



Elk River
Watershed
Qukin
ʔamakʔis

Collaborative Monitoring Program

Steering Committee Terms of Reference

(Final and Approved - v11 - October 24, 2022)

Steering Committee Mandate

The Steering Committee provides overall direction and guidance for the functioning of the *Elk River Watershed Monitoring Collaborative* (‘the Monitoring Collaborative’) and the implementation of the *Elk River Watershed Collaborative Monitoring Program* (‘the Program’). Members of the Steering Committee work to the common interest of Collaborative Partners to achieve jointly agreed objectives with agreed mutual accountabilities.

Steering Committee Responsibilities

- 1) Set *strategic direction* for the functioning of the Monitoring Collaborative and the delivery of the Program and assist with resolving strategic-level issues and risks to the Program.
- 2) Set monitoring *scope* and *priorities*, through approval of the Overarching Monitoring Framework and key questions for watershed monitoring, in response to recommendations from the Monitoring Working Group and the Annual Forum of watershed interests.
- 3) Provide a *space* for *mutual learning* and an annual *review of progress* made in Program implementation to advance Program objectives.
- 4) Direct and foster the *building of relationships* and connectivity across organizations and people interested in the health of the Elk River watershed.
- 5) Use *influence* and *authority* to assist the Monitoring Collaborative in achieving its outcomes.
- 6) Assist in Program *resourcing* for implementation of jointly identified

priorities, including joint fundraising by two or more partners.

- 7) Approve a communications plan for public reporting on the Program, including the reporting on progress made on Program objectives and public recognition of the contributions made by Partners, as developed by the Program Coordinator and with advice from the Monitoring Working Group.

The direction given and the oversight provided by the Steering Committee are *acted upon* through *direct means* by the Program Coordinator (the Elk River Alliance), who uses the financial, human, and technical resources collected for the Program and distributes these back to various Implementation Partners. The fiduciary responsibility for these *Program funds* lies with the Elk River Alliance as the Program Coordinator with oversight by its Elk River Alliance Board of Directors. The Program Coordinator reports results to the Steering Committee.

The direction given and oversight provided by the Steering Committee are also *acted upon* through *indirect means* with commitments made by Implementation Partners to apply their own *financial, human or technical resources* to accomplish Program objectives. In this case, Implementation Partners commit to follow the guidance provided by the Steering Committee, and retain fiduciary responsibility for their actions. When two or more Implementation Partners collaborate to implement a specific project or monitoring activity, they may choose to retain fiduciary responsibility jointly using project-specific agreements.

Chair & Secretary

The members of the Steering Committee select a Chair from among themselves. The Chair serves for a period of two years, with the position then held by a different member, allowing for a *rotating chair* every two years. The Program Coordinator serves as the Secretary to the Steering Committee.

Membership & Composition

The Steering Committee comprises representatives of Partner Organizations

in the Elk River watershed, with the composition of these organizations forming a balanced set of interests so that no one organization has *undue influence*.

Members of the Steering Committee speak with the authority of their organization in the collective interest of the Program. When speaking in the interest of their own organization, they will declare so.

The Steering Committee comprises 6 to 13 individuals who are selected for their knowledge of the Elk Valley, the support of their organization, and experience in collaborative initiatives. Each Collaborative Partner may put forward one individual to the Chair for approval by the Steering committee. Steering Committee members serve for 2 years, with one renewal period of two more years. It is proposed that the Steering Committee includes representative members from the following interest and rights-holder categories, with names in brackets referring to already established partnerships:

- **Yaqit ?a·knuq̄i ‘it and Ktunaxa peoples: 2 members**
- **Provincial government agencies: 2 members**
(BC Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy and BC Ministry of Lands, Water & Resource Stewardship - proposed)
- **Municipal and regional district governments: 2 members**
- **Resource industry: 2 members**
(coal mining 1 member and forestry/energy 1 member)
- **Recreational groups and outfitters: 2 members**
- **Conservation organizations- national, regional, local levels: 3 members**
(Canadian Wildlife Federation, Living Lakes Canada, and Elk River Alliance)

Efforts will be made to have representation along the length of the Elk Valley, and whenever possible, representation will also include the following demographics:

- Women in equitable number with men

- Under 30 years of age

Decision-Making and Operations

The Steering Committee will take decisions collaboratively reflecting the Charter and jointly agreed Program objectives. Each member will have *equal voice* and *equal weight* in forming and making decisions. Decisions will be made on a *consensus* basis to the extent possible – meaning all members agree or 'can live' with the decision. Where *consensus* is not reached, the majority view will be reported and differing views of members will be recorded in meeting minutes. For instances where decisions reflect differing mandates/interests coming in conflict, a conflict resolution mechanism will be developed and utilized to preserve relationships and engagement.

When the need is identified by any member, the Chair will provide a “safe space” for frank and unhindered “off the record” conversations to enable partners to “speak up” comfortably and challenge collaborative decisions as they are formed.

The Steering Committee will normally meet in full *2 times* per year, in spring and fall, with exact dates to be determined annually, with the possibility of *additional* meetings called by the Chair in response to the need for specific strategic guidance requested by Partner Organizations or the Program Coordinator.

Participation will be through *remote participation* by default, but, if requested by Steering Committee members, hybrid meetings will be planned. The costs of participation will be borne by Partner Organizations unless the Steering Committee decides there is a justifiable reason for providing support. The Chair and Secretariat will prepare a draft agenda for each meeting, for circulation to members. There will be standing items for each meeting, reflecting an annual cycle, and additional items that members have identified at previous meetings or between meetings. Following each Steering Committee meeting, the Secretariat will prepare a draft *summary meeting report* including key discussion points, decisions and follow-up actions arising. This draft will be reviewed by Steering Committee members in a timely manner and once finalized, will be posted publicly by the Program

Coordinator. Detailed meeting notes will also be retained and made available to Steering Committee members upon request.

Review and Evaluation

Every year, the Steering Committee, in consultation with the Monitoring Working Group, will review Program progress and results towards meeting milestones. Every 5 years, an external evaluation of Program results towards meeting Program objectives will also be carried out, including the review of the Steering Committee's and Monitoring Working Group's Terms of reference.