

An appeal for a: Wetland Mitigation Policy in BC

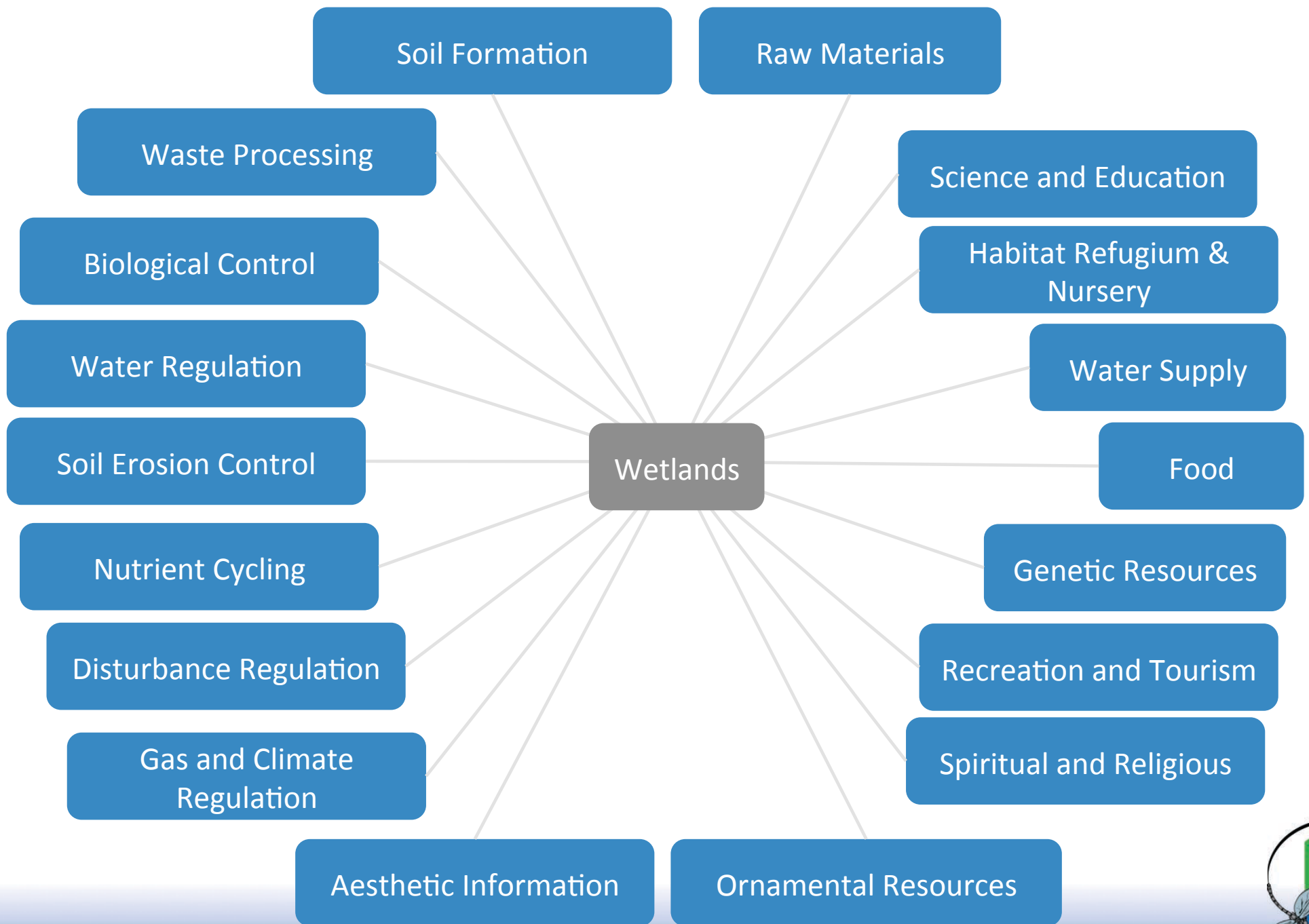
Neil Fletcher

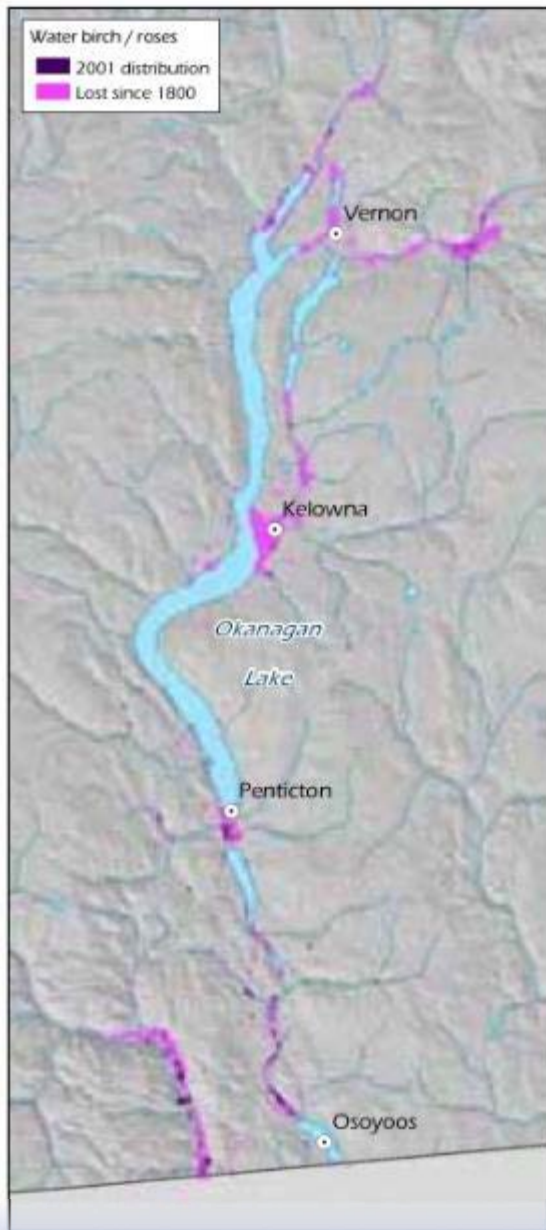
Manager, Wetlands Education Program, BC Wildlife Federation

Chair, Wetland Stewardship Partnership of BC









Loss of water birch /roses riparian shrub wetland in the Okanagan Valley since 1800.

Loss of Wetlands in Canada

70-80% loss in developed areas.
(Rubec, 1990)



Region	% Loss
Atlantic tidal and salt marshes	65
Lower Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River	71
Prairie potholes and sloughs	71
Pacific coastal estuarine wetlands	80

From National Wetlands Working Group (1988)











Can government bear all responsibility?





Wetland Stewardship Partnership



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada



BRITISH
COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BC hydro



NATURE
CONSERVANCY
CANADA

CONSERVATION
DE LA NATURE
CANADA

The Nature Trust
of British Columbia

Ducks Unlimited Canada
Canards Illimités Canada



BCWF
B.C. Wildlife Federation

BCnature
FEDERATION OF BC NATURALISTS



Grasslands Conservation Council
of British Columbia

ROYAL ROADS
UNIVERSITY



Wetland Action Plan of BC



The Wetland Stewardship Partnership (WSP) is a multi-agency group dedicated to the conservation of wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems. WSP partners include:

- Environment Canada
- BC Ministry of Environment
- BC Ministry of Forests and Range
- BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
- BC Hydro
- The Union of BC Municipalities
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- The Nature Conservancy of Canada
- BC Wildlife Federation
- BC Nature (The Federation of BC Naturalists)
- The Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- The Nature Trust of British Columbia
- The Pacific Salmon Foundation
- Royal Roads University

This partner list is current to March 1, 2010. The WSP makes decisions based on consensus, and has a provision in the partnership agreement that allows for the addition of new partners. Any questions regarding partners should be directed to info@bcwetlands.ca.



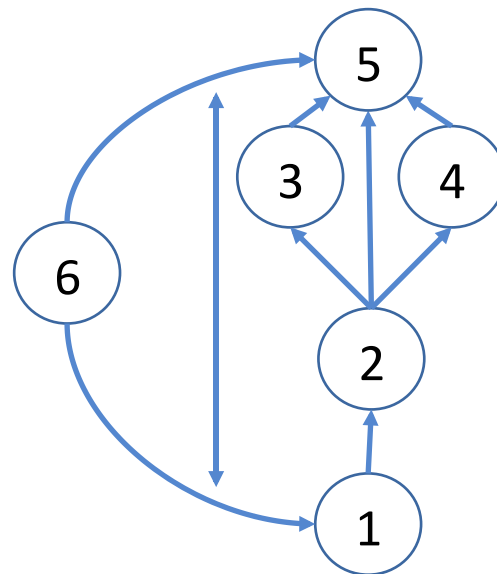
A Wetland Action Plan for British Columbia

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A Framework to Build Upon Wetland Conservation Goals (#1-6)

Coordination
& Capacity



Land Securement and
Restoration

Enabling Legislation (3) &
Supportive Frameworks (4)

Awareness

Information





Priorities:

1. Advance a Wetland Policy
2. Improve Inventory in BC
3. Encourage Education and Awareness

Water Sustainability Act, Section 11

- Approvals and Notifications for “Changes In and About a Stream”
 - “Changes In and About a Stream” means
 - any modification to the nature of the stream including the land, vegetation, natural environment or flow of water within the stream, or
 - any activity or construction within the stream channel that has or may have an impact on a stream



Definition of Stream in WSA

stream" means

(a) a natural watercourse, including a natural glacier course, or a natural body of water, whether or not the stream channel of the stream has been modified, or

(b) a natural source of water supply,

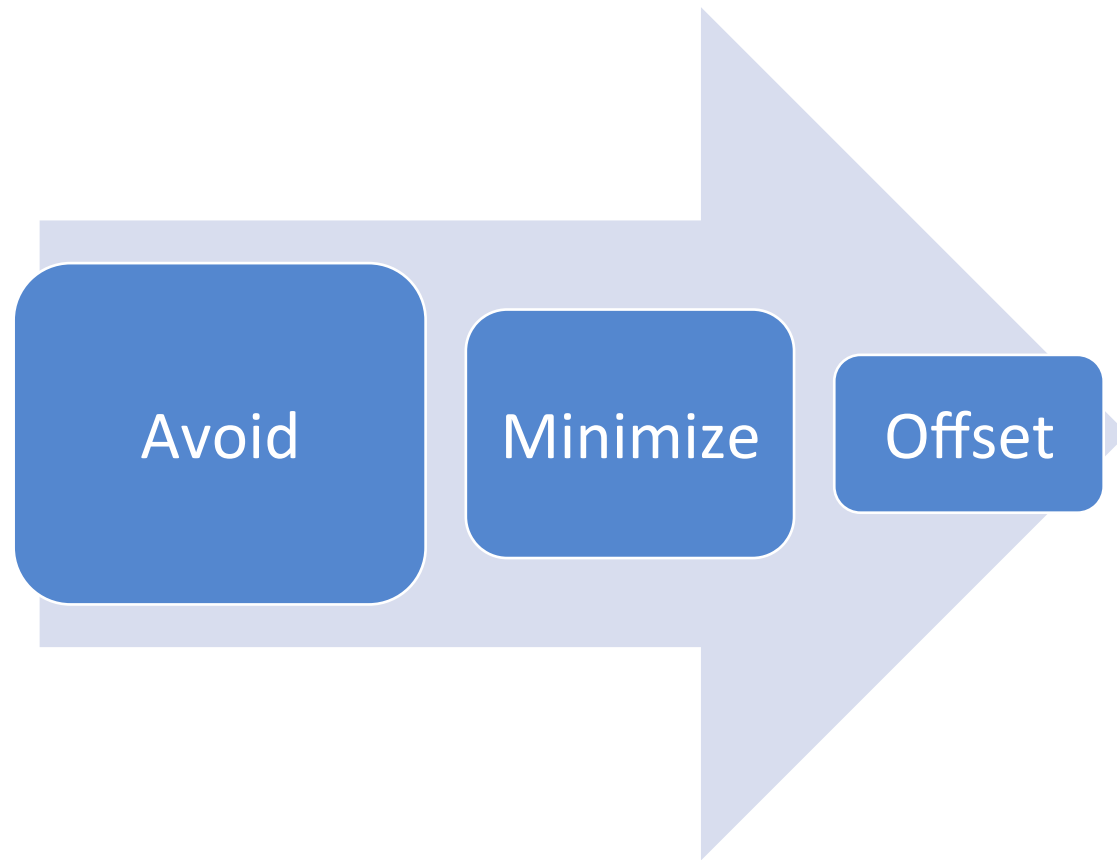
including, without limitation, a lake, **pond**, river, creek, spring, ravine, gulch, **wetland** or glacier, **whether or not usually containing water**, including ice, but does not include an aquifer;

wetland" means a swamp, marsh, fen or prescribed feature;

Wetland Mitigation Policy



Mitigation Framework



But... no Standards for Wetlands



Challenges with Restoration

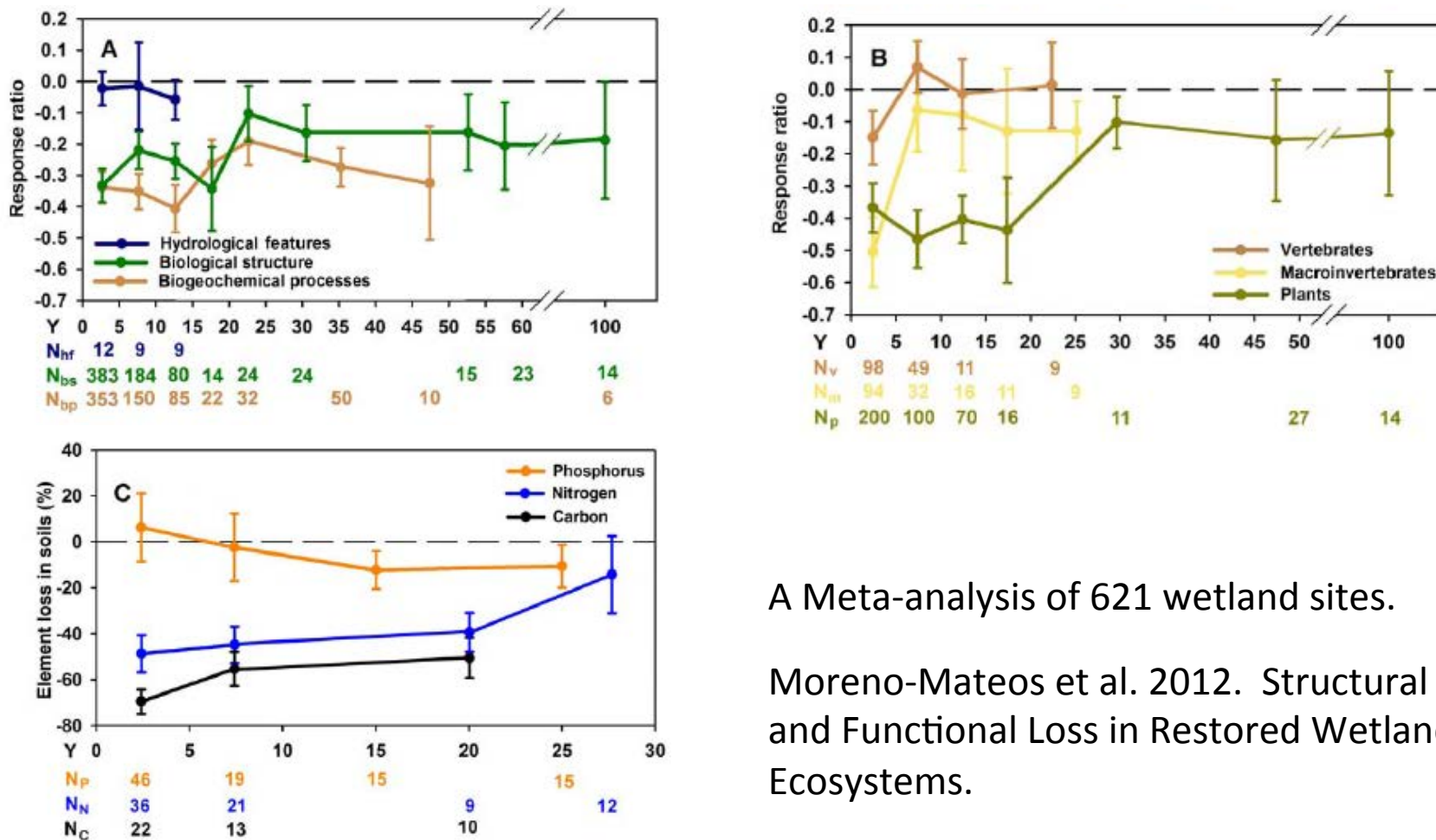


Figure 1. Recovery trajectories of created and restored wetlands. Chronosequences of the means (\pm standard error [SE]) of

A Meta-analysis of 621 wetland sites.

Moreno-Mateos et al. 2012. Structural and Functional Loss in Restored Wetland Ecosystems.

Restoration that hasn't worked

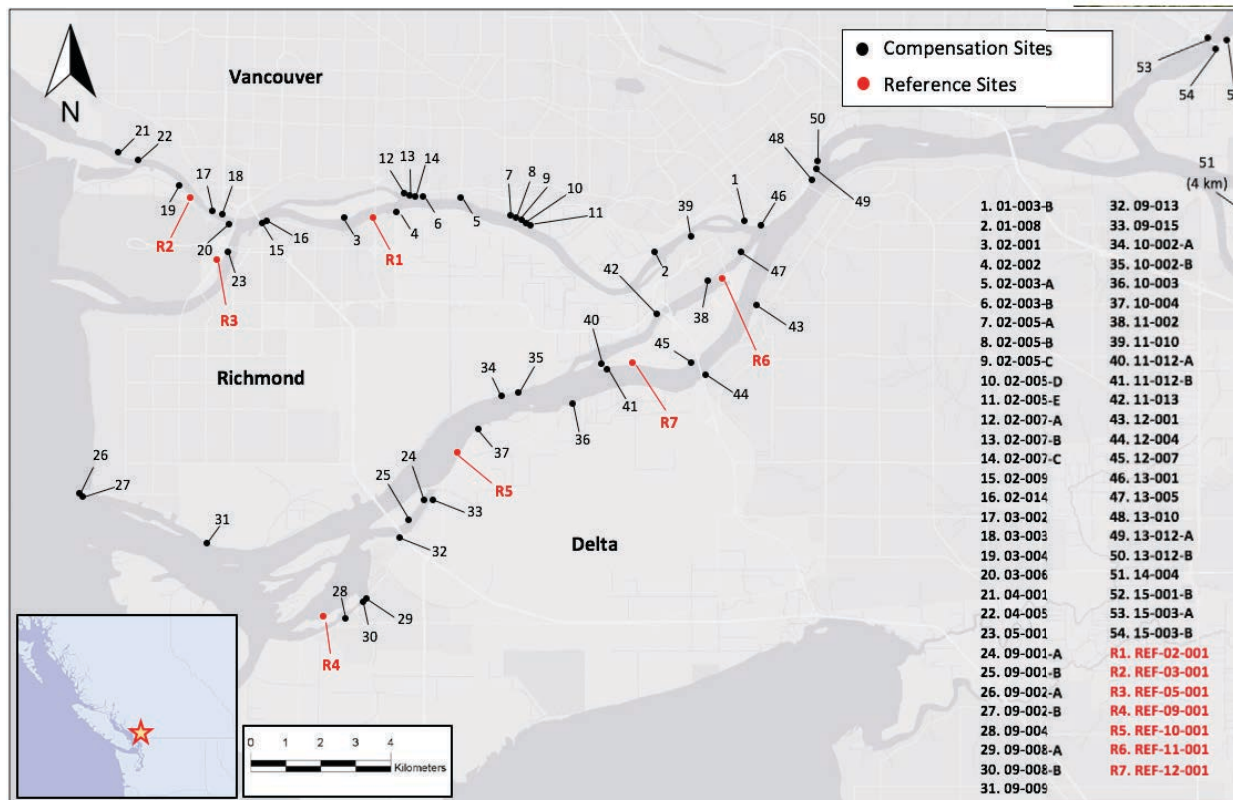
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Fraser River estuary being maintained to benefit people, not wildlife: study

MARK HUME

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Dec. 18, 2016 7:54PM EST

Last updated Monday, Jan. 02, 2017 8:20PM EST

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Few cities in the world can claim the kind of wild backdrop that Metro Vancouver has.

The Fraser River estuary is a globally important zone of biodiversity with 17,000 hectares of rich wetlands used annually by 1.4 million migratory birds and 2 billion juvenile salmon. The area's importance was recognized in 2012 under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

The estuary, which spreads along the shorelines of Delta, Richmond and Vancouver, is a remarkable natural treasure that deserves the highest level of protection a government can provide. Unfortunately, a new study shows that the Fraser estuary is slowly being eroded by development despite a 30-year-old federal policy that has sought to protect the area from any net loss of habitat by requiring developers to replace any that are destroyed.

A paper recently published by the Community Mapping Network (CMN) looked at a large sample of the 151 habitat-compensation projects completed over nearly three decades. It found that most of the projects had failed to achieve the goals set by government.

Lievesley and Stewart (2016), *Assessing Habitat Compensation and Examining Limitation to Native Plant Establishment in the Lower Fraser River Estuary*.





Lower Mainland



Metro Vancouver



Mid-Island Vancouver Island



Valley



West Kootenay



North-Central Okanagan



Kootenay Boundary

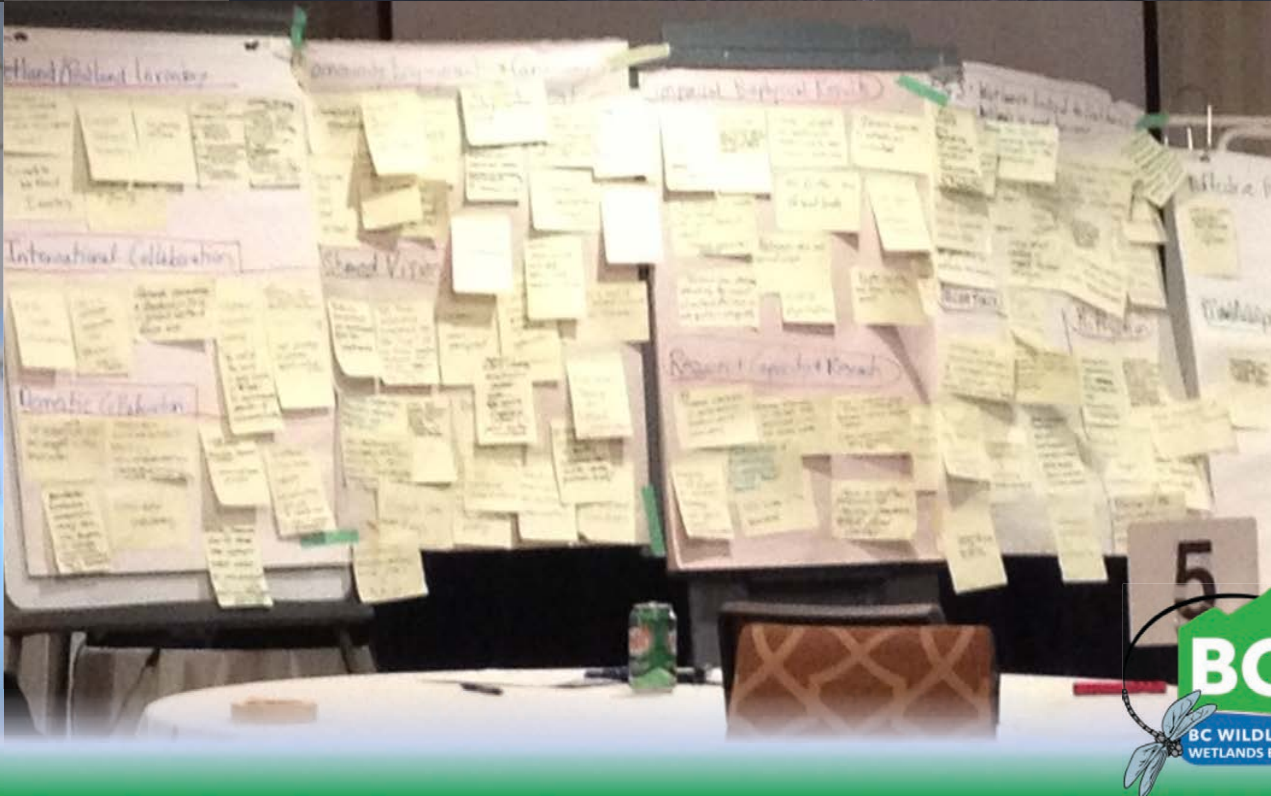
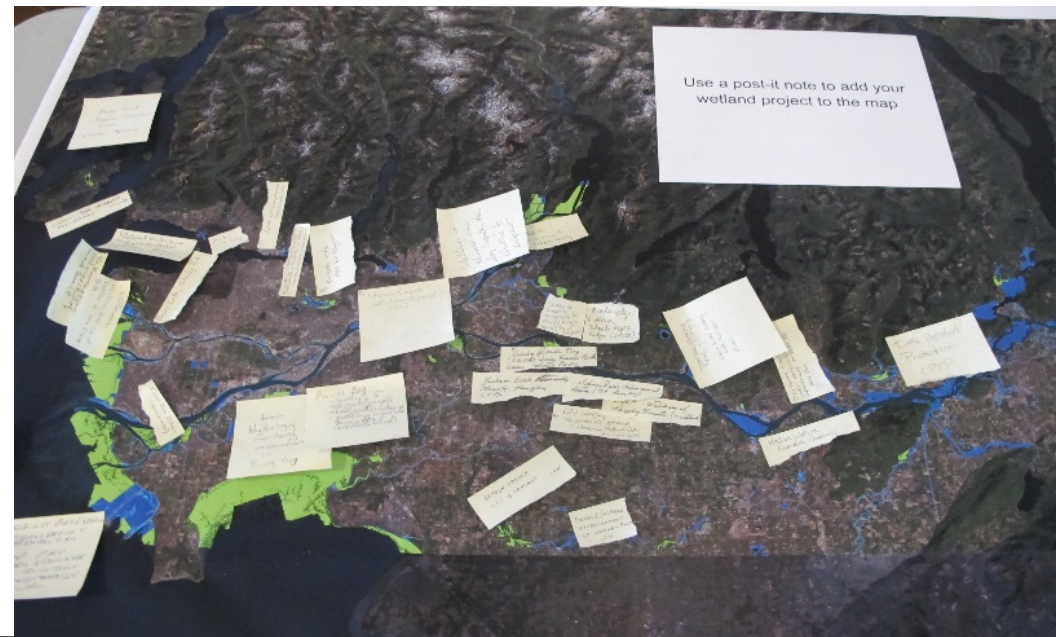
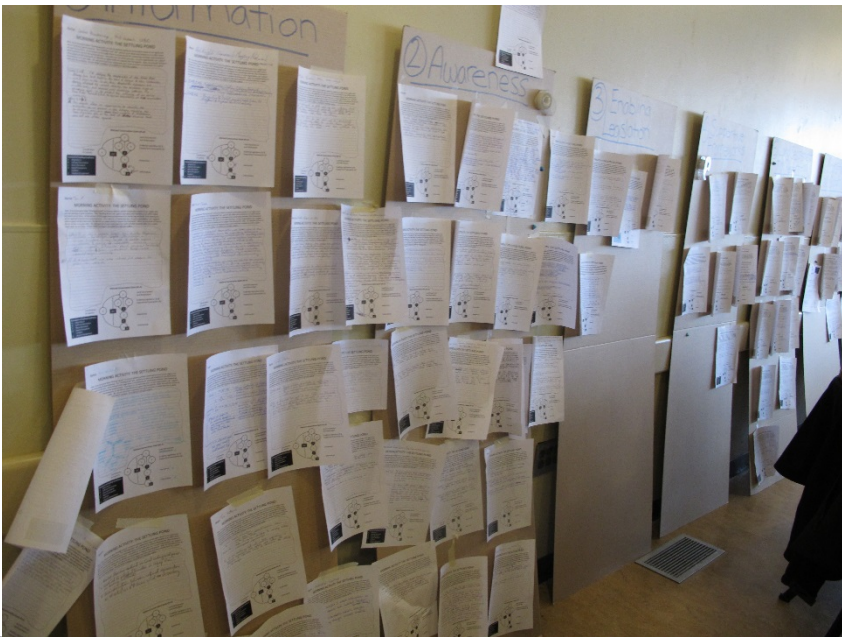


SEAR Workshop



Ottawa – National Wetland Roundtable



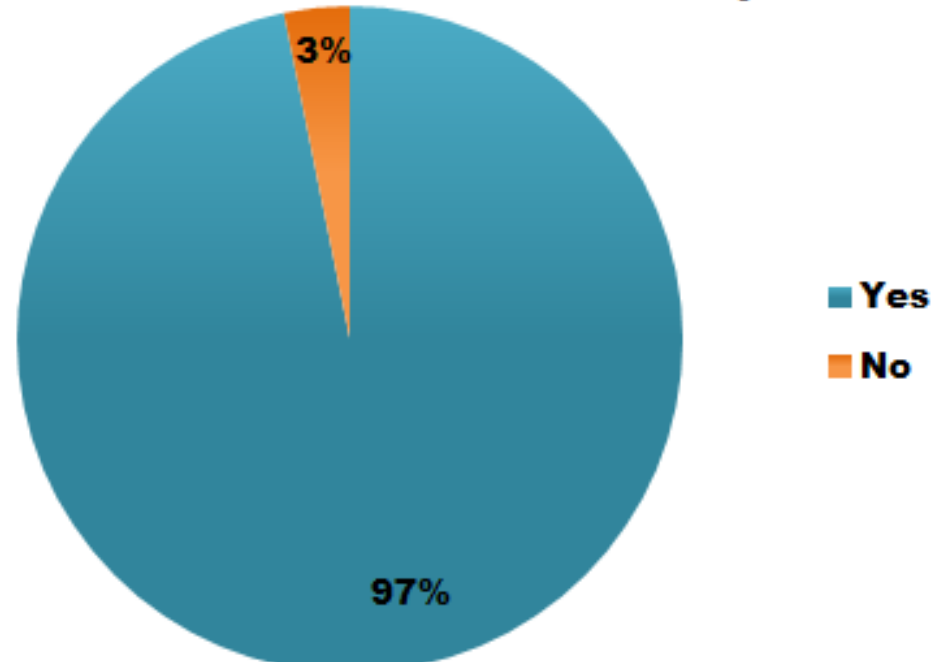


Recurring themes:

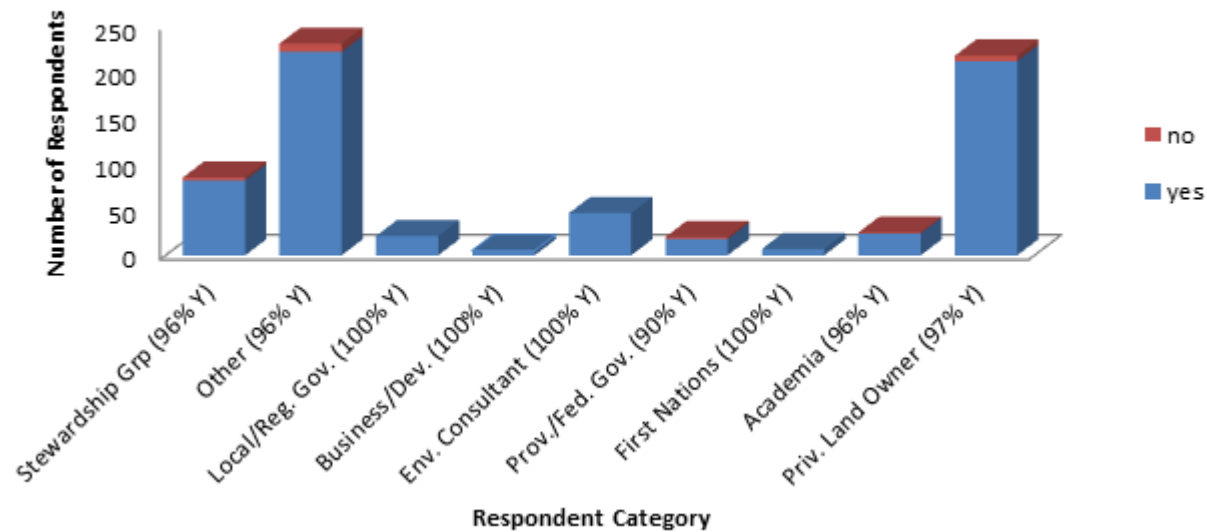
- Local Government has all legal tools required to protect wetlands now. Political will is a barrier.
- Challenges with Professional Reliance Model
- Enforcement
- More legislation required
- Consistency across & within jurisdictions



Does BC need a Wetland Policy?



Does BC need a Wetland Policy?



elements of an effective policy:

- what constitutes avoidance
- minimize ecological harms
- where compensation should occur
- what acceptable forms of compensations are
- how the overall mitigation system works, including funding (e.g., accounting, mitigation banks, evaluation)
- regional and wetland type specifics for mitigation; and
- provide guaranteed ecological outcomes

Implementation is supported by:

- Regulations
- Inventory data
- Incentives
- Education (e.g., proponents, administrators)
- Resources (e.g., funding for enforcement)



Thank you

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