

A photograph of a forest floor. In the foreground, several large, weathered logs are scattered across the ground, some partially covered in moss. The ground is a mix of dark soil and green vegetation, including ferns and other forest plants. In the background, a dense forest of tall, thin trees is visible, with some moss hanging from the branches. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed forest environment.

Mineral Licks, Wallows and Wildlife Habitat Features

NE Roundtable

May 6th, 2026

Importance of Mineral Licks and Wallows

- Significant mineral licks and wallows are localized; high-value wildlife habitat features that occur throughout the Northeast Region.
- A mineral lick is a natural mineral deposit where animals in nutrient-poor ecosystems can obtain essential mineral nutrients.
- Wallows serve several functions including thermoregulation, relief from insects, may serve a social function.

What tools are available for protection?

- ◆ The Minister responsible for the *Wildlife Act* may identify any or all of the following as a wildlife habitat feature:
 - (a) a fisheries sensitive feature;
 - (b) a marine sensitive feature;
 - **(c) a significant mineral lick or wallow;**
 - (d) a nest of: (i) a bald eagle (ii) an osprey (iii) a great blue heron (iv) a category of species at risk that is limited to birds;
 - (e) any other localized feature that the minister considers to be a wildlife habitat feature.

What is a Wildlife Habitat Feature?

- ◆ A “wildlife habitat feature” is defined as a **feature used by one or more wildlife species to meet their life history requirements**; special management is necessary to ensure that these features are protected and remain functional.
- ◆ Authority to take this action is enabled by:
 - ◆ Section 11 of the *Government Actions Regulation*.
 - ◆ Section 26 of the *Environmental Protection Management Regulation*.
- ◆ Once the minister has identified the feature persons carrying out a primary forest, range or energy resource activity **must not damage or render ineffective** the wildlife habitat feature.

What is ‘...not damage or render ineffective’ ?

- ◆ Activities must not cause physical damage, loss of the feature, or the loss of its biological or ecological function.
- ◆ Agreement holders must consider both direct and indirect impacts of their activities; a feature may cease to function without physically damaging it.
- ◆ The desired outcome is for the feature to remain intact and fully functional activities are complete.

How would a proponent identify or manage for WHF?

- ◆ A companion Field Guide, or guidance document, provides for information including,
 - ◆ How to identify features,
 - ◆ Understanding on how activities may damage or render ineffective,
 - ◆ Measures and setbacks that could be used to mitigate, and
 - ◆ Understand reporting requirements.

Wildlife habitat feature order for mineral licks and wallows in the Northeast

- ◆ Initial stages of creating a draft proposal for a WHF order for mineral licks and wallows in the Northeast Region of BC
- ◆ Evolved from Halfway River First Nation's mineral lick project and research undertaken in partnership with UNBC
- ◆ Engagement on the draft proposal, including a draft Wildlife Habitat Feature Guidance Document, is anticipated in the coming months

More resources

- ◆ [Wildlife Habitat Features - Province of British Columbia](#)
- ◆ [Kootenay Boundary Wildlife Habitat Features Order - Province of British Columbia](#)

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