Feral Horse Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

2025

Classification: Public

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Background

Official Committee Name: **Feral Horse Advisory Committee**

The Feral Horse Advisory Committee was re-established in spring of 2021 to provide recommendations to the Government of Alberta on the management of feral horse populations within the Equine Management Zones designated under section 9(1) of the *Stray Animals Act*. The Committee previously worked from 2013 to 2017 and the intent of the re-established Committee is to update and build on that work.

Purpose

The purpose of the Committee is to provide a forum of open dialogue between the Alberta government, feral horse stakeholders, subject matter experts and other key land use stakeholders to support the government's implementation of the Feral Horse Management Framework. The Committee will use current knowledge and understanding of feral horses, populations, habitat use and the Feral Horse Management Framework population tiers and thresholds to support their recommendations. Through the Committee, recommendations will be provided to the Government of Alberta on the management of feral horses and opportunities discussed on how to work together on science, research and management to ensure the population is managed at a sustainable level.

The intent of the Committee is to:

1) The Committee has been established to play an advisory role to the Alberta Government, it is not a decision-making body.
2) The Committee will provide advice to the Government of Alberta to help inform and guide the implementation of the Feral Horse Management Framework.
3) Share information about the science, knowledge, issues and management regarding feral horses within the Equine Management Zones in the Eastern Slopes.

The recommendations of the Committee will be based on the best available science and knowledge and work will be based on the previously agreed upon principle:

> "*The province needs to manage Alberta's feral horse population to an appropriate number, in a humane and effective manner, while having regard to the primary objective of ensuring their continued presence within the context of healthy rangelands supporting multiple uses on the landscape."*

Committee Goals and Objectives

Goal of the Committee:

1) Provide advice and recommend initiatives and approaches to implement the Feral Horse Management Framework.
2) To share information about the science, knowledge, issues and management regarding feral horses within the Equine Management Zones in the eastern slopes.

Objectives:

- Provide the Government of Alberta advice in regards to the implementation of the Feral Horse Management Framework.

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- Maintain a presence of feral horses on the landscape in the horse capture area while recognizing the need to steward the landscape in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- Mitigate risk to public safety or private property.
- Continue supporting feral horse research and monitoring as essential components of active management of feral horses.
- Consider social, economic and environmental influences in implementing the feral horse management framework that will be sustainable over the long term.
- Use the most recent feral horse research and scientific knowledge to guide the Committee's recommendations.
- Use the knowledge, experience and values of stakeholders to gather important information for the implementation of the feral horse management framework.
- Support government in the validation and communication of the feral horse management framework with Albertans.

Deliverables:

1. Shared understanding of science, research, horse population levels, management options and other relevant information for feral horse management.
2. An ongoing strategy that supports the implementation of the feral horse management framework including an ongoing Committee role to support framework updates if and when required.

Communications

Meetings will be chaired by the Executive Director of Lands Delivery and Coordination South. Meeting minutes will be circulated to Committee members following each meeting. Meeting minutes will be circulated as draft for members to clarify the minutes and will be finalized at the next meeting. Meetings will not be digitally recorded by the Government of Alberta or committee members.

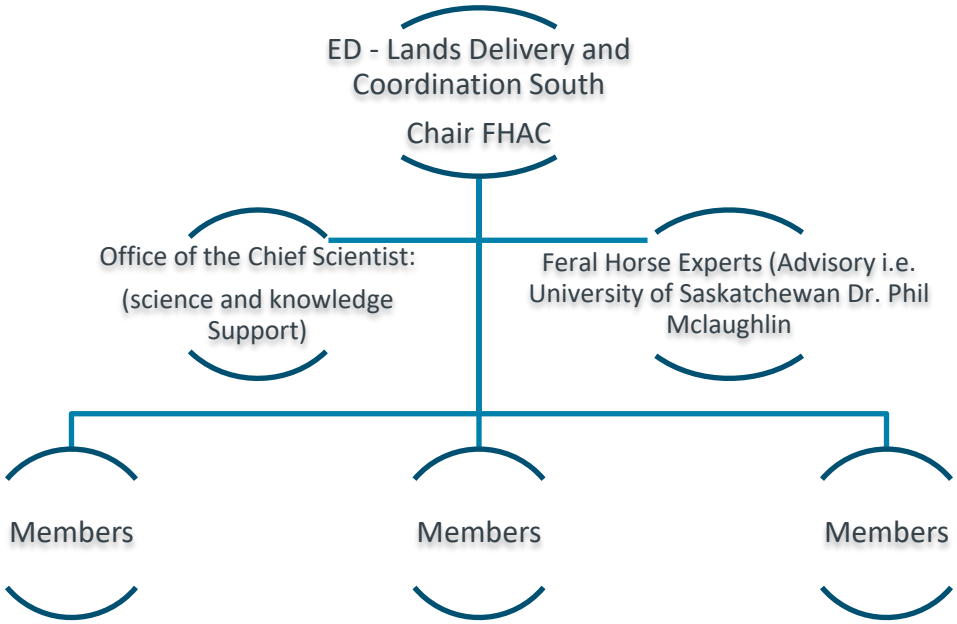
Meeting agendas will be developed by the Chair in consultation with members of the Committee and circulated via email prior to the meeting.

Conduct/Confidentiality

A degree of confidentiality in discussions is expected. Members should feel free to speak on issues without concern that information and the content of Committee discussions will be shared with the general public and/or directly attributed to individual members of the Committee. The Committee will ensure confidentiality on agenda items until members agree to make information publicly available. Decisions around dissemination of information will be made at the end of each meeting about what information can be shared with Committee members' respective organizations and recorded in the meeting minutes. Non-compliance with Conduct/Confidentiality expectations could result in removal from the committee.

Membership

Feral Horse Advisory Committee Structure:



ROLE	INDIVIDUAL/ORGANIZATION	RESPONSIBILITIES
CHAIR	Alexandra Miller-Tait, Executive Director, Lands Delivery & Coordination South, Lands Operations Division	• Provide leadership and direction • Ensure meetings are called and held in accordance with the organizations' mandate • Chair meetings • Relay pertinent information to minister •
Co-CHAIR	• Mike Alexander, Director Rangeland Stewardship and Land Use Policy	• Provide Subject Matter Expertise and operational perspectives
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTASTAFF	• Darrell Smith, Rangeland Programs and Stewardship Manager	• Provide program-area information
SECRETARY	• GoA staff	• Responsible for the documentation and communication of the activities of the Committee
MEMBERSHIP	• Alberta Wildlife Federation o Conrad Fennema • Alberta Professional Outfitters Association o Terrance Boss • Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada o Bill desBarres • Livestock Identification Services o Shawn Mclean • Rocky Mountain Forest Range Association o Buster Andrews	• Provide constructive feedback from their organizations' perspectives • Provide pertinent information for the purpose of a beneficial exchange of information and perspectives on Alberta's Feral Horses • Bring forth concerns and issues

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	• Stoney Nakoda – Nation o Barry Wesley • RCMP o Neal Reynolds • West Fraser o Matt Denney • Wild Horses of Alberta Society o Jack Nichol	
SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS	• Academic Experts • GOA staff • Representatives from other organizations	• Subject matter experts that have been identified as being supportive of a specific topic discussion will be utilized as required. • Subject matter experts will be invited to attend and contribute to meetings by the chair.

In order to ensure consistency in participation and size of the Committee, membership will be limited to a primary member and a designated alternate. During meetings, both the primary and alternate are permitted to attend and listen to the discussion; however, only the primary will be permitted to speak on behalf of the organization.

Schedule

As projected when the Committee was re-engaged, post-framework meetings have been reduced to Semi-annual frequency. Dialogue is encouraged in between meetings.

Governance

The Chair will be tasked with providing leadership and direction on the purpose of the Committee, the roles and responsibilities of Committee members, and ensuring that meetings are called and held in accordance with the Committee's mandate. Committee members are encouraged to voice any concerns or issues, and the Chair will be responsible for initiating any review of Committee structure or intent.

The Chair and program area staff will relay feedback and input to department executive and the minister.

Members of the Committee will be expected to be productive and contributing members. Members will:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all other persons;
- Behave with appropriate decorum;
- Be fair, equitable, considerate and honest in all dealings with others;
- Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature;
- Ensure that all members are given sufficient opportunity to express opinions, and that all opinions are given due consideration and weight;
- Listen to what others have to say and keep an open mind; and
- Contribute positively to the discussions.

The Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring the Committee members conduct themselves within the guidelines of the Terms of Reference. Failure to abide by the Committee Terms of Reference will be addressed by the committee Chair who may formally remove members or member organizations from the Committee.

Members will have a primary representative. If the primary representative is unable to attend, they will notify the chair that the alternate will attend in their place.

Recommendation and Advice

The goal is for recommendations made by the Committee to be documented using a Level of Support Model. The model uses six levels to facilitate defining key issues underlying non-support and aids in focusing the discussion and in finding solutions. This information will be recorded along with the recommendation.

Level of Support Model:

Options	***Level of Support***
1. Full support	Support
2. Acceptable	
3. Support with reservations	
4. I am not thrilled but can live with it	
5. Need more information or more discussion	Non-Support
6. Cannot support it and cannot accept it	

Scope

The intent of the Committee is to provide advice in a forum of open dialogue on feral horses and their management within the Equine Management Zones in the Eastern Slopes of Alberta.

Review of Mandate

The Committee will review its purpose, scope and achievements each year to ensure it is meeting the needs of the various members.

If the purpose, scope and achievements are not meeting the needs of the members, the Committee can re-examine the terms of reference.

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