



Miistakis  
Institute

# Path to Coexistence: Meeting Record of a Multi- Perspective Workshop

Guy Greenaway

July 2019

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through a grant from the Alberta Beef Producers**



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Meeting Record of a Multi-  
Perspective Workshop**

Prepared by Guy Greenaway  
July 2019

Miistakis Institute  
Rm U271, Mount Royal University  
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW  
Calgary, Alberta T3E 6K6

Phone: (403) 440-8444  
Email: [institute@rockies.ca](mailto:institute@rockies.ca)  
Web: [www.rockies.ca](http://www.rockies.ca)

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# Introduction

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The mechanisms for ensuring both humans and wildlife can exist and thrive on Alberta's agricultural landscapes are currently not satisfactory to any party. Many potential solutions have been proposed on several fronts, but none have arisen that are acceptable to all affected parties.

One person described the state of the conversation as 'stale.' Many discussions are covering previously-explored territory, and coming to similarly unresolved conclusions. Positions are often re-stated, and 'priority next steps' for one group are 'non-starters' for another.

In conversations with the Alberta Beef Producers (ABP), the Miistakis Institute proposed convening a small, strategic, "wayfinding" discussion around what steps are needed in the path to realizing human-wildlife coexistence on agricultural lands in Alberta. The goal was not – at this point – to come to a consensus resolution, only to come to agreement on what are the necessary next steps.

The approach evolved to focus on the common components of all proposed solutions, and the critical 'unknowns' for each of those. It was felt that *collectively* identifying these could go a long way to establishing common ground, while keeping people from falling into the rut of defaulting to a favourite proposal.

*NB: It is important to note that ABP agreed to fund the majority of the planning and meeting costs, support the planning as needed, and commit to having delegates there. However, they did not make any conditional requirements, nor prescribe what they wanted as outcomes, ultimately having no more influence on the outcome than any other party involved. The Miistakis Institute was left to play the neutral convener, designing the approach, and identifying and inviting participants based on the meeting objectives.*

## Methods

The project was split into two phases. The first phase would test the idea, while at the same time identifying appropriate people to participate, and refining the workshop goal.

After the first phase, Miistakis committed to making a recommendation back to the Alberta Beef Producers as to whether this seemed like a feasible undertaking. We committed that if the feedback during these initial conversations indicated an unwillingness to engage in

such a conversation, the project would be halted with Phase II — the workshop itself — abandoned (ultimately, that was not the case).

During Phase I, the workshop was designed, a meeting structure articulated, and interviews were commenced. In total, nineteen (19) people were interviewed in late 2018 and early 2019.

Approximately 2/3 of the way through the interviews, the decision was made that the concept was viable. An agenda package was developed, and a formal invite issued to the identified participants.

Phase II was the workshop itself, held on June 25, 2019 at the Lister Centre on the University of Alberta campus in Edmonton, Alberta. Fourteen participants attended (see *Participant List* in the Appendices).

The workshop began with the 10 pre-identified solution ‘categories’ displayed around the room. Participants were led through exercises of naming representative examples of each, then the critical unknowns for each, then how they would address those unknowns. The final step was to discuss the next steps.

Because of the smaller size of the group, all sessions were conducted in a single group, with no breakout sessions.

## Participant Selection

There was no effort to be exhaustively inclusive of all the organizations and agencies that ultimately have a role to play. Instead, the goal was to bring together people of a certain mindset/experience mix.

This mix required people to be aware of the issues, and involved in them. This might mean they had direct involvement or peripheral involvement, but regardless were intimately aware of the tensions and the players involved in previous and current efforts to address coexistence. The more lengthy and the more varied that experience the better.

It also required a certain mindset. The goal was to better enable people in the future to assess proposed solutions that might come forward, so participants had to be open minded, and willing to consider options from other parties. This is a difficult requirement to satisfy given how entrenched discussions on this topic have become.

During several conversations on producer-wildlife coexistence, Miistakis had already identified several people that seemed to fit this profile. As the pre-workshop interviews

took place, others were identified as potential fits for this role. In the end, every person invited had been identified by someone else as being appropriate for this sort of discussion.

## Workshop Context

### Problem Statement

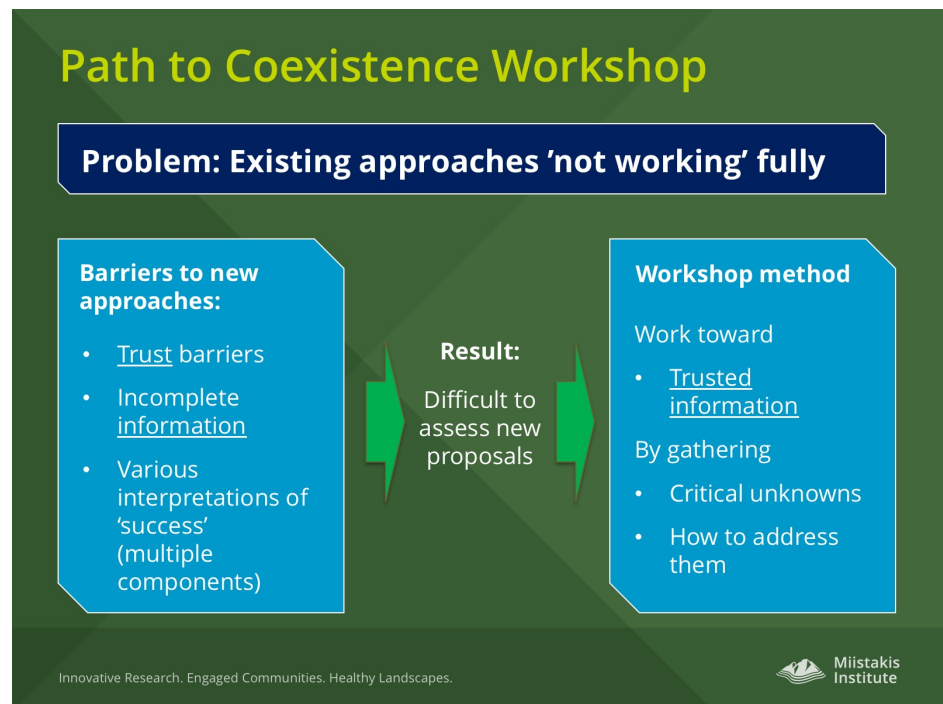
After being presented with the Core Conflict Issues (see below), one interviewee astutely noted that those were underlying issues, but they were not the problem we were there to address.

The problem (illustrated in the diagram below) is that current approaches to reconciling producer viability and wildlife viability on the same landscape have been recognized by all parties as not working fully ('fully' because some elements are believed to be working).

The effort to identify a new approach are confounded by 1) trust barriers, 2) incomplete information (a given person/organization may have some but not all pieces), and 3) varied interpretations of what is 'success' (Wildlife outcomes? Producer viability? Threshold levels of loss?).

These barriers mean when a new proposal does come forward from one party, it is very difficult for another party to objectively assess it.

Although a number of efforts are needed to address this problem, the Path to Coexistence workshop aimed at *collectively* identifying the information needs, in an effort to address the deficits in both 'trust' and 'information'.



## Goals and Intended Outcomes

### Workshop Goal

It was made clear at the outset that the goal was to engage in an expert discussion around the viable coexistence of producers and wildlife that did NOT seek to identify the *ideal* strategy, but rather to help collectively identify the unanswered questions associated with proposed strategies.

Because it is likely as important to say what the goal was NOT, it was also made clear to potential participants that they were NOT gathering:

- To leave the room having identified the *one* solution
- To discuss in detail any one proposed solution
- To advocate for any particular solution
- To assign deficiencies, blame, or culpability to any party
- To bind your organization to a particular proposed solution

It was recognized that this would be very difficult for a group of people committed to finding a solution to these issues.

### Workshop Outcomes

The following intended workshop outcomes were provided in advance:

- A deeper and shared understanding of the barriers a party may have to accepting the proposed strategies of other parties
- A consensus on what are the critical 'unknowns' for various proposed strategies
- A consensus on what steps should be taken to address the critical unknowns

## Key Terms and Concepts

Two key concepts were provided to workshop participants in advance: the core conflict issues, and the meaning of 'coexistence' as used in the workshop.

### Core Conflict Issues

While several process, practice, and interaction issues exist, the core producer-wildlife interaction issues underlying the need for the workshop were identified as:

- Predation of stock by carnivores
- Depredation of forage by ungulates
- Stored feed damage by wildlife



- Crop damage by waterfowl and other birds
- Human safety

## **'Coexistence'**

The term 'coexistence' just means existing together at the same time in the same place. For the workshop, we proposed that the conversation would be around 'viable coexistence': a state in which both agricultural producers and wildlife are able to thrive; that is, agricultural operations are viable, and wildlife populations are viable.

## **Categories of Proposed Strategies**

Recall that the intent of the workshop was to avoid debating specific strategies, and instead focus on the common elements that occur when looking at the full suite of all proposed strategies. To facilitate that, those elements needed to be identified in advance.

Numerous strategies have been put forward for achieving viable coexistence between producers and wildlife on agricultural lands. These proposed strategies can be loosely grouped into categories. The following categories were first proposed by Miistakis, then refined through the interviews.

Note that some of these categories represent comprehensive programmatic approaches, and some represent distinct but vital elements of several approaches; it was not the intent to produce perfectly distinct categories. Instead, the intent was to give workshop participants a way to break down the component parts of any strategy, and start identifying what needs to be known for each.

At the workshop, a flip chart page for each was posted on the wall.

### **Improved Compensation**

Solutions aimed at improving the mechanisms for providing compensation to producers for lost livestock and/or crops.

### **Payments / Incentives**

Solutions that use payments or other direct incentives to encourage changes in producer practices or levels of tolerance in support of wildlife viability.

### **Education / Awareness**

Solutions that seek to raise awareness of producer-wildlife coexistence issues with the intent of catalyzing changes in practices, acceptance of regulations, or public acceptance of mitigation programs.

### **Verification Improvements**

Solutions that seek to improve the processes / mechanisms for verifying negative wildlife impacts on livestock and/or crops.

### **Technology Applications**

Solutions that use new or better-applied technologies to support wildlife management, producer practices, depredation assessments, verifications, reporting, tracking, etc.

### **Changes in Regulations**

Solutions that use changes in laws, policy, or regulations (at the provincial, municipal or federal level) to require more effective wildlife, livestock, or crop management practices.

### **Community-based Programs**

Solutions that catalyze or coordinate activity within a local community to address coexistence starting from a grassroots level.

### **Market-based Approaches**

Solutions that use markets, prices, and economic variables to incent changes in producer practices that benefit both wildlife and producers.

### **Wildlife Management Changes**

Solutions that actively manage wildlife individuals and populations to reduce the incidence or potential of producer / wildlife conflicts.

### **Improved Producer Management Practices**

Solutions that involve modified agricultural practices to reduce the incidence or potential of producer / wildlife conflicts.

## **Strategy Assessment Criteria**

To determine the 'Critical Unknowns', each Strategy Category would need to be assessed against specific criteria to see if the strategy addresses it, or if it results in a 'critical unknown.'

The following list of assessment criteria were developed in advance and provided to potential participants. Then, at the workshop, the participant package included them again, and participants were directed to refer to them when thinking about the 'critical unknowns.'

### **Effectiveness – wildlife viability**

Does the strategy maintain or improve the viability of wildlife populations?

### **Effectiveness – producer viability**

Does the strategy maintain or improve the viability of the associated agricultural operation(s)?

### **Implementation cost**

Can the cost of implementing the strategy reasonably be expected to be covered within the budgets of all involved?

### **Regional differences**

Is the strategy likely to be effective in different parts of the province (different communities, different agricultural operations, different wildlife issues)?

### **Agency capacity**

If the strategy relies on a government agency(s), does the agency have the technical and financial resources to implement it?

### **Regulatory achievability**

If the strategy relies on an existing or proposed regulatory foundation, can the law, policy, or regulation reasonably be expected to support the strategy? (consider the political level here, as well)

### **Species differences**

If the strategy is expected to address issues with multiple species, is it likely to do so?

### **Producer acceptability**

If the strategy relies on being accepted by agricultural producers in the area, are they likely to be supportive (collectively or individually)?

### **Public acceptability**

If the strategy relies on being accepted by non-producer Albertans (tax-payers, urbanites, hunters, etc.), are they likely to be supportive (collectively or individually)?

## Relationship strength

Are the relationships between the required players of a type and strength to support the strategy? (industry-agency, landowner-field staff, inter-agency, public-producer, inter-industry, inter-community)

## Workshop Summary

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As described above in the *Methods*, the workshop participants were guided through a process of looking at each 'Strategy Category' and first identifying examples of that kind of strategy, then identifying critical unknowns.

The way the group was directed to think about the 'critical unknowns' was to think in terms of when an example of that category was proposed and there were criticisms levelled at it. Those criticisms often reflect critical unknowns. For example (*NB: these were examples given at the start; these are not taken from the meeting record*):

- Criticism: "It's too expensive"
  - Critical unknowns: Do we know the cost? Do we know what constitutes too expensive? Do we know the potential revenue models?
- Criticism: "That won't be supported in policy."
  - Critical unknowns: Do we know the relevant policies? What are the policy barriers? Are there roles to be played outside the policy process?
- Criticism: "Producers won't go for that."
  - Critical unknowns: Do we know that? Is that the case for all producers? In all areas? Why is this unacceptable? Are there ways to make it acceptable?

The following is the verbatim transcript gathered from the flip charts after the workshop:

## Strategy Examples and Critical Unknowns

### COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

*Examples:*

- Carnivores and Communities
- Dead stock removal
- Wolf bounties
- Biosphere Reserve Program

*Critical Unknowns:*

- If it works, how do you make it a provincial program – how to you tailor it to other communities?
- Is it economically viable?
- Who is championing this?
- Are the programs accepted in the community?

## **PAYMENTS/INCENTIVES**

### *Examples:*

- Predator livestock
- Recreational access management program
- Fencing/offsite watering/
- Dollars for projects
- Payments for ecosystem services/retention of habitat

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- Who pays?
- Who is involved? Who should be involved?
- What is the cost?
- What are other contribution methods? Partners?
- Link to tax relief?
- Are they effective in their objective?
- Are they accepted by community?
- Management structure work?
- What does success look like?
- Have we addressed the underlying issues?
- Are they being applied in the right places?
- Are they being maintained over time? Are they required to be maintained over time?
- Are they perceived and implemented fairly/consistently?
- Are there other jurisdictions that have used successful models?

## **IMPROVE PRODUCER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

### *Examples:*

- Riparian fencing
- Offsite watering
- Training in herding
- Dead stock removal/removal of attractants
- Grazing timing (riparian and areas with predators)
- Range riders
- Public access to address wildlife issues

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- How do variable conditions impact effectiveness/uptake of practices? How do you build in flexibility/responsiveness?
- How will public act if gaining access?
- Is the practice cost effective?
- Does adopting the practice increase social license?
- Is it a sustainable practice?
- Will it continue to have the desired effect over the long term?

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT CHANGES

### *Examples:*

- Reduce wildlife densities
- Fladry
- Range improvement for wildlife (keeping wildlife on public land)

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- Is fire on the landscape a critical factor?
- Do we know how much wildlife do we want – what is the carrying capacity (biological and social (preference versus tolerance) for specific species?
- What are the expectations/tolerance of local/provincial community?
- What is the risk of disease transfer with wildlife?
- What is impact of municipal land use decisions on wildlife?
- Do we know the 'end game' (e.g. waterfowl)
- Is there a risk of de-valuing wildlife through reducing populations?
- How are / should species be treated on public vs private land? Synergies between these two.

## IMPROVED COMPENSATION

### *Examples:*

- Shot livestock
- Predator compensation
- Stored feed compensation/crop damage
- Waterfowl damage

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- Who pays?
- Who is willing to pay? (Peter Boxall)
- What is the compensation mechanism?
- What are the possible mechanisms? (not necessarily a direct payment mechanism)
- How much is an acceptable payment?
- Who will implement the mechanism?
- What is the psychological cost of producers dealing with predators (stress levels etc.).

- What is the implication of not compensating – if not producing what land use will replace this?
- Should producers be compensated the same regardless of management/husbandry practices?
- Should compensation be based on location – private/public land?
- How do you control moral hazard (and ‘middle’ cases)
- Does the program cover the responsible predator and eligible livestock?
- Are compensation changes linked to greater scrutiny?

## EDUCATION/AWARENESS

### *Examples:*

- Riparian awareness (Cows and Fish)
- Training/understanding in animal behaviours (livestock and wildlife) and human behaviour
- Awareness on how verification is determined
- Hunting/trapping training on cattle behaviour (Hunter Conservation Program)
- 
- Critical Unknowns:
- How do we bridge the gap (preferences/livelihoods) between urban and rural opinions/understanding? Tolerable relationships between people and wildlife. Individual animal versus population welfare.
- Are people aware of the issue, availability of programs?
- Do people understand that producers care about the welfare of wildlife?
- How effective will education be? How do we determine this?
- Does compensation serve a cohesive relationship? Will payment/compensation result in more tolerance/co-existence (between wildlife, producers, public).
- Will an ecosystem approach result in greater social acceptability?
- What is the value of wildlife to the public?
- How do we change trust issues for F & W officers and producers?

## VERIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS

### *Examples:*

- Change who can verify predation
- Wetland verification changes
- Are rules around verification adequate (proof, technology)

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- How do you keep the verifications impartial/maintain integrity of programs?
- What is impact/cost of delay of verification on producers?
- Do we have the capacity (officers) to provide needed verification?
- Are there others suitable verifiers?
- Would specialized officers (or others) be helpful?

- Do we understand the economics (cost/benefit) of verification? Staff/risk etc. versus payments without verification?
- Would a risk model for verification be more effective?

## TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS

### *Examples:*

- Howl box (creates a wolf howl to discourage wolves in certain areas)
- Fox lights (emits random light – discourages wildlife)
- Electric fences
- Bird bangers
- Collar cameras
- GPS on cattle or on wildlife
- Stock dogs
- Centralized landowner registries
- GIS-based mapping/tools

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- Effectiveness of website to link trappers/hunters with producers?

## CHANGES IN REGULATORY TOOLS

### *Examples:*

- Land leasing for recreational/livestock use
- Process for evaluating if regulation changes are effective (hunting, species specific)
- Need for dispute resolution process changes
- Public land policies adjacent to private lands

### *Critical Unknowns:*

- Who makes the compensation decisions? How are they affected?
- How durable are changes in regulation? (political changes)
- What are the impact of municipal development/recreation decisions on wildlife?
- Who delivers the programs? Who should deliver the program?
- What is the consequence of not making decisions on land use? (conversion of agricultural land) (monitoring into oblivion)
- How is land use change affecting these issues?
- Is it enforceable?
- How do you balance knowledgeable minority and potentially apathetic majority?
- Is the burden of proof appropriate?
- Is the legislation in line with the program needs?
- Does policy cover new needed wildlife control approaches?
- How does this link to other strategies (provincial (biodiversity strategy, land use), national, international)



## MARKET BASED APPROACHES

### *Examples:*

- Conservation easements
- Carbon credits
- Access fees/paid hunting
- Conservation offsets
- Cervid harvesting preserves
- Certification programs
- Verified/sustainable beef program
- Wetland banking

### *Critical Unknown:*

- Who benefits/Who feels the pain?
- What is the value of a specific species for producer/public?
- Will paid hunting result in changes in opportunity?

## Addressing the Unknowns

This part of the workshop deviated from the original intent, but still resulted in the desired outcome. Rather than discuss each 'Strategy Category's' critical unknowns, and identifying specific actions to answer those questions (as originally intended), the group showed a clear desire to begin grouping the questions into themes.

Time was limited, and this emerged to be a better use of the last part of the workshop. As well, it was becoming apparent to the group that leaving the room with a long list of questions would not serve them well as a practical resource.

Initiated by one group member, all participants smoothly joined in. The resulting themes were (with explanatory notes added for the purposes of this report, and only reported in the order they arose, not necessarily in order of importance):

### **Payments/Taxation/Costs**

- Unknowns that revolve around program costs, hidden costs, tax implications/acceptance, compensation, paid hunting, lease land financial models, alternate revenue sources, etc.

### **Social Themes (acceptance)**

- Unknowns that revolve around understanding the acceptability of certain strategies, and for different audiences such as producers, hunters, taxpayers, conservationists, etc.; also what factors would influence those

## **Land Use Change**

- Unknowns that revolve around how changes in land use, and land management, might affect the coexistence issues, or might actively be used to address those issues.

## **Education/Messaging**

- Unknowns that revolve around increasing understanding of perspectives, core values, concerns amongst various stakeholders (urban, rural, producer, government, public, taxpayer, hunter/angler)

## **Quantifying Viable (ranching, wildlife)**

- Unknowns that revolve around having a clear concept, and practical metrics for knowing when ranching and wildlife are considered 'viable'

## **Verification/Regulation/Policy**

- Unknowns that revolve around the government-mandated roles of verification, regulatory oversight, policy development.

## **Change in Roles/Mandates**

- Unknowns that revolve around questions of how mandates are changing, and how they could change to better address coexistence issues.

## **Other Examples/Models**

- Unknowns that revolve around whether models from other places, jurisdictions or circumstances could inform effective changes in Alberta's coexistence programs.

## **Trials/Pilots**

- Unknowns that revolve around understanding how to implement or recreate trials/pilots and how to assess them.

## **"Hot Button" Issues**

- Unknowns that revolve around how to approach high-tension questions head on (e.g., paid hunting, lease changes, producer responsibility)

## **Equity**

- Unknowns that revolve around understanding the needs for equity of cost, access and how to provide them.

## Perceptions

- Unknowns that revolve around questions of perception rather than knowledge, what those are, and how to address them.

## Program Delivery Models

- Unknowns that revolve around the options for and benefits of different models of delivering on coexistence programming, especially partnership models.

## Next Steps

The final step of the workshop was to identify next steps. This task was intentionally left wide open, and the group was pressed to make concrete determinations.

Unsurprisingly this was challenging, with participants indicating there was a lot of information, and a lot to digest.

In the end, several solid suggestions were proposed, with none drawing scorn or concern (see Specific Comments, below).

There was an emerging consensus that Fish and Wildlife Policy (AEP) and Alberta Beef Producers would be the critical conveners of the next steps.

The Miistakis Institute committed to creating this meeting record and circulating it as a resource for those next meetings, or as an assessment resource for any specific pilots, strategies, or new proposals that will emerge from these participants.

## Specific Comments on the Next Steps

- What does a new model look like? One that includes all elements discussed and all stakeholders to build it from the ground up.
- Wildlife working group (government advisory group) – if group is broadened out can broaden the objectives to address some of these issues.
- There are other wildlife working groups (academic, ABP, others) – need these to be working together – how does this happen? Need a collective sense of what you are trying to address.
- Need to actively address barriers to new paradigms (economic, social, moral etc.)

- Need to move on to discussing solutions. This information can inform those dialogues.
- Have perceptions/ideas been changed because of today's discussion? Yes.
- We have lots of expertise to lean on (pockets of experts). Need to discuss how to coalesce this expertise. Can build on the experts we collectively know and bring knowledge back to a broader working group to move ideas forward.
- Many of the issues can be addressed with improved communication and sharing of information (e.g., understanding of the full breadth of the responsibility of F&W officers).
- Many of the research questions can be addressed by students. If a research agenda is determined can farm this out to students.
- Are there some in this group who cannot participate in a broader working group? (indication that all are interested). Question was raised if some need approval to continue to participate (all indicated that this was not a problem). Was discussed that this was best to be kept as an ad-hoc committee and to not 'formalize', however there is need to some support for travel costs, secretariat, etc.
- Opportunities for SSHRC funding?
- Need a neutral convener – like Miistakis – to continue to push this forward. Someone considered to not have a position/agenda.

## Appendix 1: Agenda



### AGENDA

#### Path to Coexistence for Producers and Wildlife: Identifying What We Collectively Need to Know

June 25, 2019; Lister Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

Time	Activity
9:30 - 10:00	Arrival, coffee
10:00 - 10:15	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laying out the goals for the day</li> </ul>
10:15 - 11:00	<b>1. Strategy categories</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the presented 'strategy categories'</li> <li>Provide examples under each category to guide discussion</li> </ul>
11:00 - 12:00	<b>2. Critical Unknowns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify concerns, outstanding questions associated with each category</li> </ul>
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 1:30	<b>Critical Unknowns (cont)</b>
1:30 - 2:30	<b>3. Addressing the Unknowns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What information/actions are needed to satisfy these questions, resolve these concerns</li> </ul>
2:30 - 2:45	Break
2:45 - 3:30	<b>Addressing the unknowns (cont)</b>
3:30 - 4:00	Next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How should participants move forward</li> </ul>
4:00	Adjourn



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## Appendix 2: Participant List

- Participant List
- Jeff Bectell, Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association
- Angela Burkinshaw, AEP, Rangeland Policy
- Blaine Burns, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Steven Cross, Justice and Solicitor General, Fish and Wildlife Enforcement
- Danah Duke, Miistakis Institute
- Lee Foote, University of Alberta, Alberta Conservation Association
- Jodi Flaig, Alberta Beef Producers, Producer
- Mark Handel, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Shane Hanson, Alberta Beef Producers, Producer
- Brian Joubert, Alberta Environment and Parks
- Tom Lynch-Staunton, Alberta Beef Producers
- Trevor Miller, Justice and Solicitor General, Fish and Wildlife Enforcement
- Mike Nadeau, Alberta Beef Producers, Producer
- Karen Raven, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Stewardship
- Travis Ripley, AEP, Fish and Wildlife Policy
  
- Guy Greenaway, Miistakis Institute (Facilitator)

### Interviewees unable to attend on the day

- Paul Frame, AEP, Wildlife Management Policy
- Mark Heckbert, AEP, Fish and Wildlife Policy
- Doug Manzer, Alberta Conservation Association
- Jeana Schuurman, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Todd Zimmerling, Alberta Conservation Association