



Northeast Roundtable

BC-BRFN WMB Planning Approach

May 6, 2026



BACKGROUND


The Implementation Agreement (IA), entered into by BRFN and the Province in January 2023, establishes commitments to develop new land use plans that restore the balance between the protection of Treaty Rights and responsible resource development.

WMB Plans:

at a scale that allow for planning and meaningful recovery of natural processes from local to landscape scale. They cover larger areas and additional sectors (34,000 to 300,000 ha).

HV1 Plans:

for high value areas to achieve minimum protection (at least 60% or 80%) and guide restoration and PNG activity. They cover areas ranging from 792 ha to 33,445 ha.



Watershed Management Basin (WMB) Plans are one of the primary planning processes outlined in the IA. They seek to guide cross-sector development at the watershed scale through enforceable mechanisms reflecting ecosystem-based management (EBM) principles. WMB Plans will:

1. Include new land use zones that prioritize protection through special management objectives and strategies.
2. Protect important wildlife habitat and cultural features.
3. Consider objectives and strategies for managing species at risk, range activities, access management (including those that minimize new linear features and/or access to specific areas), restoration activities, and the impacts of climate change.

More specifically, WMB Plans seek to achieve the meaningful recovery of:

- Natural processes from local to landscape scale;
- Intact and fully functional ecosystems; and
- The practice of Treaty Rights.

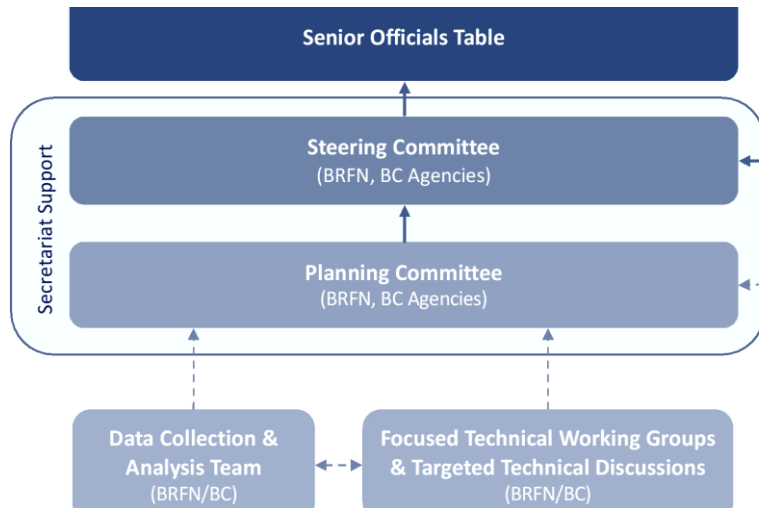
Note: Other objectives and strategies may be agreed to by the Parties through the planning process.

WORKING TOGETHER



BRFN and BC are working together collaboratively through the Planning Committee to develop WMB plans.

A governance structure has been established with representatives from both Parties that recognizes the continued development of a relationship based on mutual respect and trust.



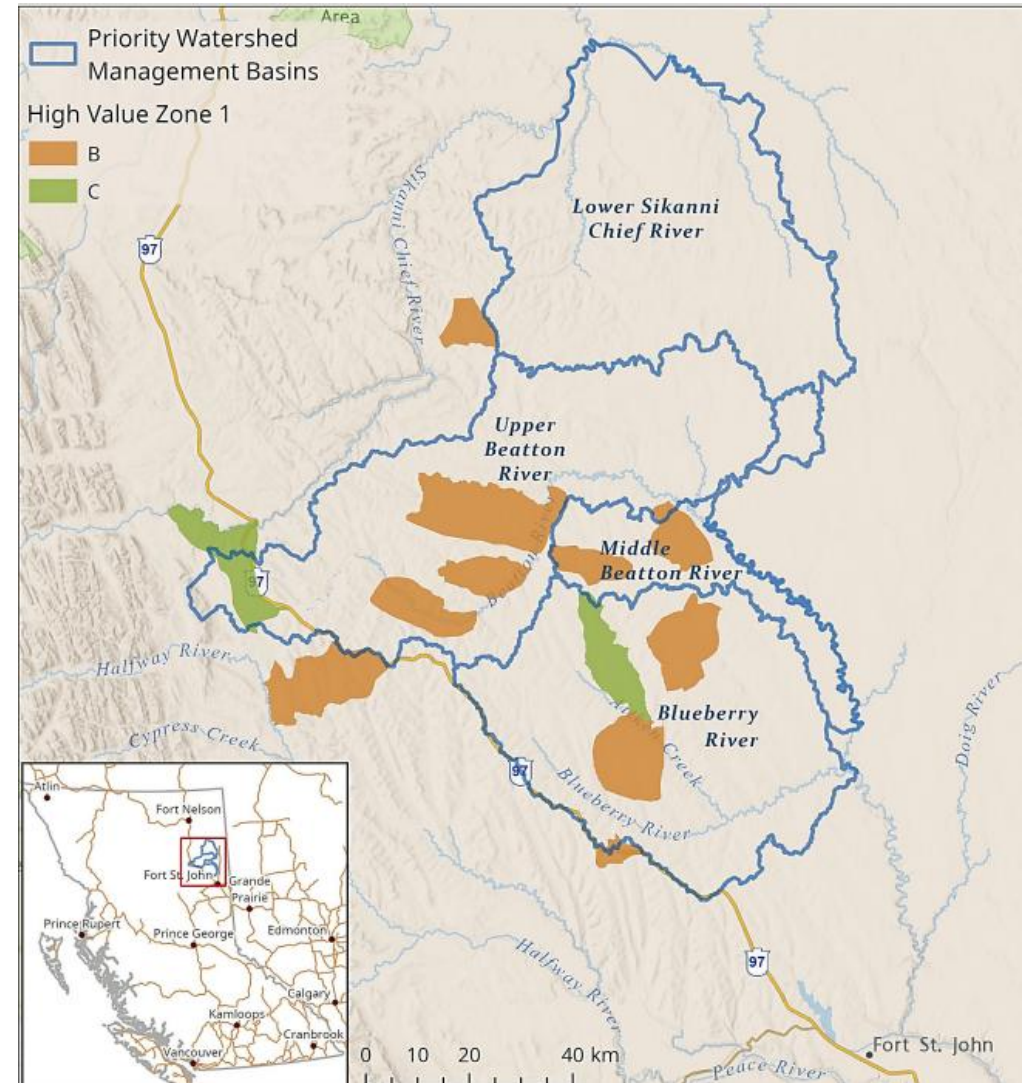
PRIORITY WMB PLANS

Four priority WMB Plans are currently being developed:

- Blueberry River WMB
- Lower Sikanni Chief River WMB
- Middle Beatton River WMB
- Upper Beatton River WMB

While the IA outlined a desired timeline of completion for these priority WMB plans of December 2025, the Parties collaboratively agreed to extend that deadline.

Other WMB Plans may be completed in the future.



ECOSYSTEM BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACH



EBM is an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. The intent is to maintain those spatial and temporal characteristics of ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained, and human well-being can be supported and improved.

WMB Planning is guided by the following EBM Framework:

- The landscape level protection strategy is intended to allow for the recovery of natural processes at the landscape scale; reserves should be large and well distributed, with high levels of interior forest condition.
- Core reserves are mapped and off-limits to development to allow meaningful recovery of intact and fully functional ecosystems.
- Smaller scale reserves are identified spatially and set aside within watersheds to augment and connect core reserves.
- Recruitment areas are identified and set aside to recover into old forest and provide large functional areas.
- Restoration is used strategically, in conjunction with reserves to improve landscape condition.
- The area's historic natural disturbance regime is used to set targets for old forest which are met with old and recruitment forests that are deferred spatially (i.e., reserves), as well as old forests that are deferred aspatially while recruitment takes place.
- Opportunities for the meaningful practice of Treaty Rights increase over the next two decades.
- Additional values not protected by large-scale reserves are effectively managed and restored.
- Strategies are identified and employed to buffer against the effects of climate change on ecosystems. Climate change is not used as a rationale to further degrade ecosystems.
- Land is used optimally to achieve ecological and cultural objectives so that a viable resource-based economy can persist.

PC APPROACH TO WMB PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The planning committee is working to draft goals, objectives, and strategies for each value, following the following logic model:



Old Forest



Intact Ecosystems



Water



Wildlife and Plants



Culture and Community



Economy

Goal: Describes the desired future condition for the value



Intact Ecosystems Example: Landscapes support healthy, connected, and diverse ecological patterns, processes, and structures

Objective: Describes what is required to achieve the desired future condition



Old Forest Example: Maintain $\geq 25\%$ of the WMB AFLB as Old Forest

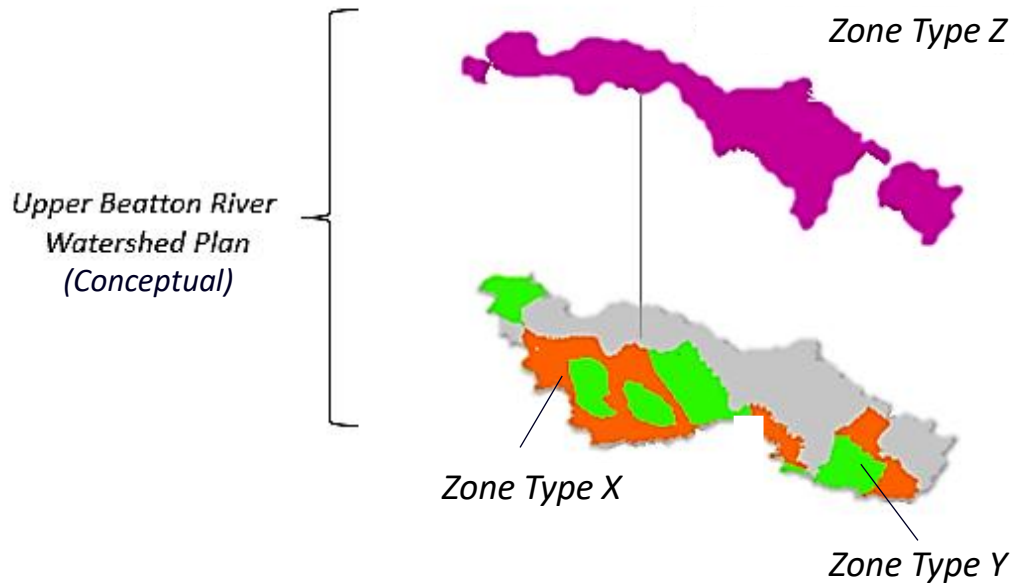
Strategy: Describes how to achieve the objective in practice



Water Example: A buffer of 'x' meters is applied to all Class 4 streams

Strategies currently under consideration by the PC range from thresholds, to buffers/setbacks, to restoration, to procedures, to spatial protections.

PC APPROACH TO WMB PLAN DEVELOPMENT



Spatial Decision Support Tool

As part of the plan development, the PC is currently working to spatially identify areas of high ecological/cultural value within watersheds to augment and connect HV1s (a secondary reserve system).

Note: the team is also considering terminology for the relevant land use zones that reflect their intention in a culturally aligned way.

Key considerations:

- Target the amount of old and recruitment forest required to increase the resilience of ecosystems to natural and human-caused disturbance.
- Concentrate towards areas of cultural importance to Treaty 8 First Nations.
- Maximize representation of key ecological values where possible (i.e., water, wildlife, etc.).
- Minimize conflict with existing / proposed economic development where avoidable.
- Explore options for different zones within the WMBs

UPDATED TIMELINES – WMB PLANNING

Date	Event	Purpose (Engagement Level)	Desired Outcome
<i>September 2025 (Complete)</i>	<i>Open House & Webinar</i>	Provide detailed overview of WMB planning approach and engagement opportunities (Inform) Seek clarity on values, interests, and perspective that third-parties would like considered in planning (Involve)	Third parties understand the scope of WMB planning and their role within it Planning Committee (PC) obtains a preliminary understanding of third parties' values, perspectives, and interests related to planning
<i>March 2026 (Complete)</i>	<i>Open House</i>	Provide detailed overview of WMB planning approach and engagement opportunities (Inform) Seek clarity on values, interests, and perspective that third-parties would like considered in planning (Involve)	Third parties understand the scope of WMB planning and their role within it Planning Committee (PC) obtains a preliminary understanding of third parties' values, perspectives, and interests related to planning
TBC	Workshop(s) & Webinars	Review and seek feedback on advanced draft WMB plan(s) (Involve)	PC understands the impacts that advanced draft WMB plan(s) will have on the values, interests, and perspectives of third parties.
TBC	Workshop(s) & Webinars	Review and seek feedback on final draft WMB plan(s) ahead of decision (Involve)	PC understands the degree to which impacts have been addressed through adjustments made in final draft WMB plan(s).

In Closing



- Thank you for your participation today
- Please provide any follow up questions to:
 - WMB related: WLRS.NortheastLUP@gov.bc.ca
 - HV1 related: rdpb@gov.bc.ca
- Planning Partnership Website:
<https://www.planninginpartnership.ca>

