Waterton Biosphere Reserve
Carnivore Working Group (CWG) Committee
Terms of Reference
(Updated October 2017)

Introduction and Background
Waterton Biosphere Reserve’s Carnivore Working Group (CWG) was established in the fall of 2011 as a committee of the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association (WBRA). The impetus for formation of the CWG was the receipt of funds under a 2011-2014 Memorandum of Understanding (2011-2014 MOU) between WBRA and Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) (then Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development). These funds were to support “project initiatives to reduce human-carnivore conflict issues in Southwestern Alberta, with a specific focus on grizzly bears, black bears, and wolves”. One of the requirements of the 2011-2014 MOU was that a community-based, landowner driven, working group be established. The WBRA established the CWG committee on October 13, 2011 and the inaugural committee meeting was held on October 17, 2011. The CWG is the third carnivore focussed landowner - government group in southwestern Alberta, and follows the Large Carnivore Communication Committee (2010-2011) and the Carnivore Advisory Group (2003-2007).

While originally established to meet the requirements of the 2011-2014 MOU, the CWG has since been maintained as a valuable community-based committee providing direction and guidance to the WBR’s Carnivores and Communities Program (CACP). WBR’s CACP was launched in 2009 with a landowner survey addressing large carnivore issues and financial support in 2009 and 2010 to the Drywood Yarrow Conservation Partnership, Chief Mountain Land Owners Information Network and Nature Conservancy of Canada for deadstock pickup and attractant management projects in the municipalities of Pincher Creek and Cardston. With the signing of the 2011-2014 MOU, the CACP expanded to include the MD of Ranchland and the western portion of the MD of Willow Creek. AEP has continued to provide funding to the CACP with annual grants. This provincial funding has also been used to leverage support from other funders including Environment Canada, Alberta Innovates BioSolutions, Alberta Ecotrust, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Shell Fuelling Change, Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and others.

This document provides a Terms of Reference for Waterton Biosphere Reserve’s CWG committee and outlines the role of the WBRA, the role of the CWG, and how they operate together to achieve the desired outcomes for the CACP.

Vision
The following vision was recommended by the CWG on December 13, 2011 and approved by the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association on January 3, 2012. It serves as the vision not only for the Carnivore Working Group, but also for the larger WBR Carnivores and Communities Program.

The purpose of this vision is not to lay out the specifics of how issues with large carnivores are to be solved, but to provide a guiding statement which reminds people what the desired
outcome is. The ideal outcome may not ever be fully achieved, but the vision statement gives us something against which to measure our plans, and results; it can keep us from drifting away from the mandate of the Carnivore Working Group (CWG) and the Carnivores and Communities Program (CACP). Ideally, we would like to see the following outcomes:

- People and large carnivores can both have a place on the landscape in southwest Alberta.
- Economic losses to the ranchers and farmers of the area are prevented through cooperative projects.
- When economic losses occur, due to large carnivores, the individuals are fairly compensated.
- Projects improve public safety and prevent bears and wolves from becoming problem animals.
- Accurate bear and wolf population numbers are determined, and these numbers are instrumental in managing the populations at levels that are appropriate and sustainable, both biologically, and within the context of keeping human-carnivore conflicts to minimum.

Role of WBRA
The WBRA is accountable to funders for meeting funding agreement requirements and completion of project deliverables. The WBRA provides project administration, approves CACP budgets and work plans, and appoints and oversees staff including the CACP Coordinator who chairs the CWG committee. The WBRA Executive Director sits as an ex-officio member on the CWG committee. The WBRA establishes and maintains the CWG, and receives direction and guidance from it, regarding use of program funds, to achieve the goals of the CACP (listed below).

Role of CWG
The CWG will be composed of producers who represent the community, representation from the Alberta government, and others as may from time to time be recommended by the CWG. CWG members bring concerns, knowledge, and ideas to the table and help relay information back to the community and the government of Alberta with the vision in mind. The CWG provides direction and guidance to the WBRA regarding use of program funds to achieve the goals of the CACP listed below, including specific advice regarding projects to be completed.

Carnivores and Communities Program Goals

- GOAL#1: To maintain an effective community-based carnivore working group with strong collaborative partnerships.
- GOAL#2: To support the completion of landowner-driven projects & other agricultural practice change efforts that reduce human carnivore conflicts.
- GOAL#3: To develop a common knowledge base and effective communication strategies related to large carnivore issues.
- GOAL#4: To encourage development of a long-term strategy for balancing coexistence of large carnivores and humans in Southwestern Alberta that recognizes the need for conflict reduction, predation compensation, and wildlife management.
- GOAL#5: To ensure effective project management and evaluation
**Guiding Principles**

The CWG will operate on a consensus model which will be guided by the following principles:

- The working relationship of the CWG will be cooperative, in that all members will strive to reach the best possible conclusion for the group and all of its members.
- CWG members will actively participate in discussion and in the formulation of recommendations and advice to the WBRA.
- The CWG will be solution-oriented, in that members will strive to emphasize areas of agreement rather than differences, and reach effective conclusions using compromise and cooperation.
- CWG members will conduct themselves with courtesy and respect of each other’s opinions and beliefs at all times.
- CWG members will effectively exchange information and engage their community members in a manner that is supportive of the other members of the CWG and the overall vision of the group.

**Meetings**

Meetings of the CWG will be held at a minimum three times a year. Meetings will be held either in person or by teleconference to minimize costs. The location of in person meetings can be rotated within the project area. An agenda for each meeting will be sent in advance. A written summary of meeting discussions will be kept and submitted for approval at a future meeting. The CACP Coordinator as identified by the WBRA will serve as chair of the CWG committee.