



# **Situation Analysis:**

Collaborative Conservation  
Opportunities in the  
Thompson-Nicola

**Thompson-Nicola Conservation Initiative  
Launch Workshops, April 2021**



**THOMPSON-NICOLA CONSERVATION INITIATIVE**  
**SITUATION ANALYSIS: Collaborative Conservation Opportunities**

Eclipse Environmental Consulting | **MARCH 2021**

<https://www.totabc.org/tnci>

# Overview

1. Situation Analysis goals, methods & role
2. Biodiversity values, threats & conservation priorities
3. Interest in collaboration & possible benefits
4. Possible goals
5. Possible objectives
6. Governance: organization structure/name
7. Governance: geographic scope
8. Governance: participants/members
9. Governance: Indigenous engagement
10. Possible program areas
11. Conclusions



Credit: Richard Doucette

**1. TNCI Phase 1 Goal:** explore options for greater support for, and collaboration among, groups doing conservation work in the Thompson-Nicola, including the possibility of a regional conservation partnership (CP) similar to others in BC.



Credit: Mandy Ross

➤ **Situation Analysis Goal:**

Assess the conservation situation in the region, including conservation priorities and options for greater collaboration

➤ **Situation Analysis Methods:**

- 70 interviews
- 60+ organizations: Indigenous, federal, provincial and local government; provincial, regional & local conservation & sectoral groups; academics & researchers

# 1. Situation Analysis: topics & role

## Interview Topics

1. biodiversity values, threats and conservation priorities?
2. interest in collaborative regional conservation?
3. possible benefits and opportunities?
4. regional assets and strengths to build on?
5. **goals and objectives?**
6. **program areas?**
7. **geographic scope?**
8. **governance & membership models?**



Credit: John Surgenor

## Role of Situation Analysis

- **discussion paper**, open for comments → Launch Report
- basis for Launch workshops & Next Steps
- synthesis of interviewee responses; doesn't represent views of the TNCI Working Group or author
- *quotes are in italics*

## 2. Priority ecosystems & habitats for collaborative conservation

### Grasslands/wetlands, including riparian areas

#### Species at Risk & other species

- take an “ecosystem” or “landscape” approach
- focus on improved watershed and natural resources management
- conserving critical habitats will benefit Species at Risk *and* “keep common species common”
- Indigenous groups: habitat & connectivity for salmon, steelhead & ungulates → food security & community well-being



## 2. Key biodiversity threats



Credit: Richard Doucette



Invasive *Centaurea biebersteinii*, Spotted Knapweed, Dreamstime

- subdivision of large rural land holdings & urban expansion into dryland ecosystems → grassland conversion & fragmentation
- poorly planned and/or managed land use and natural resource management practices (e.g., rangeland, forests) → degrades terrestrial & aquatic habitats in some areas
- more road-building & recreational users on Crown land, combined with weak/ inconsistent monitoring & enforcement
- terrestrial and aquatic invasive species

## 2. Key drivers/pressures on ecosystems



Credit: Kim Anderson / iNFOnews.ca



Credit: Seppo, with permission

- **climate change:** cross-cutting driver magnifying threats
  - factor in increased flooding, drought & wildfire events, negatively impacting habitats
  - shifts in species ranges complicates conservation efforts
- gaps & weaknesses in provincial **institutional framework** for conservation and Crown land management seen as undermining efforts to address threats **BUT**
- **opportunity:** collaboration could help if key parties are involved, e.g., provincial land managers, ranching and agricultural community, recreationists



### 3. Interest in regional collaboration? ... Yes!

- enthusiasm across diverse organizations & sectors
- hope: tailor the organization to the region, while drawing on BC/Alta. experience

#### Possible benefits:

- same as other partnerships (see *Lessons Learned*)
- increased communication, networking & data-sharing
- greater effectiveness & efficiency
- pooling resources & expertise
- collective influence to change policies & practices

#### Regional strengths to build on:

- contact list: 120 people from 75+ organisations!
- **Appendix B.** wealth of information, knowledge, expertise & experience
- build on/link with other Thompson-Nicola conservation initiatives



Western Screech Owl Nest Box Team. Credit: Rick Howie

## 4. Possible goals: draft for discussion

1. Strengthen conservation of grassland-wetland ecosystems in the region, including species at risk & other species, taking an ecosystem approach.
2. Improve watershed management, with a focus on integrating biodiversity conservation into land, water and natural resource planning and management.
3. Respect the Secwépemc concept & practice of “Tmicw” – “Lands and Waters” or “land, resources and everything on the earth” – in regional conservation efforts.



Credit: Robyn Reudink

## 5. Possible objectives: draft for discussion

1. *Promote communication and dialogue*: diverse groups → identify common goals
2. *Coordinate conservation activities*: use complementary roles, expertise & resource → collaborative work
3. *Provide leadership in developing a common direction and strategies for conservation*, e.g., harmonize practices across land tenures
4. *Increase effectiveness and efficiency*: reduce duplication & combine efforts, e.g., share data, people
5. *Facilitate capacity-building for partners*, e.g., networking, peer learning, training



Heffley Lake Stewardship Group: annual waterfowl survey. Credit: Rick Howie

## 6. Governance: *structure and name?*

### Issues to decide:

- What organizational structure & name will work here? others are called “*collaborative*”, “*program*”, “*partnership*”
  - Have called T-N Conservation *Initiative* to keep it open
- Two-tier structure with a leadership group, e.g., steering committee + a “partner” or “member” level? Other models?
- Action teams (or similar) on specific topics, e.g., stewardship, securement, research? If so, what and when?
- Founding document: e.g., Terms of reference, charter, MOU, to set out vision, goals, collaboration principles?
- Full-time coordinator? (*recommended*) Long-term funding?
- How to get started? Leadership group proposes governance?



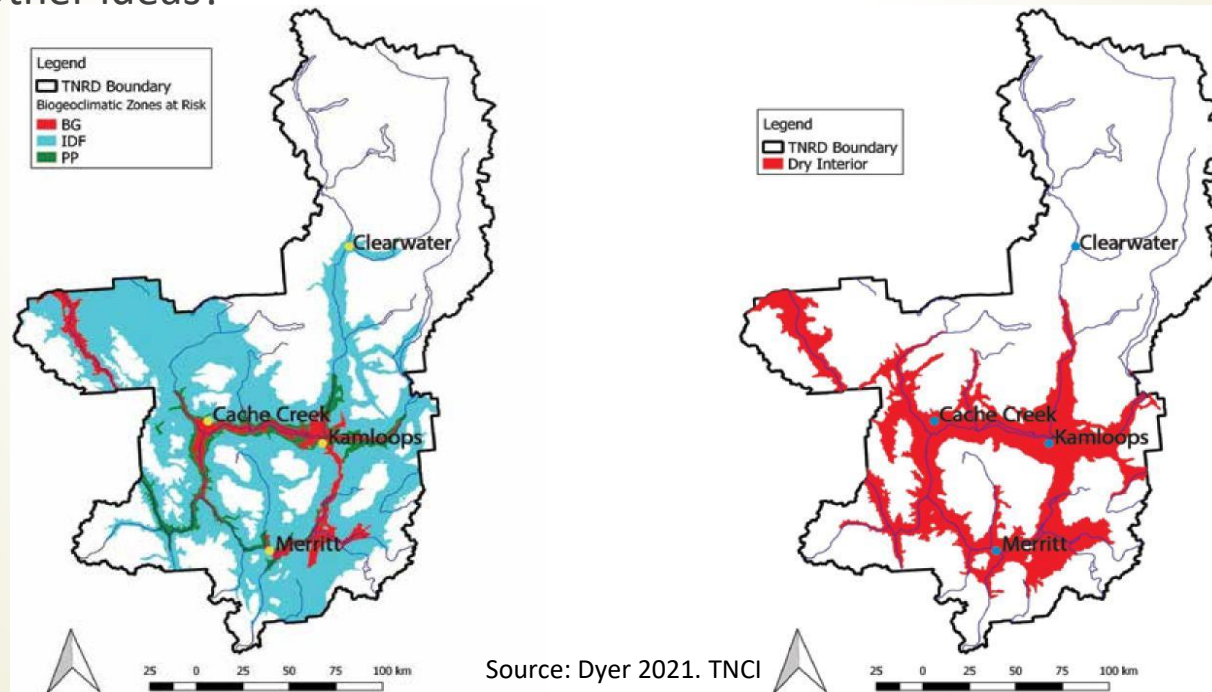
Cattle drive, Lac duBois. Credit: Bob Scheer

# 7. Governance: *geographic scope?*

## Issues to decide:

TNRD boundaries O.K. to start, but it's a large region, with diverse landscapes & communities: how to address this?

- start with priority areas with greatest threats and/or least attention?
- sub-regional teams for watersheds or valleys, to address the area-specific focus of many groups + the diversity of Indigenous territories and priorities? If so, which ones? When?
- Other ideas?



Source: Dyer 2021. TNCI

## 8. Governance: *participants/members?*

Issues to decide:

### ► How to engage groups?

- Position TNCI as an independent, member-driven body that will collectively decide governance, goals & programs
- Show groups how it can help them deliver on their own goals and programs

### ► Who to engage?

- Aim for diverse groups & sectors: 1. those involved in conservation + 2. those whose decisions influence biodiversity, e.g., Indigenous, Crown land, local gov't. & private decision-makers?
- How to find committed leaders & champions to jump-start & maintain the organization?
- How to build relationships and trust early on, e.g., workshops, field trips, collaborative projects?
- How to build support from elected officials, leaders & senior managers of key organizations?



Bat box. Photo credit: Okanagan Habitat Atlas

## 9. Governance: *Indigenous engagement?*

- Involvement by Indigenous groups seen as essential by all
- 29 groups contacted:- 15 interviews
- Many are interested: *if* Title and Rights & Government commitments to UNDRIP, especially BC *Bill 41 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) are respected
- Not all are interested, prefer to focus on G2G
- Some waiting to see how things evolve & want updates

Also helpful if:

- TNCI is clearly a *technical collaboration*, separate from G2G
- community benefits are highlighted
- support for participation is available



## 10. Possible program areas:

1. Communication, information-sharing & exchange
2. Scientific and technical collaboration
3. Securement & management of conservation lands
4. Regional conservation plan or strategy: to guide programs and support proposals: *quick start* (Dyer 2021)
5. Stewardship programs for private landowners: expand and broaden existing ones
6. Work with local government on conservation: data, training and technical support: SEAR LG Working Group



Sage and Sparrow Conservation Area, Nature Conservancy of Canada. Photo: Bryn White



## 10. Possible program areas (cont'd.)

7. Strengthening provincial regulatory, policy & planning framework: govt./NGO collaboration
8. Connect with T-N, BC, Canada & international initiatives: CWS *Integrated Conservation Action Plan* for “Dry Interior Priority Place”, 2021-22
9. Enhanced Indigenous participation in conservation: build on past and current efforts through capacity-building: link to food security, economic development and jobs
10. Terrestrial and aquatic invasives
11. Outreach, education & community engagement



Controlled burn, Merritt. Credit: Richard Doucette



Seppo, with permission



Lac du Bois. Photo: Richard Doucette



Badgers. Photo: John Surgenor



Photo: Mandy Ross

# 11. Conclusions and next steps

- ***A regional collaborative body is an idea whose time has come:*** strong interest across diverse groups who see opportunities to significantly advance conservation in the region
- Phase 1 is a good start!
  - convergence on **priority ecosystems & key threats**
    - grasslands-wetlands ecosystems (including riparian), Species at Risk and common species
    - ecosystem/landscape perspective
    - watershed management: land, water, natural resources
  - basis for “quick start” collab. **science & research** (Dyer 2021)
  - **Indigenous communities:** culture, knowledge and interest
  - **regional strengths:** groups, expertise & initiatives to build on
  - general direction on **governance structure, goals, objectives and program areas, with details to be worked out cooperatively, starting with Launch events**
- Founding groups can draw on suggestions from 70 interviewees PLUS lessons learned and advice from nine collaborative partnerships

***Please check out Situation Analysis & Lessons Learned: reports before Event 2A/B and 3! 😊***

*Thanks to interviewees for your time, suggestions and commitment!*