

Human-Wildlife Coexistence



Recommendations for Improving Human-Wildlife Coexistence in the Bow Valley
Public Feedback Compiled by Community Engagement Branch, August 31, 2018

Environment and Parks
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Human-Wildlife Coexistence
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Executive Summary

The Human Wildlife Coexistence Technical Report was well received through engagement May 31 – August 10, 2018. Feedback suggests that topics the Roundtable and Technical Working Group need to consider for implementing the recommendations include ways of changing attitudes, improving awareness, managing development, and involving the community in the process. Concern was expressed that the recommendations would not be implemented, and that additional consultation would not occur.

In general, the recommendations are seen as a good first step by those engaged. Going forward, there are significant opportunities to build stakeholder support and greater awareness during the implementation by actively including Bow Valley residents in the process. Ongoing communication about this initiative will be important; proactive, integrated messaging and outreach planning will be vital to that success.

**Wonderful.
Long overdue.
Great recommendations.
Don't drop the ball.**

Banff Open House participant

Overview

The purpose of engagement was to inform stakeholders of the Human Wildlife Coexistence Technical Report and allow stakeholders to provide feedback regarding implementing the recommendations in the report. This feedback was to be considered during implementation planning.

With an objective of informing targeted stakeholders of the Human Wildlife Coexistence Technical Report, engagement consisted of target activities based on anticipated interest in the report:

- Emails and/or phone calls to stakeholders as needed
- Acceptance of the Technical Report at council meetings for the Town of Canmore in August and Town of Banff in September 2018.
- Online posting of the Technical report May 31, 2018 with the opportunity for stakeholders to submit feedback via email until August 10, 2018.
- Two open houses: one in Canmore (June 6) and one in Banff (June 12)

The release of the Human-Wildlife Coexistence recommendations report took place on May 31, 2018. The report was not announced via media release, but advertising for the open houses was placed in the *Rocky Mountain Outlook* and the *Bow Valley Crag and Canyon* newspapers. Roundtable and Working Group members promoted the report and the open houses via their own communication systems, and the report (plus email feedback address) was posted via the Environment and Parks public sessions page. Social media 'tweets' about the Open Houses also occurred.

Additional engagement is expected during the implementation of the recommendations, but is not currently planned.

Engagement Activities And Results

As the recommendations had been accepted by the Roundtable, forward-focused public feedback was sought — specifically, residents’ opinions related to implementing the recommendations.

I’ve recently moved to Alberta and an aspect I am very impressed with is the coordination between areas... fascinating and bravo!

Canmore Open House participant

Open Houses

The program at both open houses consisted of a welcome by the hosting mayor (John Borrowman, Canmore and Karen Sorensen, Banff.) At both events, this was followed by a greeting from Cameron Westhead, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Banff-Cochrane. Representatives from the technical group (Brett Boukall, Canmore and Bill Hunt, Banff) delivered a PowerPoint presentation that provided context for the recommendations, including the purpose of the Roundtable and the role of the Technical Working Group.

Following the presentation, guests were invited to review poster boards featuring the six themes and their accompanying recommendations, and speak to subject matter experts representing the cross-section of members from the Working Group and the Roundtable.

Survey respondents rated their satisfaction with the level of information they received through the presentation, poster boards and experts. All scored well (common range 7-9.5) but the experts scored consistently between 9 and 9.5 on a scale of 10 (very useful).

In addition to completing exit surveys, participants were invited to post comments on a wall (using post-it notes) or provide comment via the assigned email AEP.HWCreport@gov.ab.ca.

- An estimated 65-70 people attended the June 6 open house at Miners’ Union Hall in Canmore. Of the 20 surveys received, 14 respondents (70 per cent) indicated support for the recommendations. Other respondents indicated they don’t yet know if they support the recommendations, as they require more time to consider them.
- In Banff, 45-50 people attended the June 12 open house at the town hall. Of the 13 surveys received, 13 respondents (100 per cent) indicated support for the recommendations.

The survey also tested whether the purposes of engagement had been met. Those purposes were that participants would:

- understand how the technical report will be used;
- become familiar with the recommendations in the report; and
- have questions and concerns addressed.

Ranking and yes/no questions tested participants' ability to gain understanding and familiarity (adequacy of information received, the extent to which the information sources were useful) and their support of the intention and purposes of the recommendations. General comments were received within the survey and written on sticky notes. The majority of comments were supportive with an emphasis on action with some criticism of the scope and viability of the report.

Email Submissions

Four online submissions were received by the AEP HWC Report email inbox providing feedback regarding the HWC Report. No submissions were affiliated with a particular stakeholder organization, and one was affiliated with an academic institution (from British Columbia). Majority of the submissions were positive in nature and included ideas for improving human-wildlife coexistence. Submissions included feedback on each section of the HWC Report: Trans-boundary Management, Wildlife in Developed Areas, Habitat Security, Food Conditioning and Habituation, People Compliance, Wildlife Management. Comments on the Roundtable and Technical Working Group and activity or location-specific feedback were also brought forward.

Most emailed comments supported People Compliance, and likewise most concerns and suggestions related to improving People Compliance. Wildlife in Developed Areas also generated more support than concern, while there was more concern than support specific to the Roundtable/Technical Working Group and in the category of activity or location-specific feedback.

Summary of All Results

The feedback received arranged based on the sections of the Technical Report include:

| | Support | Concern | Suggestion |
|---|--|---|---|
| Roundtable and Technical Working Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging to see all players at the table and the approach to the report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of representation by MD of Bighorn need for all recommendations to be specific and time-fixed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> need for user/recreational use input consider all wildlife regardless of the size need for quantifiable measures and targets |
| Trans-Boundary Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> need to ensure the problem of invisible lines resulting in rule changes for wildlife is addressed impacts to 'at-risk' species and ensuring their survival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> merging Conservation and Fish and Wildlife Officers in the Bow Valley increase funding for education and enforcement through licenses plate sales similar to B.C. or Wildlife Photography or Viewing License |
| Wildlife in Developed Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase staffing, enforcement and fines for off-leash dogs, unsanctioned trail use and closed area boundaries attractant management on municipal, provincial and federal lands | | |
| Habitat Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> temporal closures – trails/hours/capacity and provide alternatives on where to go outside of the closure area wildlife fencing growth balanced with planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the efficiency of resources and credibility of providing strategic recreational alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> differentiate between development and trails, consider restrictions to continued development people need designated areas – providing recreation/trail development |
| Food Conditioning and Habituation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> management of feral rabbits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> zoning in Recommendation 19 that some urban zones be yellow or green as there are examples of coexistence in the Hamlet of Harvie Heights | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>People Compliance</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enforcement and education at closure areas • raising infraction fees and adjusted to an individual's annual income or other proportional calculator along with education • acceptance that there will be people opposed to action which shouldn't restrict action being taken • encouraging carrying of bear spray • transparency in decision making • additional research on human interaction with wildlife • keeping the public informed – residents and guests/tourists • prevent wildlife harassment – photography and codes of best practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public perception of Fish and Wildlife officers response to wildlife occurrences • attitudes mountain bike community need special attention e.g. pirate bike trail building • use of the term “unprotected” land outside of National Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage as short-term recommendation • study-area wide Wildlife Ambassadors program • strategies be in place for residents as well as occasional and one-timers • use of accommodations (e.g. hotels) for reaching occasional or one-timers with info in multiple languages • use the community volunteer base • respond to values of individuality/entitlement • consider traditional knowledge • consider applying ecosystem based management to municipal planning – reviewing zoning with community and scientific input • careful use of wording – trail consolidation and optimization not closures • be prepared to limit events or close the Nordic Centre when bears are in the area • consider the cost of education and ensure it gets implemented |
| <p>Wildlife Management</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediate, fast track and funding of the remainder of the Trans Canada Highway from Dead Man's Flats to the Banff East gate | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aversive conditioning being used in Kananaskis potential for success in cases like Bear 148 |
| <p>Activity or location specific feedback</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvie Heights as an example of urban coexistence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-leash dog enforcement in MD of BigHorn, Quarry Lake, Peaks of Grassi and Silvertip • Shepherdia bushes in Canmore along the old rail bed between Railway Avenue and Train Bridge • Treatment of gophers at Sage and the Iron Goat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving signage from Rundle Forebay to the Three Sisters • requiring bear spray for participants at Nordic Centre events • quarry area closure areas in berry season |

Media

On June 1, 2018, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Southern Alberta issued a joint media release (via website) to express appreciation of the work of the technical working group at <https://y2y.net/news/media-releases/report-recommends-improvements-for-bow-valley-human-wildlife-coexistence>.

No formal media release issued by Alberta Environment and Parks, and metropolitan (Calgary area) coverage of the report was limited to the Calgary Herald. No media coverage of the report was identified later than June 20, 2018.

Two advertisements were placed in advance of the Open Houses:

- June 6: Crag & Canyon
- June 7: Rocky Mountain Outlook

Media coverage of the report included:

Rocky Mountain Outlook:

May 31 [Human-wildlife report provides 28 recommendations](#)

June 7: [Managing Human Use Critical](#)

June 7: [Finally, greater recognition of human use issues](#)

June 7: [Province to increase staff for wildlife enforcement](#)

June 20: [Time has come for change to provincial wildlife policies](#)

Canmore Commons:

June 2: [Recommendations released for improving human-wildlife coexistence in the Bow Valley](#)

Calgary Herald:

June 4: [Fate of Bear 148 sad example in report on reducing human-wildlife interactions in the Bow Valley](#)

**Thank
you all for
starting the
conversation**

Canmore Open
House participant

