



**REGULAR MEETING OF
Forest Wildland Advisory Committee
MINUTES**

January 10, 2024, 3 p.m.
Remote Meeting via Zoom

		Mtgs: YTD (1)
PRESENT:	Chair, M. Tardif	1
	Vice Chair, R. Millikin	1
	Community Representative, V. Cole	1
	Community Representative, C. Young	1
	Councilor, A. De Jong	1
ABSENT:	Community Representative, J. Areshenkoff	0
	Community Representative, D. Raymond	0
	WORCA Representative, N. Koshure	0
	AWARE Representation	0
STAFF	RMOW Sr. Communications Officer, E. Marriner	1
PRESENT:	RMOW Climate Action and Environment Manager, L. Burhenne	1
	RMOW Recording Secretary, A. Bois	1

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair M. Tardif recognized the Resort Municipality of Whistler is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Lílwat People, known in their language as Liłwat7úl, and the Squamish People, known in their language as Skwx̱ wú7mesh. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship and voice.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved By Councilor, A. De Jong
Seconded By Vice Chair, R. Millikin

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Committee Meeting agenda of January 10, 2024.

CARRIED

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Moved By Community Representative, C. Young

Seconded By Community Representative, V. Cole

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Committee Meeting minutes of October 11, 2023.

CARRIED

4. **PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS**

4.1 **Committees of Council Program Review**

RMOW Sr Communications Officer, E. Marriner presents the results of the Committee of Council Review Project. E. Marriner explains the purpose of the presentation is to share the review's implications on Forest Wildland Advisory Committee (FWAC) and to solicit feedback from the committee regarding the draft mandate and membership of the new *Climate Action and Environment Select Committee of Council*. A review of the Committees of Council program was recommended by both, the previous Council, and the 2019-2020 Community Engagement Review. E. Marriner notes that given the significant amount of time used by Committees of Council (RMOW staff, Council, partner organizations, and community members), there is a need to ensure committee topics are relevant and that resource commitments are in alignment with current municipal priorities that serve the community, the RMOW, and council decision making. Furthermore, the engagement landscape has changed significantly in the past 15 years since the committees of council program was last reviewed. There is now a desire to ensure the RMOW engages, and collaborates, with the community's changing landscape.

E. Marriner explained that members of committees of council were surveyed, and a staff person from each committee was interviewed, to understand the committee-specific context. These surveys, and interviews, indicated that committee topics need review. Specifically, committee topics must realign with Council's priorities (for example, Climate Action and Housing are not current committee topics). E. Marriner shared the New Committee Program Structure, endorsed by Council in September 2023. The New Committee Program Structure demonstrates that the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), along with FWAC, will amalgamate into the new *Climate Action and Environment Select Committee*. Council will accept applications for the *Climate Action and Environment Select Committee* once the Terms of Reference is endorsed.

E. Marriner shares *Climate Action and Environment Committee's* proposed mandate and membership list. E. Mariner also notes that there is a diversity and

inclusion strategy currently being developed, as recommended by Council, so the membership proposal may change (from what is being presented).

Committee Questions:

- *What will the recruitment process be for designated youth and indigenous representation in the new committee structure?* E. Marriner notes that while the recruitment process is not yet solidified, a part of the diversity and inclusion strategy includes a commitment to reducing barriers to increase diversity on the committees. E. Marriner also clarified that community representatives do not have to be residents of Whistler.
- *How will the mayor, and Council, measure the new committees' effectiveness and efficiency?* E. Marriner notes that, again, the outline of measurement is not yet solidified but the feedback compiled from the presentations will be used to support this decision.

Feedback shared:

- Committee feels that the proposed membership list for *Climate Action and Environment* is unbalanced as only 4, out of the 12 proposed members, are community representatives, and 6 of the proposed members are RMOW representation. Committee members view this as a limitation on community representation and an overrepresentation of staff.
- Given how broad the scope of topics *Climate Action and Environment Committee's* mandate may cover, there could be more experts on the proposed membership list to ensure the committee will be effective at advising policy and influencing council decision making.
- The proposed mandate is viewed as limited to only advancing Council's priorities. Committee members express the concern that committees can bring imminent issues to Council's attention that are beyond the scope of Council's priorities.
- Committee also notes that diversity and inclusion element will be challenging to achieve given that the proposed membership list only has 4 community members.
- Committee suggests that FWAC recommendations, and topics, should be also brought forward into the Climate Action and Environment Committee (document attached).
- Committee advises that the *Climate Action and Environment Committee's* mandate includes a geographic range (will the mandate be limited to Whistler, or will it include the entire Sea to Sky Corridor?).
- FWAC created a committee onboarding package for new members (with explanation of TOR and Official Community Plan). Committee wants to see this document extended into *Climate Action and Environment Committee's* onboarding process. L. Burhenne points out that a result of the review is to streamline/optimize onboarding for all committees.
- Committee notes WORCA representation is missing from proposed *Climate Action and Environment Committee* membership list. Committee feels that WORCA is a key group necessary for representing interests of recreation trails development and use.

- FWAC sees value in inviting experts to committee meetings and recommends ability to invite guests/ experts to committees going forward.

4.2 Field Trip Debrief

See minutes attached.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Wildfire Suppression

Chair M. Tardif shares information on technological advances in wildfire mitigation. M. Tardif sourced information from Squamish based company swarmsolutions.com. M. Tardif explains how the use of drones to long line lift water sacs to fight fires, specifically at nighttime, could be highly beneficial, and a superior alternative to reliance on helicopters. Given that helicopters are typically grounded 30 minutes before sunset, operations to support wildfire suppression efforts cease at nighttime. Since wildfires at nighttime are not as strong as wildfires in daytime, it can be optimum to leverage nighttime efforts to suppress wildfires. It is also noted that the use of drones reduces, if not removes, the human element needed to combat wildfires.

6. TERMINATION

Moved By Chair, M. Tardif

Seconded By Community Representative, V. Cole

That the Forest Wildland Advisory Committee terminate the Regular Committee Meeting of January 10, 2024.

CARRIED



Chair, M. Tardif



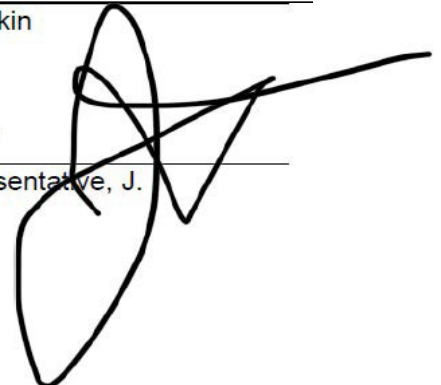
Vice Chair, R. Millikin



WORCA Representative, N. Koshure

Jared Areshenkoff

Community Representative, J. Areshenkoff





Community Representative, D. Raymond

Victoria Cole

Community Representative, V. Cole



Community Representative, C. Young

ADJ

Councilor, A. De Jong

Adina Bois

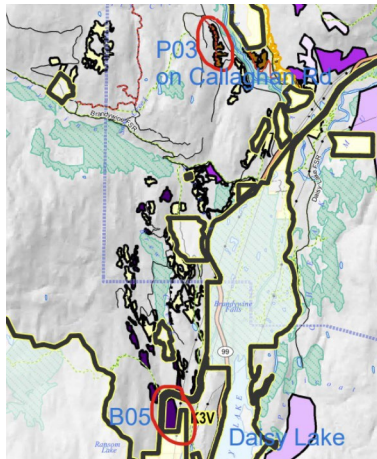
Recording Secretary, A. Bois

No Representation

AWARE Representation

Date/Time: 08 Nov 2023 13:00-16:00 hrs

Attendees: Luisa, Heather, Tina, Victoria, Melanie, Rhonda, Abe Litz



Locations: 1) P03 and P05 on Callaghan Rd; 2) B05 Daisy Lake

Note: see the CCF website <https://www.cheakamuscommunityforest.com/> for a) RSVP to their information session 24 Nov; b) video of Whistler fire history – a link to the video is on the CCF homepage immediately below the map. Look for green rectangle titled: Whistler Forest History Project Video

Highlights of our discussions:

1) P03

- Road is complete but needs to freeze before it's drivable – it's wider at entrance than intended by Abe but narrows above first switchback; it will be replanted.
- Trees are marked for 25% retention; 30% was not possible due space needed for machinery.
- Will use a feller-buncher to minimize roads
- Goal is to remove fir & replant with Cedar which is more suitable to the site (add **why**); in 60 years result will be mature overstory of Fir with mixed understory of cedar, natural regen of hemlock & some fir i.e., diversity in height & species
- Fire treatments will be focused on thinning of 60 year old dense stands; these trees will contribute to AAC if they are merchantable

2) P05

- Stand was logged, burned & planted in 1960s; unlike then, today's planning will use seedlings grown from seed suitable for this latitude/longitude and elevation
- Abe showed us the effect of planinng trees not from this seed zone (**also trying seeds from a warmer climate & different elevation**) – broken branches from our snow load and caloric trees
- Mel pointed out the 3 giant yellow cedars + 1 across the highway. Bob Bret mapped 13 Old Growth yellow cedar in Callaghan; Heather and Abe have connected with Bob to incorporate these trees in CCF forest planning for future forest health

3) B05

- Sam Grill from Oceanview joined us. Oceanview Forest Products assesses **◆**umber in the blocks and works with logging contractor on site.

- We bushwacked about 20 min into a 20 ha unique stand of 120 year old trees never logged, on an outwash floodplain. The likely agent of disturbance was the railroad
- This site was deemed to have more value kept intact than logged because of the rarity of DS1 (acronym) old growth structure in the CCF. The First Nations partners and CCF will work together to find grants to build parking, a trail and interpretive signs.
- SLRD could provide grant opportunities

Forest and Wildlands Advisory Committee

2022 Annual Report

This year the FWAC committee prepared the Annual Report for 2022 in the form of a SWOT analysis to convey our urgent messaging to the CCF Board, RMOW Council and Municipal Staff, who presumably will also be reading this report from our meeting minutes as an appendix. This report includes an outline of our Resolutions to Council which will be moved at the Regular FWAC meeting on April 12th, 2023. As well as a report card section, in keeping with FWAC's historical methods of reporting to the CCF.

SWOT

Directed at Heather Beresford, the CCF's new Executive Director and spokesperson for the CCF Board, with an urgent message that the opportunities of ecosystem-based management far outweigh the threats. Trees left standing in the CCF provide lucrative carbon credits and are a natural asset, it's time to take action on this statement.

Strengths:

1. The community forest allows for collaboration between the positions of taxpayers, First Nations, municipal, provincial & federal government.
2. We have established partnerships with Sea to Sky Indigenous communities.
3. We have lucrative natural assets and an ability to influence the management of them. The RMOW is a world class resort with an explicit value of the natural assets.
4. We can simultaneously address RMOW commitments under the Big Moves, Official Community Plan, Firesmart, and wildfire mitigation and monitoring, with a shift to management for a climate resilient forest.

Weaknesses:

1. A current lack of clarity, direction, vision, or transparency in the management of our community forest.
2. Lack of financial transparency.
3. Lack of planning. For example, what are the objectives of Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF) – is it logging or ecosystem-based management?
4. No clear leadership.
5. RMOW is doing only what they must under the provincial guidelines, without monitoring for efficacy or appropriateness in Whistler's Forest.

Opportunities:

1. RMOW has the potential to be a world class leader in climate solutions
2. A change in focus from logging to ecosystem-based management will meet the CCF and RMOW's commitment to reduce carbon emissions.
3. With Heather Beresford as the new Director of CCF, we can expect a new management direction that is aligned with ecosystem-based management, with an emphasis on monitoring to track the reduction of carbon emissions and increased climate resilience of the forest, increased involvement of partners, and improved direction from FWAC as a representative of the RMOW community.
4. To recognize the economic value of our forest beyond timber sales, by defining our carbon emission target using accurate, local data on carbon sequestration

both above and below ground. The value must be from a current market position, where we include other ecosystem services and the potential carbon sequestered under ecosystem-based management compared to logging.

5. To update the purchase agreement. We can pursue a partnership with the BC Forest Ministers to update carbon accounting. We need to clarify who owns the forest.
6. To embrace Indigenous employment outside of a focus on Annual Allowable Cut (AAC), as a positive step towards reconciliation, thus enabling shared gains for RMOW and the Sea to Sky Indigenous community. We can move beyond “old iron” and non-Indigenous contractors. All logging must be put up for auction to ensure the best value, requiring that the selection prioritizes forest health (no tree damage, no soil compaction, no erosion).
7. To move beyond compliance to a voluntary market. We can work with the UN Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to get in front of credits for biodiversity (of specialist species that indicate an intact ecosystem) and wildlife.
8. To focus on Callaghan as a pilot diversion of funding from fuel breaks, that the province agrees is ineffective, to instead install ecosystem actions, monitor for efficacy and the impact on carbon sequestration (above and below ground), biodiversity of specialists, and then adjust as needed (adaptive management).
9. To optimize spending of the \$10M from federal government for fire management, to forest that is most at risk to fire, by thinning overgrown plantation forest instead of healthy naturally regenerated forest.
10. To continue not logging at the AAC instead of fearing pressure from the provincial government to change this.

Threats:

1. Climate change and the associated risk of fire, flooding, soil erosion and extreme heat.
2. Loss of natural assets.
3. Loss of biodiversity.
4. Commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 2030. The current focus on logging (AAC and fire management) is increasing carbon emissions.
5. Community opposition and negative publicity.
6. Uncertainty of a new approach.

RESOLUTIONS

Directed at the FWAC chair to be carried forward to Council, with an urgent message that it's time for bold action.

FWAC resolves that RMOW must:

- Modify the FWAC Terms of Reference to require from RMOW, an annual review of targets for ecosystem sustainability, and for all meeting minutes, a reviewable summary of decisions and actions required, by whom/when, before the minutes are finalized in pdf.
- Move from the current unthinking implementation of provincial prescriptions and annual reporting on that plan, to long-term thoughtful planning for ecosystem management.

- Renegotiate the carbon offset purchase agreement between the provincial government and CCF to reflect a more accurate price on current and future carbon markets. Apply the increase price in carbon to CCF operations and partners, as an offset to possible financial input from commercial logging.
- Renegotiate the AAC to reflect no commercial logging in the region.
- With the CCF, quantify and apply a monetary value, on ecosystem services of unlogged forest to include cultural significance, tourism value, energy savings, wildlife habitat, water filtration, soil and bank stability, and natural diversity; thus, strengthening the EBM plan.
- Allocate funding that is dedicated to ecosystem management with complete (includes natural assets and below ground carbon sequestration) accounting for carbon offsets, as well as other metrics of climate change mitigation (flood, heat, health of forest and community well-being) and natural asset sustainability (retention of old-growth and attributes of an intact forest ecosystem), instead of the traditional financial recovery through logging. Validate with local data, whether our trees are worth more standing or not. Annual reporting on spending and results.
- Monitor for loss in biodiversity of species that indicate intact ecosystems compared to biodiversity of disturbance-related species. Annual report on targets for biodiversity credits.
- Integrate ecosystem-based management with Firesmart and fuel-thinning programs so funds can be properly allocated to long-term management of our forests for climate resilience.

REPORT CARD

FWAC's report card on the CCF's performance on forest management, directed at the FWAC chair to be brought forward to the CCF Executive Director and Arthur De Jong Council Representative, with the message that we need to end the history of poor performance (2016-2022) on recommendations from FWAC.

Below is a list of RMOW's four key objectives followed by the 2022 FWAC ranking (Excellent, Pass, Fail or Unknown), and the reason for this ranking.

Provide economic benefits to their communities & to BC.	Unknown due to a lack of transparency
Provide social benefits of community involvement & worker safety, to their communities & to BC	Fail due to the poor use of on-line GIS capability, confusion of multiple disjoint plans, and zero use of citizen science.
Promote communication & strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities	Unknown due to a lack of transparency.

Community forest management is consistent with sound principles of environmental stewardship that reflect a broad spectrum of values.	Pass due to a commitment in 2021-2022 to fund monitoring for the efficacy of fire management, but only a pass due to a lack of leadership in long-term planning that recognizes Whistler's unique opportunity to value natural assets over logging and to fully account for the carbon benefits of not logging.
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Forest and Wildlife Advisory Committee, Resort Municipality of Whistler

FWAC Onboarding Document

Draft 3/02/23TY- v3

FWAC Board Members, per its Terms of Reference:

- 1 from AWARE (Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment)- Claire Ruddy
- 1 from WORCA (Whistler Off Road Cycling Association)- Nicole Koshure
- 1 Council-appointed - Councillor Arthur De Jong
- 6 Whistler community representatives- Members at Large, volunteers appointed by the Council
- 1 Manager of Whistler's Environmental Stewardship Department – Luisa Burhenne
- 1 Administrative Assistant recording secretary – Olivia Carroll

Role and definitions - see Whistler.ca for details and background: [Terms of Reference](#)

FWAC ([Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee | Resort Municipality of Whistler](#)) is defined by the Terms of Reference (TOR)2022, as excerpted below. Each year FWAC focuses on various aspects of its TOR, depending on the current hot topic:

“2.0 PURPOSE - The Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee (FWAC) is a Council-appointed committee that advises Council on matters related to forestry, wildfire management, land use plans, public and commercial backcountry recreation, wildlife management and the Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF). *It provides input to Council through its monthly meeting minutes.* It also acts as the public review committee for the CCF *and provides feedback directly to the CCF* on CCF's plans and activities.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES - Forest & Wildland Advisory Committee's role is to Advise Council on matters related to **sustainable** use of forests, waters, and wildlands outside the Whistler Urban Development Containment Area but in the overall Whistler landscape unit, and in alignment with the Whistler Official Community Plan.

Topics include:

- a. Issues related to wildfire risk management and forest health;
- b. Issues related to biodiversity, wildlife and its habitat;
- c. Issues related to the effects of climate change eg. Increasing forest fires, and forest drying
- d. Issues related to the Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (see below);
- e. Issues related to other regional land management plans, land use plans and regional growth strategies;
- f. Issues related to public and commercial recreation including access management and recreation infrastructure planning in Whistler-area forests and wildlands;
- g. Cheakamus Community Forest activities.

Terms defining acronyms frequently used during committee meetings:

WUDCA -Whistler Urban Development Containment Area:

The purpose of the WUDCA is to **protect the natural environment that sustains our local biodiversity, provides our connection to nature and sustains Whistler as an attractive mountain destination by carefully managing the amount of development** and proactively preserving sensitive areas.

WUDCA extends from Function Junction/Cheakamus Crossing to Emerald Estates. Therefore it does not include the communities of Rainbow and WedgeWood north of Emerald Estates.

See map -Schedule A of the current Whistler Official Community Plan. (See map in Figure 1 below)

Note: FWAC's mandate does not include the lands in the WUDCA, except possibly for issues that affect the surrounding forests and wildlands and their wildlife, such as wildlife corridors.

CCF - Cheakamus Community Forest

The Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF) is one of more than 50 community managed forests in British Columbia. Situated on more than 33,000 hectares surrounding Whistler, BC, the Cheakamus Community Forest was established in April 2009, when the Lil'wat Nation, and Squamish Nation, and the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) signed a 25-year tenure with the provincial Ministry of Forests and Range. Together, these three equal partners oversee the management and operation of the forest. Each of these partners has its own priorities for CCF, ranging from forest preservation, jobs for its people, and revenue from logging.

The CCF operates under its Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) approach meaning that more of the land base is set aside to protect more of what the Whistler community values such as streams, views, recreation areas and old growth than under regular forest practices. Of the 33,000 hectares managed by the CCF, approximately 15,000 hectares are protected from being logged through a variety of legal and voluntary mechanisms. Under this management approach, an average of 40 hectares per year will be harvested. Effective 2023, the new Executive Manager of CCF is Heather Beresford, Whistler's former Environmental Stewardship Manager.

Whistler's priorities for CCF are outlined in the Whistler Official Community Plan. See the excerpts below:

"5.7 Intro - The Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF), as shown in Schedule C, is a leading example of partnership and ecological forestry practices through the application of ecosystem-based management (EBM) establishing a new best practice in community forestry operations that has been applied in other jurisdictions.

"5.8.1. Objective - Promote sustainable, efficient and effective uses of the CCF.

5.8.1.1. Policy - Promote use of the EBM plan to guide timber harvesting and land management practices within the CCF.

5.8.1.2. Policy - Encourage the CCF to obtain and maintain Forest Stewardship Council certification as a commitment to and recognition of best management practices.

5.8.1.3. Policy - Encourage the CCF to address a broader range of issues within CCF activities that are reflective of community values, such as public and commercial recreation.

5.8.1.4. Policy - Promote timber harvesting and land management practices within the CCF that minimize harvesting old growth and minimize negative impacts to sensitive ecosystems and species and ecosystems at risk. “

CRA – Whistler Blackcomb’s Controlled Recreation Area - see map (See map in Figure 1)

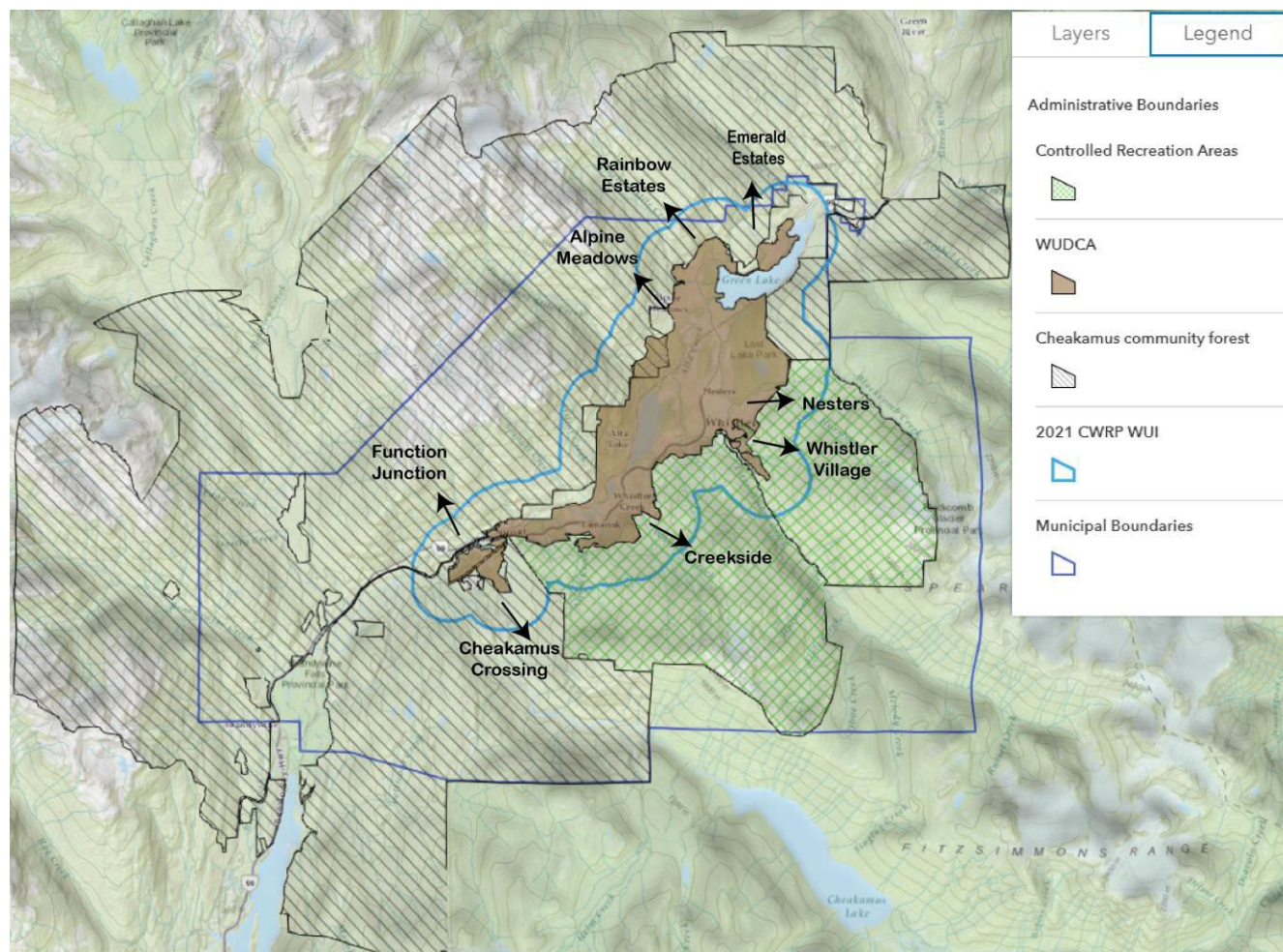


Figure 1: Map of Whistler including Controlled Recreation Area (CRA), Whistler Urban Development Containment Area (WUDCA), Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF), Whistler Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), and Municipal Boundaries

WUI - Wildland Urban Interface areas. Define via map

MDAs -Master Development Agreements - Recognize the Whistler and Blackcomb Master Plan Updates (dated 2013), and the associated 2017 MDA for each mountain approved by the Province of British Columbia . These approvals apply for 60 years. The MDAs are referenced in the OCP excerpted below in sections 4.1.3.5 (e) and (h) .

OCP - Whistler Official Community Plan

Whistler's Official Community Plan was drafted in 2013, but implemented in 2017 – It is anticipated to be in place for 8-10 years. The OCP defines what FWAC's objections and philosophy should be. Schedule A of the OCP is important for understanding locations. Relevant OCP excerpts shown below: See sections related to growth management, land use, natural environment, climate action

[Whistler's Vision and OCP | Resort Municipality of Whistler](#)

" 4.1.1.5.(e)

Support low impact outdoor recreation activities and carefully managed resource uses including timber harvesting within the Cheakamus Community Forest outside the CRA and the WUDCA. Seek to ensure best management practices and compliance with applicable Crown land regulations, avoid impacts on critical natural areas and protect Whistler's water sources. "

4.1.3.5.(c)

Recognize the economic development interests of the Squamish Nation, Lil'wat Nation and Province in the long-term successful operations and development of the Whistler Mountain Resort and Blackcomb Mountain Resort, as well as the success of the Whistler resort community as a whole.

4.1.3.5 (e) Recognize that protection of the natural environment relative to Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain operations and development within the CRA is addressed by the provincial government through the Master Plan approval process and the approved MDA for each mountain, which specify ongoing environmental requirements. Avoid duplicative environmental review and permitting processes.

4.1.3.5 (h)

Recognize that the Whistler Mountain Master Plan Update identifies Option Sites that may be acquired from the Crown for new base area developments. There are seven Option Sites, shown in Schedule A of this OCP. The proposed "South Base" development would require a RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER | Official Community Plan CHAPTER 4 GROWTH MANAGEMENT | 4-11 substantial investment by Whistler Blackcomb in recreational infrastructure and servicing on Crown land and has the potential to add significant additional lift staging capacity and new skiing terrain with a new access road and staging route up Whistler Mountain from Cheakamus Crossing. The plan also identifies significant parking facilities, potential day skier and commercial facilities, and the potential for development of accommodation. (i) Given the location, scale and nature of development, any proposals for development of the South Base or any of the other Option Sites would involve careful consideration with significant community input to ensure clear and substantial benefits to both the resort and the community as a whole, and no unacceptable negative impacts on the community, resort or environment. The Option Sites are located outside of the WUDCA, and development in these areas would require an OCP amendment and rezoning to amend the WUDCA and provide for proposed uses.

4.1.5.1. Policy - Proactively implement initiatives for effective prevention of wildfires and structure fires including Whistler's community wildfire protection plan and comprehensive emergency management plan.

Ch. 7 intro extract

“Our Shared Future Whistler’s natural environment is one of the resort community’s greatest assets and residents and visitors continue to understand the need to protect its inherent values. A healthy natural environment in the Whistler valley not only provides a significant benefit for tourism, recreation and our quality of life, but **supports local wildlife and ecosystems with its contiguous natural areas connecting all ecosystems within the broader landscape** “

7.1.1.3. Policy Wherever possible, link sensitive ecosystems, such as aquatic habitats, to parks, greenways or other natural areas to minimize habitat fragmentation.

7.1.1.5. Policy Locate trails outside sensitive ecosystems, including riparian areas, but allow for trails in these areas when this use can be shown to be compatible with OCP policies and development permit guidelines, the Riparian Areas Regulation, Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) recommendations, other relevant legislation and best management practices.

CECAP – Community Energy and Climate Action Plan

Reference from the OCP -“Climate modelling for the (CECAP) clearly shows that the Sea to Sky corridor will experience longer, hotter, drier summers in the future and that among other effects, wildfire risk to both the built and natural environment will increase.”