

The Oiled Wildlife Trust: Collaborative Partnerships in Professional Oiled Wildlife Response

Focus Wildlife Canada
1778 127A Street, Surrey, BC V4A3S4



Principle Author:
Coleen Doucette,
Operations Manager



Co-Author:
Jenny Schlieps,
Programs Manager

Introduction

Between 1998 and 2000 British Columbia, Canada experienced a series of oil spills in which attempts were made by government agencies and non-profit wildlife organizations to rescue and rehabilitate impacted wildlife. The response efforts were largely unsuccessful; they were overwhelming for response staff and resulted in few animals being successfully released. Based on this experience, it became clear to the leading animal rehabilitation organizations in British Columbia that skilled personnel, proper training, supplies and equipment was required in order for oiled wildlife response to be humane and successful.

In 2008, six organizations (non-profits, NGOs and for-profit organizations) came together to develop the Oiled Wildlife Trust in British Columbia, Canada. The Trust was founded as an organized collaborative structure with the goals of increasing region-specific capacity and capability for personnel, facilities and equipment resources, establishing mutual goals and identifying productive paths forward in a joint effort with government regulatory agencies. Today, the Oiled Wildlife Trust works side by side with government to develop and define responsible wildlife preparedness and emergency response roles for industry.

The British Columbia Oiled Wildlife Trust (BC OWT)

Mission: To establish uniform, professional response to oiled wildlife incidents
Vision: To engage all stakeholders in actively supporting best achievable practices for all oiled wildlife

- Values**
- Inherent/intrinsic worth of all wildlife (individual or otherwise)
 - Humane treatment of wildlife
 - Professional standards of operation in oiled wildlife response
 - Strength of cooperation and respect of expertise (strength in diversity)

- Objectives**
- Support professional response and "polluter pay" principle
 - Participate in government decision-making process
 - Endorse best achievable care standards
 - Ensure humane treatment for all species and individuals
 - Assist in resource development
 - Facilitate education and outreach

- Means of Action**
- Human Resources
 - Response management structure and professional staff
 - Workforce personnel, database and training program
 - Physical Resources
 - Facilities, equipment, supplies and identified local resources
 - Education Resources
 - Media management and public outreach
 - Meetings and workshops for government, wildlife organizations and industry representatives
 - Best Achievable Response Standards
 - Response workshops: Standards and practices
 - Planning: Response management, use of Incident Command System model

BC OWT Partners



Wildlife Rescue Association of BC (WRA)

Mission: WRA provides leadership in the care and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned and pollution-damaged wildlife in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Canada. WRA is also committed to raising public awareness of and respect for wildlife and the issues affecting them in the urban environment.

- Resources for Wildlife Response**
- Trained oiled wildlife rehabilitation staff
 - Experienced animal care volunteer corps
 - Very limited on-site capacity for oiled wildlife rehabilitation

- Roles and Responsibilities During a Response**
- To support the wildlife response structure by provision of trained staff and experienced volunteer corps



Wildlife Rehabilitators Network of BC (WRNBC)

Mission: To advocate for wildlife through appropriate action, legislation, and education

- Resources for Wildlife Response**
- Database of British Columbia wildlife rehabilitators
 - Quarterly newsletter for members throughout BC
 - Training opportunities for members and wildlife stakeholders through the annual general meeting
 - Networking

- Roles and Responsibilities During Response**
- Support the ongoing development of professional oiled wildlife response
 - Information sharing (for and about member centres)
 - Oiled wildlife response training
 - Communication with members during spills
 - Animal welfare spokesperson



Vancouver Aquarium, Marine Mammal Rescue Program (MMRP)

Mission: The Vancouver Aquarium is a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, education, research, and direct action

- Resources for Wildlife Response**
- Marine mammal expertise
 - Trained and qualified staff
 - Marine mammal facilities
 - Active volunteer network

- Roles and Responsibilities During Response**
- Treatment and recovery of marine mammals
 - Medical diagnosis
 - Housing and husbandry
 - Strict quarantine procedures inspected by Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and Vancouver Aquarium Animal Care Committee
 - Work with others for oil spill contingency planning
 - Work closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for appropriate marine mammal stranding response



British Columbia Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BCSPCA)

Mission: The BCSPCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

- Resources for Wildlife Response**
- Provincial shelter staff and officers at regional locations throughout BC
 - Assistance with search and rescue and transport
 - Volunteer coordination of provincial network
 - Skilled rehabilitation staff for animal care

- Roles and Responsibilities During Response**
- To ensure the humane treatment of impacted wildlife
 - To assist professional wildlife responders
 - Media management and public outreach
 - Volunteer/workforce coordination and management



Oiled Wildlife Society of British Columbia (OWS)

Mission: To promote a high level of emergency preparedness and awareness of oiled wildlife response through equipment management and ongoing oil spill response training.

- Resources for Wildlife Response**
- 53 ft. trailer; equipment storage and washroom capacity
 - 16 ft. triage trailer; equipment storage
 - Stockpile of rehabilitation equipment, safety equipment, medical supplies, husbandry supplies, net bottom caging, cleaning equipment

- Roles and Responsibilities During Response**
- Equipment and supplies availability



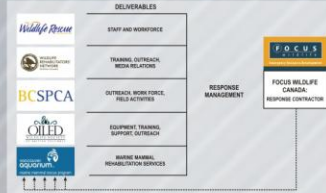
Focus Wildlife Canada (FWC)

Mission: To develop and offer resources to aid the plight of wildlife impacted by human activities through response, planning, training, research and education.

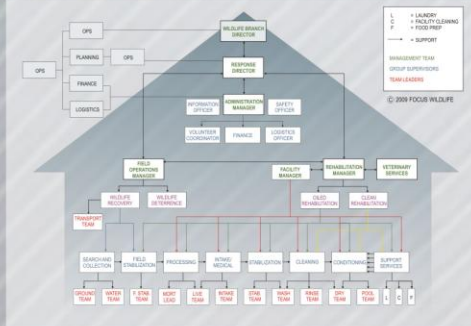
- Resources During Wildlife Response**
- Proactive, well developed relationships with industry, government agencies and wildlife non-governmental agencies
 - Skilled and qualified wildlife response team
 - Extensive Incident Command System training and experience
 - Federal and provincial wildlife capture and rehabilitation permits
 - Rehabilitation equipment to support 300 animal capacity
 - Identification of local services and suppliers
 - General liability insurance and workers compensation coverage

- Roles and Responsibilities for Wildlife Response**
- Wildlife response management structure
 - Incident Command System model
 - Wildlife Branch Director experience
 - Advisor to Incident Command Environmental Planning Unit
 - Interactive administrative program with Incident Command logistics and finance
 - Cooperative media and public relations program supporting client and joint information center
 - Standard operating procedures and trained management team
 - Wildlife assessment and deterrence program
 - Search and collection program
 - Animal medical and rehabilitation program

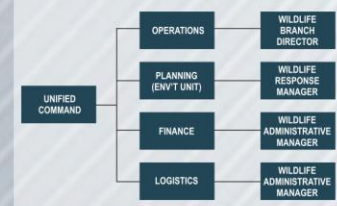
Collaborative Response Support Structure



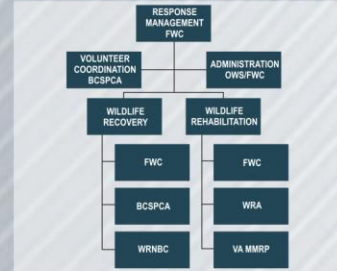
Wildlife Response Operations



Unified Command System; Wildlife Operations Implementation



OWT Response Structure



- Current Capacity**
- Incident Command System management personnel
 - Skilled and qualified wildlife assessment personnel
 - Skilled and qualified wildlife response personnel
 - Internationally accepted medical and animal care standards
 - Field stabilization unit
 - Rehabilitation equipment and supplies capacity for 300 animal response

- Resource Goals**
- Wildlife Resources Development
- Researching site locations for wildlife response staging underway
 - Continue acquisition of mobile facility structures
 - 50-bird capacity
 - 100-bird capacity
 - 500-bird capacity
 - Inclusion of a marine mammal response program within the Incident Command Structure

- Path Forward**
- Collaborate with regulatory agencies to identify an effective wildlife branch structure for western Canada
 - Determine triggers for notification and assessment of product release
 - Continue to build an understanding of qualified wildlife assessment process and personnel with government and industry
 - Determine triggers for an oiled wildlife response
 - Continue to build an understanding of qualified wildlife assessment process
 - Identify wildlife response variables
 - Determine reasonable costs

Conclusion

The collaborative efforts of the six organizations involved in the OWT have improved wildlife response capabilities in British Columbia. Communication between stakeholders, government and industry have resulted in increased capacity for response in BC, improved response methods, and open communication regarding response structure and wildlife legislation. These six organizations have achieved together what no single organization could accomplish alone. The OWT looks forward to a strong and united future ahead.

Acknowledgments

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