

Meeting Minutes

Title:	Feral Horse Advisory Committee Meeting
Date / Time:	August 13, 2025 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Location:	Forestry and Parks, Bow-Crow Office, 8660 Bearspaw Dam Road NW, Calgary, AB
Chair:	Alexandra Miller-Tait, Executive Director Lands Delivery and Coordination South
Co-Chair:	Mike Alexander, Director Rangeland Stewardship and Land Use Policy
Participants:	Debbie McGauran, Help Alberta Wildies Society Darrell Glover, Help Alberta Wildies Society Shawn McLean, Livestock Identification Services Ltd. Bill Des Barres, Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada Mikki Shatosky, Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada (transitioning to Replace Bill on Committee) Curtis Reed, Alberta Wildlife Federation Terance Boss, Alberta Professional Outfitter Society Jack Nichol, Wild Horses of Alberta Society Buster Andrews, Rocky Mountain Forest Range Association Alex Miller-Tait, Government of Alberta Mike Alexander, Government of Alberta Darrell Smith, Government of Alberta Kelsey Cartwright, Government of Alberta Crystal Damer, Facilitator
Background Documents	Draft Terms of Reference Draft June 2024 Meeting Minutes

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Welcome & Introductions | 1:00 – 1:20 |
| 2. Approval of Agenda & June 2024 Meeting Minutes | 1:20 – 1:25 |
| 3. Approval of 2025 Terms of Reference of the Committee | 1:25 – 1:45 |
| 4. 2 Minute Updates by Committee Members | 1:45 – 2:15 |
| 5. Break | 2:15 – 2:30 |
| 6. Overview of current management activities | 2:30 – 2:45 |
| 7. Current Horse Count Results | 2:45 – 3:15 |
| 8. Discussion: Implementation of the Feral Horse Management Framework | 3:15 – 4:15 |
| 9. Wrap Up and Next Steps | 4:15 – 4:30 |

Items

1. Introductions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks were provided by the Chair. The role of a meeting facilitator and expectations for meeting conduct by attendees was reviewed. A round of introductions was completed.

2. Approval of Agenda & June 2024 Meeting Minutes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of the August 13 agenda was provided and the agenda was approved as written with one change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to concerns raised by a committee member during the introductions, the Terms of Reference Agenda Item (Agenda Item 3) was moved forward by Chair to be addressed prior to approval of June 2024 Minutes.

3. Approval of 2025 Terms of Reference of the Committee	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government of Alberta (GoA) provided an overview of the proposed updates to the Terms of Reference (ToR), which were provided to committee members with the agenda on June 30, 2025. Updates include changes to committee representation and shifting the focus of the committee to implementation of the Feral Horse Management Framework. The previous ToR was focused on Framework development. It was confirmed that meeting minutes would be publicly available. It was also confirmed that all participating members would need to sign the ToR before proceeding with the rest of the meeting agenda. HAWS representative did not agree to the draft ToR as written with particular reference to the code of conduct and confidentiality. Other representatives were supportive of the section. As HAWS was not willing to sign the ToR, they left the meeting around 1:40pm. The ToR was approved by remaining members and signed by Committee members in attendance.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoA staff will contact Committee members not able to attend the meeting to confirm their support for the ToR as drafted and willingness to continue to participate on the Committee by approving and signing the ToR.

2a. Approval of June 2024 Meeting Minutes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of the June 4, 2024 meeting minutes were circulated prior the August 13, 2025 meeting for review. No objections or additions were identified. Bill Des Barres moved to adopt the June 4, 2024 meeting minutes.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved Minutes will be posted to GoA website.

4. 2 Minute Updates by Committee Members

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each organization provided updates on their organization activities related to feral horses. Discussions focused on education and awareness efforts, communication with stakeholders about horses. WHOAS provided updates on their work with distressed and nuisance animals both inside and outside the equine management zones. They discussed their success but also challenges related to adoption. There has been good uptake on their education and awareness efforts that includes tours. WHOAS also updated the committee on the MOU with the department. LIS identified the issue with a lack of current market for horses in western Canada. Wild Horse Alliance of Canada representative proposed that it may be valuable for the committee or members of the committee to make statements of support for the framework and the role of the advisory committee in Framework implementation. This recommendation was supported by the committee.
----------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

5. Overview of current management activities

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoA provided updates on research initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Saskatchewan: aerial multi-species surveys University of Alberta: habitat use patterns and forage production GoA highlighted the current distressed and nuisance horse capture licenses issued in 2025 (Help Alberta Wildies Society (HAWS) and Wild Horses of Alberta Society (WHOAS)). GoA spoke to the WHOAS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) GoA highlighted the year in review of implementing the Feral Horse Management Framework.
----------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

6. Current Horse Count Results

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoA provided an overview of 2025 count results, methodologies and flight patterns. The GoA spoke to the previous concerns regarding flight patterns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 GoA Sundre Minimum Count flight track included historic elk habitats north of the Ya Ha Tinda. Overlaying the observation waypoints over the elk habitat flight track shows that no horses were added to the count from these areas. HAWS 2025 Survey results were also discussed. Committee discussions focused on local observations and areas of particular concern.
----------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discussion: Implementation of the Feral Horse Management Framework

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoA reviewed key points of the Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed with input from all Committee members Sustainable feral horse population on the landscape Management options are adoption, contraception and removal
----------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yellow zone allows for proactive management versus reactive when populations are in the red zone ○ Thresholds and population numbers were a balance between science and social considerations. • Committee discussions focused on count methodology (distance sampling versus minimum count) and results. • Committee discussion included the use of capture licenses to be issued to other organizations or public interested in adopting feral horses. • Committee members agreed that safety and fitness for adoption are key considerations when potentially rehoming horses. • Committee members agreed that the feral horse population management be directed by the framework with consideration on focusing capture in areas of high concentrations where impacts are the most significant – consider localized management on priority areas where there are issues with safety, nuisance and extremely high grazing pressure.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoA will provide Committee members a copy of 2018-2025 minimum count results.

8. Wrap Up and Next Steps

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoA will provide a briefing to the Minister utilizing Committee's feedback. • GoA may reach out to Advisory Committee for further information and feedback. • Committee Members agreed that open communications between Advisory Committee and GoA is essential. • Meeting adjourned at 4:14pm.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Minutes to be circulated to Committee members.