussion Paper. We contributed to the shishalh BC- Land Use Planning Process and (2021) Pender Harbour Dock Management Plan.

In the last year WLRS, MOF and the Premiers' office have received from us requests for support for a Water Sustainability Plan to protect aquifers on the lower Sunshine Coast, including analysis and critique BC Timber Sales Operating Plans, and their Mt. Elphinstone South Watershed Assessment Study, which we pushed BCTS to undertake. Last week, we completed a submission to the Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Planning Pilot and will be responding to the proposed changes to the Land Act and DMP, shortly.

As you may imagine, we are very supportive of the concept and many aspects of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework, and see its value as a tool to bridge gaps between processes, while the BC Government creates and establishes a BC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework.

Sadly, we feel this Framework document misses an essential opportunity to state in no uncertain terms the urgency and commitment to do everything in our power to curb biodiversity loss, and stop the 6th Mass Extinction on our planet.<sup>1</sup> How many more 20+ billion dollar atmospheric river events, record setting wildfire seasons, heatwaves and drinking watersheds drying up will it take, before we name the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Crisis for what it is, and treat it with the urgency it requires?

**Words matter.** And this Framework is just “high level” enough, and contains just enough “notwithstanding” language to render it ineffective in achieving the goals we need it to achieve.

We are on the precipice of no return tipping points. We are out of time, and we have to get this right. Now. Yes, this is a big responsibility on the shoulders of this government. The race to stop biodiversity collapse is yours to lose, and yours to win. The health of the ecosystems and the children of tomorrow are on the line. Please, don't let them down.

Below, we have offered **deletions**, **additions and edits** to the wording of the draft Framework document, that we believe will get to the goals the Framework espouses. We hope you will seriously consider them.

Suzanne Senger, Executive Director  
Sunshine Coast Conservation Association  
Email: [executive@thescca.ca](mailto:executive@thescca.ca)

---

<sup>1</sup> World Wildlife Fund: What is the sixth mass extinction and what can we do about it?

Currently, the species extinction rate is estimated between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than natural extinction rates—the rate of species extinctions that would occur if we humans were not around. While extinctions are a normal and expected part of the evolutionary process, the current rates of species population decline and species extinction are high enough to threaten important ecological functions that support human life on Earth, such as a stable climate, predictable regional precipitation patterns, and productive farmland and fisheries. If we do not course correct, we will continue to lose life-sustaining biodiversity at an alarming rate. These losses will, at best, take decades to reverse, resulting in a planet less able to support current and future generations.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/what-is-the-sixth-mass-extinction-and-what-can-we-do-about-it#:~:text=Unlike%20previous%20extinction%20events%20caused,been%20converted%20for%20food%20production>.

## SCCA comments Draft B.C. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework

### Statement of Intent:

The British Columbia Government commits to the **conservation and resilience based management of ecosystem health and biodiversity as an overarching priority, and will formalize this priority through legislation, regulation and other enabling tools that apply to and can be accessed by all sectors.**

The Framework is built on the foundation of upholding and enabling the articles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act). We feel the framework is missing a pillar. If we want this legislation to serve its purpose, and remain stable and durable in an ever changing political climate, it needs to be table, not a stool.

1. **Prioritizing protection of primary forests, stopping biodiversity loss (as defined by the principles of Ecology <sup>2</sup>), conserving, restoring and maintaining ecosystem health.**
2. Taking a whole-of-government approach that demonstrates vision, leadership, and integration: including **creating primary legislation with clear definitions** of ecosystem health and biodiversity and **definitive regulations and standards**; applying them across all sectors, integrating and aligning all provincial government decision-making, policies processes, and legislation **with this legislation.**
3. Fostering and supporting a whole-of-society approach that **includes formal public engagement processes; facilitates actions and initiatives** by individuals, organizations, private sector, governments, and communities **to conserve ecosystem health and biodiversity in primary ecosystems, manage and restore degraded systems** in order to support sustainable communities and economies.
4. Adopting an open, transparent and **inclusive process to develop and implement the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Act, and regulations** as well as **evaluation and progress reporting**, continuous collective learning and improvement of adaptive management **using best available data, monitoring and modelling.**

---

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia Ecology: Ecology (from Ancient Greek οἶκος (oikos) 'house', and -λογία (-logía) 'study of')[A] is the natural science of the relationships among living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment. Ecology considers organisms at the individual, population, community, ecosystem, and biosphere level. Ecology overlaps with the closely related sciences of biogeography, evolutionary biology, genetics, ethology, and natural history. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecology>

## Key terms

**Ecosystem Health** – a clearly defined state of environmental conditions in relation to natural/historical benchmarks for biodiversity and ecosystem structures, functions, and processes. Unhealthy ecosystems are degraded by human/industrial use.

**Comment:** Define it. This is the fundamental problem with this proposal. Amorphous definitions will not suffice. Government needs to work with leading BC Ecologists to create clear definitions in the legislation.

**Biodiversity** (short for biological diversity) - the diversity of plants, animals, and other living organisms in all their forms and levels of organization, and includes the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems, as well as the evolutionary and functional processes that link them.

**Ecological Integrity** - ecosystems that contain native species and communities, natural landscapes, and ecological functions that are characteristic of the region and ecosystem they occur within.

**Comment:** Not good enough. Government needs to work with leading BC Ecologists to create clear definitions in the legislation.

**Ecological Resilience** - the ability of ecosystems to absorb the effects of combined human and natural disturbance events by resisting and recovering from the disturbance, while still maintaining ecosystem composition, structures, functions, and processes.

**Comment:** Not good enough. Work with leading BC Ecologists to create clearer definitions in the legislation.

**Human Well-Being** – the overall quality of life and satisfaction that individuals and communities experience. It encompasses various physical, psychological, social, and economic factors that contribute to a sense of contentment, fulfillment, and happiness.

**Comment:** Not good enough. Humans and ecosystems are not separate.

**Conservation** – the protection, care, management and maintenance of ecosystems, habitats, wildlife species and populations, within or outside of their natural environments, to safeguard the natural conditions for their long-term permanence.

**Comment:** Not good enough. Add a definition of protection.

**Ecosystem-Based Management** - an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. The intent is to maintain those spatial and temporal characteristics of ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained, and human well-being supported and improved.

**Adaptive Management** – is a rigorous approach for designing and implementing management actions to maximize learning about critical uncertainties that affect recurrent decisions while simultaneously striving to meet multiple management objectives.

## Missing terms

**Primary Forest:** Work with leading BC Ecologists to create clear definitions in the legislation.

**Genetic Resources:** Work with leading BC Ecologists to create clear definitions in the legislation.

**Protection:** Work with leading BC Ecologists to create clearer definitions in the legislation.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Framework is to **guide the urgent creation of a BC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Act, and Regulation, as well as changes in other legislation regulation and policy and guidelines, in alignment with BC DRIPA.** The specific goals of a new Act include BC's commitment to preserving, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecological integrity, protecting and conserving priority areas, restoring degraded ecosystems, and ensuring healthy communities and economies for generations to come. It sets out desired outcomes, principles, and direction to deliver legislation, regulation, detailed policies, and actions necessary - jointly with First Nations and with involvement from all British Columbians. The framework will facilitate short-term shifts towards transformational changes and government moves to enact **a new BC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Act by the end of 2025.**

Recognizing the many initiatives and programs that are already underway in B.C. that support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, the Framework aims to create a coordinated and cohesive approach and fill gaps. It aims to strengthen and accelerate these existing initiatives, building on successes and wise practices that can be scaled and applied more broadly, while supporting a collective culture of learning and growth.

The Framework is living and flexible, recognizing that many actions and ideas contained in this document are based on the current state and will continue to **improve as we progress reconciliation and adapt to a changing environment.**

## What does Prioritizing the Conservation and Management of Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity mean?

The Framework sets the stage for the desired transformational shift from a land management system that prioritizes resource extraction (**subject to constraints**) to a future that proactively prioritizes the protection, conservation and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity, and is implemented jointly with title and rights holders (a paradigm shift). **This shift recognizes that strong, stable, and prosperous communities and economies rely on healthy ecosystems. Comment: DELETE**

This means that policies, decisions, and actions would first consider what ecosystems need to sustain themselves and the benefits they provide<sup>3</sup> across spatial scales (e.g., local, watershed, regional) through time, and then consider how they may be sustainably used to support communities and economies. Ecosystem-based management (EBM) will be an important management approach to concurrently manage ecological integrity and human well-being in degraded ecosystems. NOTE: EBM management will not be applied in primary forests. Primary forests will be conserved.

EBM will look different across B.C. (spatially and temporally) given the diversity and continuum of impacts on ecosystems in degraded forests. It is expected that there will continue to be areas of more intensive development to accommodate population growth and increasing demands for food, fiber, and energy as well as areas of the landscape where there will be greater emphasis on ecosystem health, including protection of priority areas and restoration of degraded ones. **It will require a complementary transition toward a long-term view of economic health and community prosperity. Comment: DELETE**

---

<sup>3</sup> Ecosystem benefits include, but are not limited to, clean air, water quality, species diversity, soil productivity, predator-prey interactions, pollination, carbon sequestration and storage, flood and disease prevention, and provision of medicine, food, and fiber.

**Prioritizing the conservation and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity includes:**

<b>Shift from</b>	<b>Shift to</b>
Individual species	<b>Ecology based, holistic, multi-species, sensitive ecosystems, and threats-based approach</b>
Small spatial scale	Multiple scales
Short-term perspective	<b>Short, medium and long-term perspective</b>
Humans independent of ecosystems	Humans as integral parts of ecosystems
Management separate from research	Adaptive, <b>Resilience Based Management</b>
Managing for extraction of commodities	<b>Protect genetic and ecosystem diversity, restore and sustain ecosystem goods and services</b>

\* Managing for vulnerable individual species and sensitive ecosystems will **also be needed to stop biodiversity loss**. Shifting to an ecology based, holistic, multi-species, sensitive ecosystems, and threats-based approach will result in greater benefits across multiple species and reduce overall costs and effort on single species, and **support protection and management over time**.

**Creating Conditions for Change**

Managing for ecosystem health and biodiversity is **a considerable and long needed shift**, and it will be challenging to make the shift. Success will require **that Government**

- **Creates and implements** the right sets of laws, policies, and practices in place;
- **Provides** people with the necessary funding, tools and support to work effectively;
- **Hears values, and considers** all voices in decision-making;
- **Informs, educates and supports** societal understanding of the change and the need for it;
- **Provides for** full expression of UNDRIP standards in the new ACT and regulations;
- **Provides funding** to ensure a ‘just transition’ for resource extraction based communities that does not unduly impact affected people;
- **Delivers** a well-aligned vision of land use, stewardship and governance between First Nations and the Province.

The Framework is designed to help get this in place, and as part of its strategic direction fill policy gaps while working towards longer term legislation.

## Desired Outcomes of the Framework

The desired outcomes from implementing the Framework include:

Healthy ecosystems: achieve **levels of protection, conservation and stewardship** that maintain and enhance biodiversity, ecological integrity, and ecological resilience across the province.

Advances reconciliation: implementation of the standards of UNDRIP; First Nations have the space and capacity to play an integral role in conserving ecosystems and biodiversity in their territories; with increased opportunities to exercise Indigenous rights and responsibilities, including right to harvest **where biodiversity loss does not result and ecosystem health is not at risk; and the responsibility to restore, sustain,** and steward lands and waters.

Effective stewardship: approach is achieving biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health goals; broadly understood, supported by, and meaningfully involves the broader public; there are respectful relationships; and holistic learning and knowledge sharing;

Resilient communities and economies: achieves social and economic benefits for all; supports diverse and ecologically sustainable local, regional, and provincial economies; and fosters and attracts necessary skills, innovation and training with communities benefiting from secure, innovative jobs for generations to come.

Vision: **Healthy and biodiverse ecosystems are thriving, productive and resilient – and sustain community, social, economic, and environmental well-being in all ways, for all generations to come.**

## Principles to Guide Our Shared Path Forward

The following principles are intended to guide actions, decisions, and policy development to support implementation of the Framework, such as informing the co-development of legislation and guiding considerations for statutory decision-makers. These principles are in addition to, and designed to complement, existing principles that are related to the Framework. E.g. [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#) will guide the Province-Indigenous relationship that is based on respect and recognition of inherent rights when implementing the Framework.

Shared Responsibility and Accountability : We are all responsible for managing and caring for the land and water together. We all have actions that we can commit to that will make a difference. Aligning levels of government and individual goals will amplify our success.

Respectful relationships : Success relies on respectful relationships with each other and the land and water. Partnerships and collaboration among governments and all British Columbians that embrace a diverse range of values and perspectives, and a spirit of learning and adapting will be key.

Sustainable and Inclusive Economies : Recognize that long-term stable jobs, and resilient and competitive economies, are only possible with a healthy environment.

Interconnectedness : Recognize that the connection between land, water and people are inseparable when it comes to stewardship and conservation.

Community/ Place-Based Decisions and Actions : Accounts for regional differences by emphasizing community empowerment and informed decision making and supporting flexible local approaches (rather than top-down, one-size-fits all approaches).

Multi-generational : Ensure that decisions made today are sustainable for future generations and provide for intergenerational equity.

## Foundation

The Framework is built on the foundation of upholding and implementing the articles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the requirements of the Declaration Act. First Nations in B.C. have stewarded their territories for millennia and have specific rights, interests, and connections. The uniqueness of each First Nation in B.C. is expressed, in part, through knowledge systems, cultural identities, and laws which are inextricably linked to the lands and waters in their respective territories. The Province recognizes and supports the fact that ecosystem health and biodiversity are core to the inherent title and rights of First Nations in B.C.

Indigenous world views, **traditional** cultural and economic practices have demonstrated success in maintaining ecosystem health and biodiversity. Sharing knowledge (Indigenous, scientific, expert, local) and learning together will strengthen the adaptive approach necessary to address the complex challenges we are collectively facing. **Comment: This is simply no longer true, without the word traditional added.**

Implementation of the Framework will involve a distinctions-based approach **rooted in a shared commitment to stop biodiversity loss, restore ecosystem health and** the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of Indigenous Peoples in B.C. are acknowledged, affirmed, and respected; that respects First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as distinct, with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments; and, which requires Canada and B.C.'s relationship and engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to include different approaches or actions with different outcomes; therefore this Framework involves First Nations as the Indigenous Peoples who hold title and rights to territory in B.C. through agreed upon governance structures and the exercise of First Nations rights to self-determination and self government.

Commitments related to new biodiversity and ecosystem health legislation as well as amendments to existing land and water related provincial legislation to give effect to the Framework would be co-developed with First Nations. The Province is also committed to working in partnership with First Nations to advance territorial planning, which includes land use planning, to inform land use decisions that can support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.

The Province recognizes that consistent capacity funding for Indigenous communities, governments and organizations will be needed to support readiness in the implementation of the Framework. Implementation of the Framework will entail working with Indigenous knowledge holders to uphold and support Indigenous knowledge meaningfully and respectfully.

## Actions

**The fundamental Pillar of this framework must be to prioritizing protection of primary forests, stopping biodiversity loss (as defined by the principles of Ecology<sup>4</sup>), conserving, restoring and maintaining ecosystem health.**

**Framework Pillar 1: Taking a whole-of-government approach that demonstrates vision, leadership, and integration: including creating primary legislation with clear definitions of ecosystem health and biodiversity and definitive regulations and standards; applying them across all sectors, integrating and aligning all provincial government decision-making, policies processes, and legislation with this legislation.**

A whole-of-government approach is essential to shift to mainstreaming concepts of ecosystem health and biodiversity **across all sectors** including health, agriculture, forestry, mining, infrastructure, and finance. Changing our ways to maintain and enhance ecosystem health and biodiversity is complex and challenging and requires all government bodies at all levels to be actively involved to ensure government actions are complementary and not working at cross purposes. It requires shared goals, backbone capacity and governance, and structural enablement through law and policy – all of which enables collective action and impact across sectors.

B.C. will:

1. Establish an Office of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health within the B.C. Public Service with the necessary powers and authorities to lead a coordinated and collaborative approach across government and in partnership with First Nations to implement the framework including:

a) Improving the collection, coordination and sharing of information on the status of ecosystem health, including biodiversity, and supporting informed decisions and continuous improvement.

b) Leading the development of ecosystem health and biodiversity **objectives and standards for all BC Biogeoclimatic Zones, supported by regulations and guidance for all sectors, based in ecology, current science and local and Indigenous knowledge**, to account for multiple values that can then be recognized in legislation.

c) Championing policies and approaches; and ensuring accountability to meet ecosystem health and biodiversity objectives and standards across government.

2. Co-develop with First Nations **and in consultation with the public new legislation, regulations, guidelines and policies, as well as** amendments to existing related provincial legislation, to give effect to the Framework, including affirming First Nation jurisdiction, governance, **and stewardship practices which protect primary forests, stop biodiversity loss, conserve restore and maintain ecosystem health.**

---

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia Ecology: Ecology (from Ancient Greek οἶκος (oikos) 'house', and -λογία (-logia) 'study of')[A] is the natural science of the relationships among living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment. Ecology considers organisms at the individual, population, community, ecosystem, and biosphere level. Ecology overlaps with the closely related sciences of biogeography, evolutionary biology, genetics, ethology, and natural history. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecology>

3. Integrate and align decision-making processes, policies, programs, with the priority of conserving and managing ecosystem health and biodiversity.

4. Incorporate ecosystem health and biodiversity objectives and standards (see 1 b) in all planning activities (e.g., Land Use Planning, Forest Landscape Planning, Watershed Planning), in a manner that enables First Nations and the Province to work together in an inclusive and transparent way to adjust the objectives and standards to meet the goals for specific areas. Planning activities will be based on ecosystem-based management principles to ensure:

a) Ecosystems are managed in a way that minimizes biodiversity risk and ensures ecological integrity is maintained.

b) That cumulative effects of natural and human-caused disturbances are managed for the desired future conditions, informed by the range of natural/historic variability and the need to manage for resiliency to future climate conditions.

c) Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures are established to protect, connect, recover, and maintain important habitat, riparian areas, and wildlife features.

d) Restoration is included as part of planning activities and is used strategically to improve landscape conditions.

e) Ecosystems are managed to promote and enable sustainable economies and resilient communities.

**Framework Pillar 2: Taking a whole-of-government approach that demonstrates vision, leadership, and integration: including creating primary legislation with clear definitions of ecosystem health and biodiversity and definitive regulations and standards; applying them across all sectors, integrating and aligning all provincial government decision-making, policies processes, and legislation with this legislation.**

While many British Columbians are working hard to conserve ecosystem health and biodiversity, **a key value** of this Framework is in connecting and unifying efforts and people to maximize long term impact. Supporting connections between people and nature, with enabling mechanisms in place for all to actively contribute to protection, restoration, and sustainable use (e.g., governance, information sharing, and investment in skills, knowledge, capability, and capacity), are proven to have measured benefits on physical, spiritual, and mental health and well-being<sup>ix</sup>.

B.C. will:

1. Support and connect **NGOs**, societal initiatives and actions that are working towards achieving healthy ecosystems and biodiversity in B.C., address barriers and gaps, and evaluate these three supports.

2. Provide education and **make publicly available, accessible, and current and** credible data and information on ecosystem health and biodiversity, while supporting Indigenous data sovereignty, to help enable informed local participation in decision-making **and stewardship**

3. Create or use financing mechanisms (e.g., conservation finance, tools and sustained long-term funds) to enhance stewardship capacity.

4. Create pathways (including fostering innovation, skills, and training) to achieve environmental, social, and economic benefits for all, this includes supporting sustainable and stable natural resource sectors that **continue to be a source of provide good jobs which meeting the goals of this framework** and provide economic security for communities; **while creating new opportunities and benefits through restoration and conservation jobs, which accelerates diverse streams of revenues.**

**Pillar 3: Fostering and supporting a whole-of-society approach that includes formal public engagement processes; facilitates actions and initiatives by individuals, organizations, private sector, governments, and communities to conserve ecosystem health and biodiversity in primary ecosystems, manage and restore degraded systems in order to support sustainable communities and economies.**

Our collective success depends on making sure we are on the right path to maintaining and enhancing ecosystem health and biodiversity. This requires a foundation of science and local knowledge, improved understanding of biodiversity, ecosystem health and related cumulative impacts **based on the principle of Ecology, as well as** enhancement of monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive learning. Tracking, reporting on and celebrating progress will be important for maintaining momentum towards this transformational shift.

B.C. will:

1. Develop an implementation plan to operationalize the Framework that identifies the necessary resources which will accelerate and integrate related initiatives and fill gaps.

2. As part of the implementation plan implement interim measures to ensure action is taken quickly and options are retained for long-term decisions.

3. Enhance oversight through compliance and enforcement such as by involving others (e.g., First Nations Guardian programs, **NGOs**) and provide improved ability to tailor to region specific needs.

4. Regularly and transparently report publicly on the state of ecosystem health and biodiversity and progress in implementing the Framework (including how we are tracking against ecosystem health and biodiversity objectives and standards **and making data and modeling publicly available**), and adjust response where needed based on the results of monitoring and evaluation.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework sets out an important provincial commitment: **protection of primary forests, stopping biodiversity loss (as defined by the principles of Ecology), conserving, restoring and maintaining ecosystem health** as an overarching priority and formalizing this priority through legislation and other enabling tools that apply to, and can be accessed by, all sectors.” While the Framework provides the strategic direction and creates the structure for understanding and action, each of the commitments will have to be further designed, with analysis and policy choices made.

Along with that commitment, the Framework facilitates the short-term shifts towards transformational changes that are needed. It provides strategic direction, setting the course for changes in legislation and current practices that are grounded in the Provincial commitment to UNDRIP.

With guiding principles, desired outcomes, and specific actions, it lays out a pathway to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecological integrity, protect and conserve priority areas, restore degraded ecosystems, and ensure healthy communities and economies for generations to come.

The Framework is living and flexible, recognizing that many actions and ideas contained within it are based on the current state and will continue to change as we progress reconciliation and adapt to a changing environment.

Our collective efforts, through co-operation and integration, will ensure we are learning, building, and implementing the transformational changes needed to build our shared future. This includes reviewing and renewing the Framework with opportunities for involvement in its evolution.

In the intervening time, once engagement on the draft Framework has drawn to a close, all feedback will be considered and used to inform the final Framework.

In addition, recognizing that the Framework sets out a pathways approach, the next steps will be to develop an implementation plan that identifies interim measures and the expected timelines for all measures, whether short, medium, or long term.

## Appendix A: Background Information

The following information provides additional context on the various concepts introduced in this document.

### Nature's value

- B.C. has the greatest diversity of species, ecosystems, and habitats of any province or territory in Canada.
- Healthy ecosystems support healthy environments that provide stable cultural, social, and economic benefits to people and communities throughout B.C.
- Ecosystem benefits include, but are not limited to, clean air, water quality, species diversity, soil productivity, predatory-prey interactions, pollination, carbon sequestration and storage, flood and disease prevention, and provision of medicine, food, and fiber.
- There is increasing recognition for the need and value of natural asset management, i.e., to ensure clean drinking water, healthy fisheries and waterways, and mitigation of floods, landslides, wildfires, and other risks.
- The economy is not separate and apart from nature but embedded within it: our prosperity is dependent on the dynamics in nature.
- There is a wealth of knowledge and case studies on the economic benefits of biodiversity from local economic studies, from other jurisdictions and internationally. Taking the full value of nature into account can lead to different types of opportunities, benefits and a more pragmatic assessment of decisions, unintended consequences, and their costs.

### Our shared future: managing for different risks and uncertainty

- The climate change and biodiversity crises are inextricably linked – climate change is threatening biodiversity in B.C. Conserving and restoring ecosystems are fundamental to mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Building healthy ecosystems is part of disaster risk reduction. For example, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Includes recommendations to: “strengthen the sustainable use and management of ecosystems” and “... preserve ecosystem functions that help to reduce risks.”
- Managing for uncertainty will require us to coordinate our collective efforts and action, build from the collective wisdom that incorporates different views and knowledge systems information, and to strengthen decision making and collaborative processes, through better communications.

## Meaning of prioritization of ecosystem health and resilience

- Prioritization of the conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystem health means to consider the restoration and maintenance of the natural range of variability of ecosystem characteristics across scales (local to regional) to promote ecosystem resilience and sustainable delivery of economic and social services.
- Conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystem health is proposed to be based on an ecosystem approach, which includes ecosystem-based management. In some cases, where an ecosystem is severely degraded or at risk: that ecosystem may need protection, restoration, or enhancement efforts.
- As part of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and decisions made under it, sustainable use has been recognized as a management objective as it is a way to promote conservation of biodiversity, providing incentives for conservation and restoration because of the social, cultural, and economic benefits that people derive from that use. It also means that sustainable use is connected to effective conservation measures.
- Ecosystem-based management looks at long-term viability, ecosystem services benefits, functions, and use, and makes decisions in the context of people's relationships to those ecosystems. For example, for an ecosystem in a watershed, the erosion of soil and the water filtration function will be critical benefits that need to be considered along with other factors in deciding the use of that ecosystem. Management decisions will also entail consideration of the cumulative impact of activities on species or ecosystems in management decisions related to the species or ecosystem.
- Adaptive management is **an aspect of Resilience Based Management** that works to deal with uncertainty, given that ecosystems are dynamic, complex and that decisions in relation to an ecosystem are not static. Adaptive management allows for learning from previous results. The Framework will facilitate learning from wise practices, cross-sector learnings, different knowledge systems including Indigenous knowledge and increased monitoring to strengthen adaptive management.
- There is a need to create a broader understanding on what conservation and management entails: a common assumption is that it is only preservation, but the actions are broader and can be tailored for a given situation and different ecosystem types in terms of protection, care, maintenance, or restoration.
- Many of the actions that span the scope of conservation and sustainable use are already underway in B.C., for example, consideration of the ecosystem and adaptive management. Having a cohesive and consistent approach may enable enhanced practices and procedures and provide broader certainty and clarity.
- The goal is to ensure that existing initiatives can be amplified and promoted, creating knowledge networks and exchanges, with learnings shared between sectors, reducing duplication of efforts.

## Designing for Economic Resilience

The Framework is expected to:

- add to existing efforts in the StrongerBC Economic Plan to strengthen community resilience in the context of climate change nurturing talent, promoting investment, strengthening infrastructure, and fostering innovation in both traditional and new industries.
- strengthen and or create pathways towards inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities that can diversify revenue streams for local communities and explore opportunities to avoid additional costs and impacts on vulnerable and/or marginalized populations.
- enable the exploration and adoption of financial mechanisms to support outcomes and create initiatives that support early adopters and industry leaders in addressing biodiversity loss.
- support existing efforts to sustain sectors and jobs into the long-term based on the recovery and productivity of ecosystems.
- create the support and awareness for nature-based assets that could help communities to avoid costly local infrastructure spending, building more resilient local economies.
- bolster existing efforts designed to increase productivity by enhancing biodiversity, for example, strengthening food security through changes to soil health and advancing forest climate change strategies.
- build and prepare for the full range of future skills and training that will be needed to support the actions needed to maintain, restore, and enhance biodiversity.

## Implementation

The Framework will be implemented in various ways: from communications, to updates to existing policies, to increasing partnerships, agreements, and participation in existing processes in the short term. Many of the short-term activities entail increasing awareness, strengthening knowledge networks, and building relationships as preparation for dialogue and design of broader structural changes that are needed.

- Through a consultation and co-operation plan, further work will be outlined to co-develop the longer-term policy and legislative changes needed.
- The Framework will be implemented and supported through various initiatives already underway or in place that would further the outcomes in place, such as land use planning, protected area targets, other effective conservation measures, protected areas, watershed security strategy, the coastal marine strategy, to name just a few examples.

- The Framework would create a common frame of reference for all the related initiatives, enabling identification of shared goals and purpose, understanding where alignments are needed, improving communications, and identifying support needed.
- The Framework can catalyze the broader conditions (structural, relational, and transformational) that are needed to support a shared understanding and greater awareness, that will result in proactive measures, thus reducing the risk of costly reactive responses.
- Having a structured approach with clear outcomes and direction prepares and equips everyone better to deal with complex, dynamic environments that will require a broad range of appropriate responses.