

# **Community Engagement to Develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action**

Lindsay Barnett

B.A., Dalhousie University, 2012

A project submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

in the School of Public Administration  
at the University of Victoria

© Lindsay Barnett, 2022

University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This project may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

### **Defense Committee**

**Supervisor:** Dr. Lynne Siemens  
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

**Second Reader:** Dr. Barton Cunningham  
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

**Chair:** Dr. Sarah Wiebe  
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

## Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge, first and foremost, Laurie McConnell and Chloe Hajjar of Pacific Wild for sharing with me their vision for the Save BC Wolves community and for trusting me to help develop the community through this project. Thank you for your time, energy, and support. Your creativity and passion reassure me of the strength and potential of the conservation movement and inspire me to continue in this work.

Thank you to the members of the Save BC Wolves community for sharing your perspectives with me through this project. I truly appreciate your participation in this project, as well as your involvement with Pacific Wild. You are part of an important community of changemakers advocating for critical ecosystem-based conservation solutions through your involvement in the Save BC Wolves initiative

To my supervisor, Dr. Lynne Siemens, I am sincerely grateful for your guidance and patience throughout this process. You have been instrumental in translating the initial concept to an actionable and attainable master's project. Your expertise has enriched my experience in the MACD program and furthered my ability to apply the concepts I've learned. Thank you!

Special thanks to all my loved ones who have walked beside me on this journey. To my grandparents, thank you so much for making this possible, to my family, thank you for your support, and to my friends, thank you for checking in on me, empathizing, and offering words of encouragement. Extra special thanks to Jane and Ali; thank you for believing in me when I didn't believe in myself and for talking through solutions to every roadblock I came up against.

I am honoured to have been a part of the 2019 *clever cohort* alongside such brilliant, compassionate visionaries. Your dedication to the communities you are part of, including this one, has been edifying and inspiring. Thank you for sharing your creative energy, expertise, and encouragement; this transformative experience would not have been the same without you. You are my lifelong friends and colleagues, and I look forward to learning from you and laughing with you for years to come.

Finally, I want to thank my wonderful partner Anthony, who I think learned almost as much about community development and volunteerism as I have over the past three years. Your contributions to my experience in this program cannot be understated; your support, reassurance, and insights have been incredibly meaningful. I am grateful to have a partner who has so generously shared their time as a sounding board, editor, cheerleader, and in a million other ways throughout this journey.

## **Subjectivity Statement**

My name is Lindsay Barnett. I am a white, cis-gender, heterosexual woman who uses the pronouns she/her. I was born in 1990 in Kamloops, BC, on the unceded traditional territories of the Secwépemc (Shuswap) peoples. I live a nomadic lifestyle and am honoured to have been a guest in many places across what is now known as Canada. I am a native English speaker and have benefitted from the privilege of a post secondary education and stable employment in the non-profit sector for nearly ten years. I currently work for an environmental conservation organization. I was raised in a middle-class household with two working parents, both of whom attended university, as did their parents. I have a bachelor's degree in history and international development from Dalhousie University and a graduate certificate in evaluation from the University of Victoria (UVIC); this report is submitted as a requirement for earning a master's degree in community development at UVIC. My perceptions, values, beliefs, and behaviours have all been influenced by the privileges afforded to me through my identity, as well as scientific rationality, modernism, environmentalism, and decolonial values characteristic of my upbringing and education. However, I acknowledge and appreciate diverse forms of knowing and being and recognize that cultural paradigms have evolved throughout history. My lived experience continuously affects my worldview and how I navigate my place in the world, including in the report that follows.

## **Executive Summary**

The Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves program consists of an online community with over 3,000 members interested in taking action to end the aerial wolf cull policy of the Province of British Columbia. This policy, enacted as a measure of protection for endangered caribou herds, is a costly use of public funds with mounting evidence of its ineffectiveness and inefficiency in protecting caribou, particularly in the context of ongoing habitat loss due to uncurbed resource extraction activities. Wolves are ecosystem engineers and are a critical component of ecological resilience in British Columbia.

Pacific Wild is a small non-profit organization based in British Columbia, Canada. This report outlines a project designed to facilitate engagement and input from community members about how they envision their involvement in the Save BC Wolves community, and what supports Pacific Wild can offer, within current staffing and financial models, to leverage community energy and expertise to end the wolf cull. Key themes of volunteer management are explored through this project, including role development and recruitment; communications; engagement, retention, and recognition; and social connections. Learnings inform recommendations for Pacific Wild to further develop a framework to facilitate independent volunteer action from within the Save BC Wolves community.

## **Methodology and Methods**

This project involved two research phases. A literature review was initially conducted to develop an in-depth understanding of the relevant research; inform the development of project research instruments; and to better understand contextual factors associated with volunteerism to ground and interpret project findings. The literature review was followed by a primary research phase where Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves community members were engaged through a survey and focus group.

As the purpose of this research is to inform the development of a volunteer engagement framework for Pacific Wild, a case study design was selected. A mixed methods approach offered an efficient means of collecting data from a large group of people with significant geographical distribution while still collecting qualitative data and incorporating participatory elements.

A survey comprised of 46 questions taking approximately 30 minutes to complete was distributed to Save BC Wolves community members through the Save BC Wolves online community platform hosted by Pacific Wild. One-hundred-seventeen responses were collected over the course of nearly three weeks. The opportunity to enter a draw for a \$150CAD gift card was offered as an incentive for completion. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were asked if they were interested in participating in a focus group to further explore survey results. An hour-long focus group was conducted with a total of 6 participants.

Grounded theory, where a theory is constructed from data, was the guiding approach to analysis, as it allowed for results to be interpreted based on both the volunteer literature and the specific context of the Save BC Wolves community. Descriptive analysis was selected as the primary method of analysis. Due to the nature of the study, descriptive analysis offered straightforward yet meaningful insights into the most frequent selections made by survey respondents and sentiments expressed by focus group participants.

## **Key Findings**

Across both the survey and the focus group, the predominant finding was that Save BC Wolves members want to be more informed. This includes both a better understanding of the facts and data that support ending the cull and the arguments in favour of maintaining the cull, as well as how to

organize and take action to share Save BC Wolves messaging. Clarifying priorities and objectives, providing more training and resources - primarily virtual and self-directed - would be beneficial to member's capacity to be involved and self-organize. This includes training on how to use the Save BC Wolves online platform. Advocacy can be intimidating and discouraging, particularly when engaging with people who are not familiar with the issue or the vocal, confident supporters of the cull.

With respect to communications, regular updates with a weekly to monthly frequency are preferred. Community connections were expressed as important in some regards, though not in others. There was some interest in collaborating with other members, but in general, comfort with respect to leadership from within the group and self-organizing was low. Instead, members prefer to choose a way to contribute from a list of opportunities, rather than developing and implementing a new initiative. Contributing to Save BC Wolves on a project basis, particularly where specific skills are needed or when the project is especially interesting to members, is the preferred mechanism of involvement. Educational learning opportunities were a popular form of recognition.

The majority of respondents are 65 years of age or older. Many are employed full time or are retired, and most live in Canada. Collectively, they possess a wide variety of skills, including 48 skills or knowledge areas indicated by participants. Members are primarily motivated by their concern about the wolf cull and their interest in supporting meaningful work, and many believe that changing people's perceptions of wolves is key to the success of the Save BC Wolves campaign.

## **Recommendations**

The following seven recommendations to inform the development of a self-organizing framework for the Save BC Wolves community emerged from this study:

- Recommendation #1 – Detail a vision for the Save BC Wolves community that can guide engagement and eventually, self-organizing.
- Recommendation #2 – Develop a learning and training program that facilitates knowledge building and fosters social connectedness to enable engagement and self-organizing.
- Recommendation #3 – Enhance the Save BC Wolves internal communications strategy by including additional content that enables action and builds community to increase engagement.
- Recommendation #4 – Cultivate a cohort of community leaders among Save BC Wolves members to engage highly committed members and strengthen the community.
- Recommendation #5 – Broaden the onboarding and orientation process to collect additional information about members and integrate a brief orientation to the community component.
- Recommendation #6 – Develop a framework for self-organizing to help community members develop their own means of contributing to the community.
- Recommendation #7 – Allocate one part-time staff member to lead the development of the program.

## Table of Contents

Defense Committee .....	3
Acknowledgements .....	4
Subjectivity Statement .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Methodology and Methods.....	6
Key Findings.....	6
Recommendations .....	7
Table of Contents .....	8
List of Figures.....	12
List of Tables .....	12
List of Appendices .....	13
Introduction .....	14
The Problem .....	14
Project Objective and Research Questions.....	14
Research Question .....	15
Sub Questions.....	15
Scope.....	15
Project Client.....	15
About Pacific Wild Save Bc Wolves Volunteers .....	15
Background and Context .....	16
Reading This Report .....	16
Literature Review.....	18
Landscape of the Volunteer Literature.....	18
Challenges of the Evolving Volunteer Sector.....	20
Episodic Volunteering.....	21
Integrating Functional and Interactional Volunteer Management.....	23
Interactional Management as a Natural Dimension of the Functional Paradigm.....	23
The Role of Culture in Integrated Volunteer Management.....	24
Mitigating and Managing Conflict in the Volunteer Context.....	25
Volunteer Management in Practice .....	26
Crafting the Volunteer Experience .....	26
Volunteer Retention as a Starting Point .....	26

Recruitment and Volunteer Roles .....	28
Developing Volunteer Competencies with Training .....	29
Autonomy Through Progressive Responsibilities .....	30
Volunteer Communication Strategies .....	31
The Role of Community .....	32
Benefits of Organizational Commitment .....	32
Conclusion .....	33
<b>Methodology and Methods .....</b>	<b>34</b>
Conceptual Framework .....	34
Methodology .....	34
Methods .....	35
The Survey .....	35
Focus Group .....	36
Data Collection and Analysis Tasks .....	36
Data Analysis .....	37
Limitations, Delimitations, Strengths .....	37
Limitations .....	37
Delimitations .....	38
Strengths .....	38
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Survey.....	39
Demographics .....	39
Communications .....	40
Community .....	41
Knowledge and Skill Sets .....	41
Taking Action .....	42
Leadership .....	43
Motivation .....	44
Recognition .....	45
Focus Group .....	45
Developing the Community Knowledge Base to Inspire Action .....	45
Self Organizing.....	46
Changing the Narrative.....	47

Summary of Research Findings .....	47
<b>Discussion and Analysis .....</b>	<b>49</b>
Research Question #1 .....	49
Information, Tools, and Training .....	49
Organizational Communication .....	51
Research Question #2 .....	52
The Save BC Wolves Community .....	52
Communications Among Save BC Wolves Members .....	53
Self-Organizing .....	53
Research Question #3 .....	54
Developing Community Priorities Relevant to Community Expertise .....	55
Role Alignment .....	55
Leveraging Community Member Expertise and Interests .....	56
Research Question #4 .....	57
Engagement Through Alignment with Volunteer Motives .....	57
Experience Translates to Retention .....	58
Recognition .....	58
Discussion and Analysis Final Thoughts .....	59
Program Staffing .....	59
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>61</b>
Recommendation #1 – Articulate a Vision For The Save Bc Wolves Community .....	61
Recommendation #2 – Develop a Learning and Training Program .....	62
Recommendation #3 – Enhance the Save BC Wolves Internal Communications Strategy .....	63
Recommendation #4 – Cultivate a Cohort of Community Leaders .....	63
Recommendation #5 – Broaden the Onboarding and Orientation Process .....	64
Recommendation #6 – Develop a Framework for Self-Organizing .....	64
Recommendation #7 – Allocate Part Time Role to Manage Program Development .....	64
Recommendation Implementation Strategy .....	65
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Appendix B .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Appendix C .....</b>	<b>91</b>

Appendix D.....	92
Appendix E .....	94
Appendix F .....	95
Appendix G .....	97

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b> The Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention Model. This model depicts evolving motives for volunteering and determinants of retention over the duration of their volunteer service (Hyde et al., 2016). .....	28
<b>Figure 2.</b> Age of Save BC Wolves community survey respondents. ....	39
<b>Figure 3.</b> Location of Canadian survey respondents. Larger text indicates higher concentrations of respondents. ....	40
<b>Figure 4.</b> Respondents indicate their connections within the Save BC Wolves community. ....	41
<b>Figure 5.</b> Areas of knowledge and skill sets within the Save BC Wolves community. Larger text indicates higher concentrations of respondents. ....	41
<b>Figure 6.</b> How frequently Save BC Wolves members want to participate in community activities. ....	43
<b>Figure 7.</b> Respondents indicate how they would like to contribute to Save BC Wolves activities. ....	43
<b>Figure 8.</b> Respondents indicate their top three reasons why participating in the Save BC Wolves community is important to them. ....	44

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b> .....	44
<i>Top reasons for becoming involved in non-profit or community initiatives.</i>	

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Survey, Including Letter of Implied Consent .....	71
Appendix B – Focus Group Consent Form .....	87
Appendix C – Focus Group Agenda.....	87
Appendix D – Focus Group Reference Guide.....	92
Appendix E – Focus Group Questions and Prompts .....	94
Appendix F – Focus Group Findings Presented to Participants for Review .....	95
Appendix G – Ethics Protocol Certificate of Approval.....	97

## **Introduction**

This project is designed to engage Pacific Wild volunteers in organization developmental research. Through this research, Save BC Wolves program volunteers will provide input to inform the development of a volunteer framework that will facilitate independent, ongoing volunteer engagement within the parameters of key guidelines articulated in the framework. Research will provide insight as to the capacity and interests of volunteers, as well as preferred communication mechanisms and tools Pacific Wild can offer to engage volunteers in independent efforts that contribute to the goals of the Save BC Wolves program.

### **The Problem**

The goal of the Save BC Wolves program is to “stop the wolf cull and to resist ongoing efforts to escalate the persecution of wolves across the province” of BC (Pacific Wild, n.d.-b). One of the primary strategic objectives Pacific Wild has identified to achieve this goal is to engage volunteers in self-guided action to inform provincial wolf cull policy.

A leading organization in conservation, Pacific Wild has engaged approximately 3,000 concerned individuals as advocates against the wolf cull through their Save BC Wolves program. As a grassroots non-profit organization, facilitating impactful volunteer engagement for a group of this magnitude presents a logistical challenge; this research project will contribute to efforts to address that challenge. Pacific Wild consists of a small team of 11 people. At this time, they do not have a dedicated volunteer coordinator, and have limited capacity to facilitate active engagement among those interested in volunteering as contributors to the Save BC Wolves campaign (Laurie McConnell, personal communication, April 13, 2021).

Individuals who have expressed their interest in engaging with the efforts of Save BC Wolves are diverse with respect to their location, interests, skill sets, and level of commitment. While the organization plans to grow this community and increase membership to 4,000 individuals, additional information is needed to guide the development of a volunteer engagement framework that is reflective of organizational volunteers and Pacific Wild’s capacity to manage volunteers. This project will surface relevant information about volunteer characteristics and skill sets, communication and community building interests, recognition and retention strategies, and organizational infrastructure needed to enable and support self-led volunteer mobilization.

Recommendations for the volunteer framework will be developed from the data; Pacific Wild will translate this information into a volunteer framework and activism toolkit. The intent of the volunteer framework is to leverage the commitment of engaged volunteers and enable their expertise in support of wolf advocacy in such a way that requires minimal ongoing oversight by the Pacific Wild team.

### **Project Objective and Research Questions**

The objective of this project is to seek input from Pacific Wild volunteers regarding their interests and capacities, as well as the tools they need, to undertake independent action that aligns with Save BC Wolves program goals. This input will inform recommendations for a volunteer framework that facilitates independent volunteer activity. Ultimately, this project is an initial step towards increased volunteer engagement among Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves volunteers.

## **Research Question**

How can Pacific Wild leverage volunteers to increase engagement and consequently, impact, in wolf conservation in a way that is feasible with current staffing and financial models?

## **Sub Questions**

- What tools and information do Pacific Wild volunteers need to self-mobilize in meaningful activities that align with the Pacific Wild mission for the Save BC Wolves Campaign and Pacific Wild organizational values?
- How do members of Save BC Wolves want to communicate with one another and self-organize?
- What skills and expertise do Pacific Wild volunteers have that should be considered in the development of the volunteer framework?
- What engagement, retention, and recognition strategies should inform the development of the volunteer framework?

## **Scope**

This project engages with volunteers to collect information about their interests, skills, and the tools they need to succeed as volunteers. This information was then used to develop seven recommendations for Pacific Wild to consider in the development of a volunteer engagement framework. The development of the volunteer engagement framework is beyond the scope of this project.

## **Project Client**

Pacific Wild is a non-profit organization based in British Columbia, Canada, whose purpose is to influence policy, public opinion, and legislative change to protect the biological and ecological integrity of the northwest Pacific Region (Pacific Wild, n.d.-a). Founded in 2008, the organization has a strong track record of leading and contributing to successful conservation initiatives through accessible storytelling that connects people with places (Pacific Wild, n.d.-a). With a diverse team of communication experts, scientists, and passionate conservationists, Pacific Wild develops compelling campaigns to address specific environmental issues and is a pioneer in innovative technology for wildlife monitoring (Pacific Wild, n.d.-a). Pacific Wild's efforts are facilitated by eleven staff members (Pacific Wild, n.d.-a).

## **About Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves Volunteers**

The Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves volunteer community consists of more than 3,000 individuals located in British Columbia, Canada, and internationally. Members of this community include wolf biologists and ecologists, artists, educators, communicators, photographers, activists, and storytellers (Pacific Wild, n.d.-b) and other individuals who support the objectives of the Save BC Wolves campaign.

The Save BC Wolves volunteer program is built on three pillars; experience, engage, learn (Pacific Wild, n.d.-b), offering a spectrum of opportunities for volunteers to engage in wolf advocacy in diverse ways. Volunteers sign up to participate in an online community where campaign updates,

advocacy tools, and stories of wolves are shared to galvanize independent action (Pacific Wild, n.d.-d). There is no dedicated volunteer coordinator; when the organization identifies a need for volunteers, they distribute an e-mail notification to the volunteer list or engage volunteers with specific skill sets on an as-needed basis (Pacific Wild, n.d.-e).

## **Background and Context**

In 2015 the government of British Columbia launched a wolf cull program to protect endangered Southern mountain caribou (Pacific Wild, n.d.-c). Through this program 1,000+ wolves have been culled, costing taxpayers approximately \$2.2 million in 2019 and 2020 (Pacific Wild, n.d.-c). Research indicates that the wolf cull does not address the most pressing issues for caribou conservation, and caribou populations continue to decline at the expense of both wolves and the ecosystems that wolves are instrumental in maintaining as apex predators (Pacific Wild, n.d.-c).

Pacific Wild is actively engaged in a multifaceted campaign to end the aerial wolf cull program operated by the BC Wildlife Service. In early October 2021, a petition with more than 500,000 signatures was delivered to delivered by Pacific Wild to Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development of British Columbia (FLNRORD) (Pacific Wild, Oct. 4, 2021). A court case challenging both the ethical and legal tenets of the wolf cull was first heard in July and extended to October 2021 (Cordasco, 2021). In February 2022, a coalition of organizations including Pacific Wild, launched the “Howl to Horgan” campaign encouraging individuals to call or write British Columbia premier John Horgan and express their opposition to the provincially funded aerial wolf cull, where wolves are shot and killed from helicopters (Howl to Horgan, n.d.).

In 2020, research demonstrating the efficacy of the wolf cull was examined, finding faulty modelling and reporting in favour of the wolf cull (Harding et al., 2020; Raincoast Conservation Foundation, 2020). This problematic research was cited as evidence in support of the wolf cull by the provincial government, legitimizing a focus on wolf removal rather than a holistic recovery approach that involves habitat protection from resource extraction activities pressuring caribou survival with reduced availability of quality habitat (Harding et al., 2020).

Pacific Wild argues that the wolf cull is being promoted as a solution for caribou conservation without recognizing and addressing environmental issues associated with economic activities that include resource extraction and land use change (Pacific Wild, n.d.-c). Caribou require access to critical food sources found exclusively in old growth forest; BC forestry practices continuously contribute to the decline of these forests (Harding et al., 2020; Pacific Wild, n.d.-c). In addition to the BC Wildlife Service aerial wolf cull program, the provincially funded Livestock Protection Program, which supports the agricultural sector, began in 2016 and supported trappers in killing 684 wolves in response to 1,293 livestock attacks between 2016 and 2020 (Narwhal, 2020).

## **Reading this Report**

This report begins by with an in-depth literature review detailing the foundational knowledge of the volunteer sector considered to interpret study findings. The literature review is followed by a chapter on Methodology and Methods, including an explanation of the conceptual framework for the study, the mixed-methods case study methodology, and the study methods, like the survey to Save BC Wolves volunteers and a focus group to further discuss key findings. The data analysis approach and limitations, delimitations, and strengths of the project are also described in the Methodology and Methods chapter. Findings of both the survey and the focus group are detailed in the Findings section.

The research questions are then used to guide the Discussion and Analysis chapter. The report concludes with a section detailing a set of recommendations to inform the development of the volunteer engagement framework, followed by final thoughts and reflections on the findings and how they translate to contributions to the Save BC Wolves community and the volunteer sector.

## Literature Review

This literature review explores the academic literature related to volunteer management, and the tenets of establishing effective volunteer engagement programs. The purpose of this literature review is to surface salient information that is applicable or transferable to the development of effective, self-mobilized, online volunteer programs. Due to the breadth of the field, this paper offers a precursory overview. Volunteer motives and the application of human resources (HR) practices in volunteer management are explored due to their prevalence in the literature, with recruitment and retention emerging as prominent volunteer outcomes supported by both structural and relational management functions. Online volunteer communities, self-mobilization of volunteers, and leadership from within the volunteer community are also explored, though literature related to these topics was not extensive by comparison. The evolving volunteer sector, episodic volunteering, Studer's (2016) theory of functional and interactional volunteer management, organizational culture and conflict, experience, retention, recruitment, training, autonomy, communications, community, and organizational commitment are all discussed in this literature review.

To build on advancement of the volunteer field, particularly considering significant shifts in volunteerism since the turn of the millennium (further discussed below), the primary search range focuses on articles published between 2000 and 2022, and includes published research from Australia, Canada, Western Europe, and the USA. Using the University of Victoria Summon 2.0 search system and Google Scholar, various combinations of the following search terms were used to secure a collection of literature from JSTOR, Sage and SpringerLink databases: "volunteer management", "volunteer engagement", "volunteer coordination", "volunteer retention", "episodic volunteering", "mobilizing volunteers", "independent volunteers", "volunteer leadership". The abstracts of all relevant articles were reviewed for alignment with the project focus of establishing a volunteer program to support independent volunteer action. Each selected article was reviewed and content to establish this literature review was sorted into different categories. During the review process these categories were re-evaluated and re-organized in response to emerging themes, with each article reviewed multiple times in response to adjusted thematic categories. The references section of salient articles was scanned, and additional articles were selected for reading from both the content and reference lists of initially selected readings.

### Landscape of the Volunteer Literature

Volunteers make important contributions across multiple sectors (Dunn et al., 2016), offering time and energy to support civic initiatives for the public good. They are motivated by care and interest, rather than financial compensation (Alfes et al., 2017; Dunn et al., 2020). This exchange of labour without monetary reward establishes a relationship dynamic with distinct characteristics from the employment-labour relationship. Nichols (2013) describes this relationship as a psychological contract between volunteers and organizational paid staff, other volunteers, or beneficiaries (Vantilborgh et al., 2012, as cited in Ward & Greene 2018), while Hager and Brudney (2008) position volunteerism as a leisure activity.

Approximately eighty percent of all charitable organizations engage volunteers to deliver their mission (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Volunteer roles are conceptualized in various ways, often either in relation to organizational staff, where volunteers provide labour to complement or support staff, or in relation to the cause as collaborative partners or advising experts (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). In addition to formal volunteer roles facilitated by non-profit organizations, informal community-based action outside the scope of an organization may also be considered as volunteer work (Taniguchi, 2011).

The term volunteer encompasses a broad spectrum of roles with varying commitments, frequencies, levels of independence, and management frameworks. This diversity is reflected in the literature, which spans a variety of topics explored across disparate contexts; results can be difficult to generalize, and contradictory findings are surfaced through studies that engage different types of volunteer groups.

Much of the volunteer literature acknowledges a focus on building organizational capacity for volunteer management and investigating volunteer motives (Hager & Brudney, 2008; Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Butt et al., 2017; Clary et al., 1998; Maki & Snyder, 2017; Weenick & Bridgman, 2017, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Studer (2016) identifies two frames that can be helpful in categorizing and understanding the literature: *Functional* and *Interactional* Volunteer Management. *Functional volunteer management* refers to the practical and structural aspects of volunteer management, such as planning, recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, and recognition (Studer, 2016). One of the predominant areas of exploration in the volunteer sector, the application of human resource approaches, falls within the functional frame. Yet Studer (2016) emphasizes that volunteers are a unique stakeholder group, cautioning that the focus on the functionalist perspective in the form of HR practices fails to acknowledge that volunteers are different than employees. Weenick and Bridgeman (2017, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019) also highlight the limitations of the functional approach, describing volunteerism as a social process where the benefits experienced are co-constructed by volunteers and organizational staff through the process of volunteerism itself. This process takes place within the parameters of the social and cultural context of the organization and its volunteer program. Volunteerism extends beyond the confines of functional management practices directed towards task completion to integrate layers of social benefit and reward experienced by both the volunteer and the organization they serve. The focus on functional management practices is exclusive of these important social dynamics. Similarly, Hager and Brudney (2011) position organizational conditions (like the mission) as “nature” and the social relationships as “nurture”; while the importance of nurturing volunteer relationships from a social perspective can be neglected in the literature in favour of a focus on the “nature” or functional management elements, it is of equivocal importance as mission, structures, systems, and processes, and must be considered for effective volunteer engagement and retention.

Weenink and Bridgeman’s (2017) and Hager and Brudney’s (2011) applications of the social constructionist paradigm affirm the importance of coupling the structural aspects of functional volunteer management with the social relational aspects of interactional volunteer management. Thus, *interactional volunteer management* represents the social element of volunteer engagement (Studer, 2016). Within the frame of interactional volunteer management, the literature primarily explores volunteer motives (Ward & Green, 2018). Volunteer identity, experience and the factors that lead to volunteer engagement include individual characteristics and goals as well as social and cultural contexts, all of which are diverse and evolving (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Bussell & Forbes, 2002, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Ward & Greene, 2018). While volunteer motives are at the forefront, this area of study is seeing diversification as researchers begin to look more broadly at concepts such as volunteer engagement (Traeger & Alfes, 2019), and the relationship between volunteer experience and satisfaction with retention (Butt et al., 2017; Maki & Snyder, 2017, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Studies of organizational factors that impact volunteer relationships (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013) and relationship dynamics between volunteers and volunteer managers are also beginning to emerge (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011), with calls for further investigation. Exploring the everyday realities of managing volunteers is another area lacking in the literature that deserves further attention (Murray, 2008, p. 245-246, as cited in Ward & Greene, 2018). While most studies explore either functional or interactional volunteer management, Studer (2016) argues that they are complementary, with interactional volunteer management as critical to positive volunteer outcomes. The nuanced conditions

and characteristics of the volunteer-organizational relationship deserve thoughtful consideration in the context of the literature where functional volunteer management is abundant.

### ***Challenges of the Evolving Volunteer Sector***

Forms of volunteering have evolved since the early 1990s in response to the ongoing evolution of the social, political, and economic contexts in which volunteering takes place. Modern technology, including the internet, has enabled globalization and the advancement of social movements, redefining how people spend their time, what information they are exposed to and have access to, and how they engage in social initiatives. The rise in responsibilities assumed by community organizations for the delivery of social and public services (Alfes et al., 2017; Ward & Greene, 2018) is concurrent with a consistent downward trend in traditional volunteering (Studer, 2016). In developed nations, this shift away from traditional volunteering, where volunteers assume long-term roles with a specific purpose and regular, recurring commitments, is accompanied by an increase in self-led volunteering (Macduff et al., 2009). Self-led volunteering describes volunteerism where individuals or groups take action on their own volition and organize their own activities to contribute to a cause, either within the framework of an organization or independently (Macduff et al., 2009). An individual collecting donations while amplifying messaging on behalf of an organization they support at a non-associated event, like a neighbourhood BBQ is an example of self-led volunteerism independent of an organizational framework. In the case of self-led volunteerism within an organizational framework, an example might involve volunteers coordinating their personal networks to undertake environmental restoration activities at a site secured by the organization they support, working within guidelines established by that organization. An interest in occasional and timebound volunteer action is also emerging on a significant scale, along with virtual volunteerism (Brudney, 2005 as cited in Macduff et al., 2009; Dunn et al., 2016; Hustinx et al., 2008; Macduff, 2005; and Rochester, 2018, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020).

Research into the relationship between volunteer demographics and the evolution of volunteerism is difficult to consider generally due to the specificity of contexts in which volunteerism takes place. However, Dunn et al. (2020) suggest a preference for irregular commitments among young people, students, and professionals, which aligns with the work of Taniguchi (2011), who found that constraints on time were a factor in lower volunteer engagement. When investigating this shift in volunteer patterns towards volunteer roles that required different forms of commitment, Handy et al. (2006) found evidence that this pattern was consistent across all age groups. Hyde et al. (2016) found similar results, though they also determined that age, as well as financial status, correlated with longer term commitments (Hager & Brudney, 2008; Hyde et al., 2016). Women have been found to be significantly more likely than men to volunteer (Hyde et al., 2016). The substantial changes in the role of women in society in the last several decades, where women are increasingly employed while retaining primary responsibility for household management and parenting, likely impacts time to dedicate to volunteer initiatives; changes in how women use their time may be a factor in the evolution away from long-term, regular volunteer commitments.

The effects of the evolution of volunteering include reduced availability and increased turnover among volunteers (McCurley & Lynch, 2005, as cited in Hyde et al., 2016), more individual volunteers investing less time (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020), increased demand within organizations for recruitment, retention and the development of short term, flexible roles (Macduff, 2005), and urgency for organizations to adapt or establish volunteer programs that accommodate changing volunteer patterns. Changes in volunteer patterns are reflected in volunteer management, where the traditional hierarchical approach emphasizing duration of volunteer service, frequency of commitment and specificity of roles, is being

adapted to embrace flexibility and promote collaboration and high level of participation (Macduff et al., 2009). Yet the transformation of the volunteer sector has operational and financial impacts for organizations depending on volunteers to deliver their mission (Garner & Garner 2010; Netting et al., 2005, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). Formalized recruitment, training, and management systems are required to effectively facilitate increasing numbers of volunteers engaged in varied, irregular roles, subsequently requiring additional organizational investments of time and funds to support staffing and management tools (McCurley & Lynch, 2005, as cited in Hyde et al., 2016). The financial impacts of the evolving volunteer sector are exasperated by a simultaneous decrease of available funding and increase of public services falling under the auspices of non-profit organizations; financial constraints are consistently identified as a major limiting factor in the mobilization of volunteers resulting in lack of appropriate staffing and other resources (Lough et al. 2018, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020; Studer, 2016).

The increasing need for volunteer management, coupled with the lack of financial resources, is compounded by staffing challenges. The perceived expendability of volunteers, where the value and impact of volunteers in achieving the organizational mission is not necessarily appreciated or acknowledged as a unique resource requiring careful cultivation, has led to a general failure in the non-profit sector to recognize and advance the professionalization of volunteer management (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Strategic volunteer management frameworks are underdeveloped and overall capacity for volunteer management is limited across the sector. Direct service volunteer programs, where volunteers offer services directly to the beneficiary population (for example, a monthly volunteer-led peer support group or a weekly time slot answering a crisis call line), typically maintain a traditional approach and are an exception to this trend, generally with strong management structures in place (Hager & Brudney, 2008). This is in contrast with under-developed organizational support volunteer programs, where volunteers contribute through activities like fundraising or advocacy. Dependency on volunteers has increased in conjunction with the increased obligations of community organizations, yet in the absence of volunteer management capacity and competency, many organizations have limited ability to efficiently and effectively manage volunteer contributions (Ward & Greene, 2018).

### ***Episodic Volunteering***

The term “episodic volunteers” (EVs) is used to describe the periodic, flexible roles of increasing popularity in the volunteer sector. Episodic volunteering can take many forms, but some examples to demonstrate the scope of roles and commitments encompassed by this term include students serving Thanksgiving dinner at a soup kitchen as part of a community service project; an individual coordinating a fundraising benefit, or a biologist advising on the set up of a conservation project. These roles typically align with the personal and professional expertise of the volunteer (Dunn et al., 2020; and Lockstone & Smith 2009, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020; Macduff, 2005; Studer, 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019). EVs are also often associated with events due to both the quantity of volunteers required and the time-bound nature of such commitments (Dunn et al., 2016; Dunn et al., 2020; and Macduff, 2004, as cited in Hyde et al., 2016).

While episodic volunteering has become a distinct area of study, Cnaan and Handy (2005) offer a different perspective; EVs are simply volunteers on the lower end of a spectrum of capacity for ongoing, regular commitment. They go on to suggest that the term “episodic volunteering” does not offer meaningful insights into the impact EVs can have, which can be substantial, even if sporadic (Cnaan & Handy, 2005). Despite the merits of this argument, EVs still represent a relatively new yet significant phenomenon in volunteering. Though the Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention Model (See Figure 1, discussed in further detail on pp. 13-14) developed by Hyde et al. (2016) focuses on episodic volunteers as a distinct subset of volunteers, it does bridge Cnaan and Handy’s position with the general

episodic volunteering literature. Three phases of episodic volunteering are identified in this model; novice volunteers have a year of service or less, volunteers with two to four years of service are categorized within the transition phase, and sustained episodic volunteers have five plus years of service (Hyde et al., 2016). This model implies that episodic volunteers do uphold long term organizational commitments, despite irregular participation in volunteer activities, aligning with the spectrum Cnaan and Handy (2005) champion.

Along with a departure from traditional, recurring roles towards distinct patterns of volunteering, the motives of EVs are also unique, though not well understood (Bryen & Madden 2006; Wilson 2012, as cited in Dunn et al., 2016; and Cnaan & Handy, 2005). EVs are motivated by a range of factors, including alignment with personal values, (Hustinx et al., 2008); socialization opportunities (See Figure 1; Hyde et al., 2016), particularly among young people, and personal growth and professional development (Taylor & Shanka 2008, as cited in Dunn et al., 2016; and Bryden & Madden, 2009, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). These motives are also predictive factors of EV retention (Dunn et al., 2016). Yet the broad spectrum of volunteer contexts means that findings may be inconsistent or require explanation of the nuanced setting from which they emerged. For example, Dunn et al. (2016) point out that a 2008 study conducted by Hustinx et al., where the study subjects were episodic volunteers helping provide temporary accommodations and supports to those receiving medical treatment, found that the primary motives for volunteering were civic duty, where Handy et al. (2006) found that altruism, or concern for others, was not a motivation among episodic volunteers at cultural events. One may conclude that in the case of cultural event volunteers, part of the motivation is the opportunity to attend the event itself, where in the context of helping provide accommodation to those in need, civic duty and concern for others is more predominant. Findings about volunteer motives in each of these distinct areas are likely not broadly applicable across other contexts.

Developing EV management frameworks that facilitate the desired level of engagement from both the volunteer and organizational perspective is a significant challenge (Dunn et al. 2016; Hyde et al., 2016; and Hyde et al. 2014b, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). Matching skill to opportunity within the right timeframe, monitoring availability, finding either enough volunteers or work for too many volunteers, maintaining quality, and lack of staff and funds to support efficient management, stewardship, and retention are all concerns (Dunn et al., 2020; Hyde et al., 2016). Though research suggests EVs are primarily motivated by employing their skill set, professional development opportunities, and building community, Hager and Brudney (2008) found that traditional volunteer programs were much more likely than EV programs to assign roles that correspond with the volunteer skill sets or interests, as well as provide training, support, and consistent communication. This is likely in part because organizations relying on volunteers only occasionally, and therefore engaging EVs, may have fewer resources dedicated to volunteer management. Further, the characteristics of traditional recurring roles may also require certain competencies or relationships with staff to facilitate and ensure effective performance over an extended timeframe (Hager and Brudney, 2008). Despite the challenges, volunteer managers consider EVs to be critical to mission fulfillment and elevating community relationships and public perceptions that ultimately enabled partnerships and donations (Dunn et al., 2020).

As a relatively new field of study within the volunteer sector, research specifically exploring EVs is limited, though growing (Handy et al., 2006; Hyde et al., 2014b; Macduff 2008; Wilson 2012, as cited in Dunn et al., 2016; and Hyde et al., 2016). It is worth noting that EV research is constrained by the association between EVs and events, as events such as music festivals and fundraisers take place in a niche context, where study findings may not be generalizable to other circumstances where EVs donate their time.

## **Integrating Functional and Interactional Volunteer Management**

### ***Interactional Management as a Natural Dimension of the Functional Paradigm***

The volunteer management literature is predominantly grounded in the application of HR approaches in the volunteer setting (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Studer, 2016). Numerous works identify HR practices as positively correlating with volunteer motivation (Alfes et al., 2017; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013) performance, satisfaction, and retention (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Volunteer perceptions of how organizational HR practices facilitate positive volunteer experiences are conducive to volunteer engagement, including dissemination of organizational information, institutionalized training, consistent processes, and mechanisms of connectivity among volunteers (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Conversely, lack of HR practices, such as poorly defined roles and failure to effectively use volunteer time and talents, correlate with discontinued service (Hager & Brudney, 2008).

The importance of HR practices in volunteer management are further espoused in the literature exploring HR bundling, where volunteer programs integrate a comprehensive suite of HR practices to amplify the individual effects (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Providing information and support as well as demonstrating appreciation improve volunteer experience, commitment, and loyalty (Lo Presti, 2013, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Traeger and Alfes (2019) go on to identify recruitment, training and development, recognition, feedback, communication, transparency, and involvement in decision making as complementary HR practices applicable in a volunteer context. They argue that the practice of HR bundling, including these key pillars, empowers volunteers by establishing meaning, competency, self-determination, and impact associated with their volunteer role, all of which strengthen their connection to the organization and their sense of competency in relation to their contributions (Cohen, 2009; Spreitzer, 1995; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Steimel, 2013, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019).

While HR practices have a significant role in volunteer management, there is a growing body of evidence that confirms that HR practices alone are not sufficient; HR practices must be complemented with interactional management strategies that build relationships, social connection, and community. Empirical studies about the efficacy of HR practices in volunteer management are minimal and show mixed results (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Alfes et al. (2017) point out that organizational features have significant influence on HR practices, an area which merits further investigation. Moreover, studies indicate that HR practices must be reflective of the unique characteristics that distinguish volunteers from paid employees to effectively enhance volunteer capacities and interests (Alfes et al., 2017; Traeger & Alfes, 2019).

HR practices are designed for employment-based relationships; volunteers are not employees, and the characteristics of paid employment cannot be applied without consideration of the nuances of the volunteer relationship (Alfes et al., 2017; Nichols, 2013; Pearce, 1993, p. 142-143, as cited in Ward & Greene, 2018). As volunteers are not financially compensated for their contributions to the organization mission, this relationship might be conceptualized as an informal social contract between volunteers and organizational staff, where social rewards are the primary form of compensation (Nichols, 2013; Vantilborgh et al., 2012, as cited in Ward & Greene, 2018). In addition to distinct role functions and “contractual” relationships, a key difference between organizational staff and volunteers is their motivation to participate in the organization (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Volunteering is often considered as a leisure activity (Hager & Brudney, 2008; and Warner et al., 2011, as cited in Dunn et al. 2020) with expectations of creativity, freedom of action, and choice (Kruetzer & Jäger, 2011). Volunteers can be alienated from their initial interests in an organization when the parallels between volunteerism

and employment are emphasized through HR structures designed for employees rather than volunteers (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Studer, 2016). Studer (2016) advocates that volunteers be recognized as unique contributors where effective management requires complementary functional and interactional practices. In the absence of financial compensation, interactional management serves to offer socially based rewards for volunteers. Functional management through an investment in knowledge, skill, and ability development, and interactional management through attention to values, social connection, and emotional, care serve as mechanisms for organizational connection (Kinnie et al., 2005, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019). This balance between functional and interactional management enhances motivation, participation, engagement, and satisfaction, empowering volunteers to develop their identity in relation to their services as a volunteer, solidifying their organizational connection (Tyler & Blader 2003; van Knippenberg, 2000, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019; and Studer, 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019).

Ward and Greene (2018) encourage organizational staff to normalize volunteers as critical to their mission. Brudney and Meijs (2009, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020) suggest volunteers be considered as natural resources whose competencies must be cultivated to enable success and accomplishment at the volunteer and organizational level. The concept of reciprocity is explored by Traeger and Alfes (2019), where investing in volunteers establishes the conditions for volunteers to invest in the organization. Volunteer training offers an example of how these concepts can address both functional and interactional volunteer management approaches. Training volunteers meets the needs of an organization from a functional management perspective in that volunteers have increased capacity to undertake their role. Simultaneously, the opportunity to interact with organizational staff and other volunteers, as well as the benefit of increased competency, and consequently, confidence in their contributions, results in a satisfying experience and stronger organizational connections, serving the interactional perspective. Reciprocity, stewardship, and relationship demonstrate to volunteers that they are valued, which translates to retention built on trust, support, and confidence in the organizational impact, the organization itself, and in the experience the organization can offer to other volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2008).

### ***The Role of Culture in Integrated Volunteer Management***

While additional research is needed to explore the relationship between organizational culture and volunteerism (Traeger & Alfes, 2019), organizational culture is a critical dimension of volunteer management, bridging both the functional and interactional aspects of managing volunteers. Culture, demonstrated through organizational practices, rules, and procedures, in addition to social relationships, has a considerable impact on volunteer engagement and experience (Brudney & Meijs, 2009; Maran & Soro, 2010, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Organizational leaders have an instrumental role in defining a culture where volunteers are welcome and valued, as leaders simultaneously craft and reflect organizational identity (Hogg, 2001; Van Knippenberg, 2011, as cited in Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014). Lower rates of engagement and retention have been identified where leadership was indifferent to volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Volunteer relationships with organizational staff benefit both staff and volunteer experience (Studer, 2016).

Collaborative cultures where staff and volunteers are encouraged to work together facilitate high engagement and performance among volunteers. Collaboration builds respect and trust between staff and volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014), which in turn builds volunteer engagement and organizational identification (Ross & Tries, 2010, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wallaraff, 2010; Craig-Lees et al., 2008; Hong et al., 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Seeking volunteer perspectives and engaging volunteers in decision making processes

increases volunteer engagement and performance (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) while simultaneously strengthening the volunteer program as well as strategies to achieve the organizational mission. A volunteer friendly culture empowers staff to collaborate with volunteers and draw on the unique perspectives, expertise, and talents within the volunteer network (Allen, 2006, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Establishing a culture where volunteers are appreciated involves attention to both the functional and interactional dimensions of volunteer management. This includes facilitating collaboration and implementing volunteer informed structures and processes to ensure effective use of volunteer time and enable volunteers to be successful in their endeavors as organizational representatives (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Barriers to participation and engagement must also be addressed on both a functional and interactional level (Allen, 2006, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

### ***Mitigating and Managing Conflict in the Volunteer Context***

Mitigating and resolving conflict is a key element of organizational culture that must be addressed for effective volunteer management. Conflict typically arises in relation to authority and leadership styles, expectations, motivations, and organizational identity (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011), manifesting in non-compliance with organizational guidelines and direction from leadership (Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Handy, 1988; Pearce, 1993, as cited in Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014). While the mission itself is generally not debated among volunteers and organizational staff, exactly how to achieve that mission can be a source of contention (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011).

Conflict and disagreement between volunteers and organizational staff are common reasons for discontinued service among volunteers (Rosenblatt, 2000, as cited in Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011). Kreutzer and Jäger (2011) explore conflict in relation to organizational identity, which is multifaceted and dynamic, continuously and informally re-envisioned as a product of social relationships and the perceptions and actions of organizational stakeholders. Organizational evolution is an ongoing process, influenced by a variety of factors such as changes in staff, public perception, environmental context, and more, all of which may change the vision or structures of an organization. It can be challenging for volunteers to envision their role in relation to such changes, leading to disconnection, disillusionment, and conflict. Unrealistic expectations of the role of staff, lack of communication, and failure to recognize volunteer contributions can spark tension among volunteers (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Conversely, staff are disillusioned by competition for meaningful tasks, investment required to effectively manage volunteers, and concern over quality and timeliness of volunteer outputs (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Attention to these sources of potential conflict is critical to preventing frustration and tension among both volunteers and staff. Clear communication regarding the relationship between the role of volunteers and the organization mission and staff, as well as what success looks like and how volunteers can contribute can help prevent conflict. Volunteers have limited organizational perspective; building understanding of policies, processes and values offers context to understand their role and impact in relation to the organization mission (Ward & Greene, 2018). Involving volunteers in planning processes in relation to the tasks and outcomes associated with their roles is another preventative tactic. The role of the volunteer coordinator then involves both championing the volunteer program within the organization and representing the organization among the volunteers (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011). Training related to emotional management and interactional dimensions of volunteerism are recommended for volunteer management to cultivate an environment conducive to understanding and efficiency (Ward & Greene, 2018).

## **Volunteer Management in Practice**

### ***Crafting the Volunteer Experience***

Volunteer recruitment and retention success is directly linked with a satisfying volunteer experience (Taylor et al., 2006, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). Initial impressions and experiences influence the decision to continue to volunteer (Hyde et al., 2016) and organizational commitment is fostered over time, relying on the satisfaction of repeated positive experiences (Chacon et al., 2007). Facilitating meaningful, quality volunteer experiences through both functional and interactional volunteer management practices increases the efficacy of volunteer placements, contributing to strong engagement and a positive experience (Dunn et al., 2020; Hager & Brudney, 2008; Hyde et al., 2016; Studer, 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019).

Satisfaction among new volunteers is linked to both social connection and alignment between volunteer motives and tasks related to the placement (Hyde et al., 2016). Similarly, Dunn et al. (2016) found that cause involvement and social connection are also important elements of a positive experience among first time EVs. Alignment between interests, skills, and role placement; training to equip the volunteer for success; and recognition all contribute to positive volunteer experiences and consequently, retention (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Investing in functional management with organizational orientation, role related training, ongoing learning opportunities and recognition for contributions of time and expertise are important experiential elements that establish the conditions for interactional volunteer management. As a result, volunteers benefit from the satisfaction and fulfillment of making meaningful contributions to a goal that resonates; social connections and community; learning and skill development opportunities, gaining experience in areas of interest; and recognition for their contributions. Retention issues are likely where practices to enrich volunteer experience are lacking (Dunn et al., 2020; Hager & Brudney, 2008).

The remainder of this literature review explores the functional and interactional aspects of the volunteer experience, encompassing the spectrum of volunteer engagement ranging from episodic to long-term traditional volunteers. Each component could be considered a key pillar of volunteer management programs designed to facilitate volunteer engagement and satisfaction (Alfes et al., 2016; Vecina et al., 2012, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Two predominant outcomes have been identified in the volunteer literature: recruitment and retention (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Macduff, 1996; McCurley & Rick, 2007, as cited in Studer, 2016; Hager & Brudney, 2008, 2011). Both outcomes are served by the application of functional and interactional approaches in the development, implementation, and management of volunteer programs.

### ***Volunteer Retention as a Starting Point***

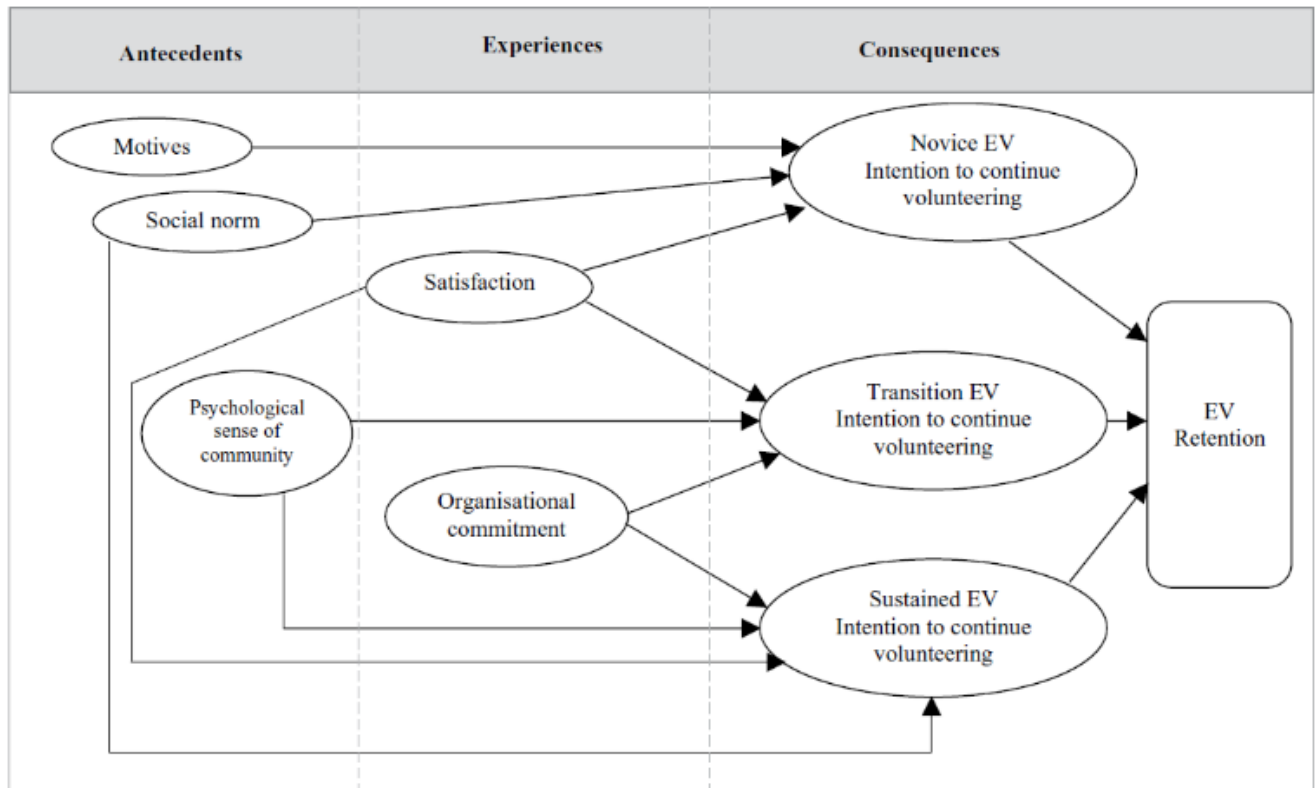
Volunteer management starts with retention; organizations that engage volunteers must consider long term goals requiring volunteer support, rather than the immediate tasks at hand, to effectively benefit from the power of volunteers. Focusing on roles and recruitment at the outset of developing or revitalizing a volunteer program centres functional management, resulting in a volunteer program with a need for continuous functional input. Alternatively, a sustaining system builds on interactive principles, like engagement and collaboration, where volunteers support both the development of other volunteers and the volunteer program, as well as mission delivery. In turn, the organization supports the ongoing development of volunteers while benefiting from volunteer engagement.

Retention is ultimately a product of how organizations interact with their volunteers and find opportunities to enhance volunteer experience (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Placements, training, autonomy and proportionate responsibilities, communication and recognition, community and organizational relationships are all important components of a volunteer program that contribute to retention. Issues of volunteer retention are indicative of gaps in volunteer management frameworks. While new volunteers can infuse new energy into an organization, overall, volunteer turnover presents a multitude of challenges (Dunn et al., 2020). Recruitment, training, and progressive development of volunteers all require investments of time, energy, and finances. Institutional memory, community connections, and peer-based leadership capacities are all compromised when volunteer programs experience significant turnover. Investing in retention is an efficient and cost-effective volunteer management strategy (Hager & Brudney, 2008).

Discussion about volunteer retention is embedded throughout the remainder of this review as retention results from complementary functional and interactional volunteer management practices that contribute to volunteer experience. However, one model of volunteer retention is beneficial to explore in detail as it is representative of much of the research on volunteer retention. Though it does specify an application to episodic volunteers, this model also acknowledges that while episodic volunteers may have lower capacity for frequent commitment, they do have the potential for long-term commitment, making it broadly applicable to a wide variety of modern volunteer contexts. This applicability makes this model an excellent tool for demonstrating the relationship between volunteer experience and retention; factors in volunteer engagement and experience translate to retention over time. This model will first be explained as a summary of key retention considerations and will then be referred to throughout this paper when critical experiential factors are also particularly relevant to retention.

The Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention model (See **Error! Reference source not found.**) depicts evolving motives for volunteering and determinants of retention over the duration of volunteer service (Hyde et al., 2016). While this model is specific to EVs, it also aligns with the literature applicable to the volunteer context more generally. As previously discussed, Hyde et al. (2016), identified three phases of episodic volunteering; novice (1 year or less), transition (2-4 years) and sustained (5+). Among novice volunteers, motives, social enjoyment, social norms, and satisfaction were the predominant predictors of volunteer commitment. This is consistent with the work of Chacon et al. (2007), who found that initial motivation and experiential satisfaction were the primary predictors of retention among those who had volunteered for less than one year. Community, organizational commitment, and satisfaction correlated strongly with retention among volunteers in the transition phase, while retention factors among volunteers in the sustained phase included social norms, community, organizational commitment, and satisfaction. Satisfaction with the experience was consistent throughout each phase. Other studies have also confirmed that satisfaction is a primary predictor of retention among volunteers (Chacon et al., 2007; and Vecina et al., 2012, as cited in Hyde et al., 2016). Further, this model indicates that the primary predictors of retention rely strongly on interactional management functions. For example, while social norms may be partially established through organizational processes, they are also co-constructed by interactions between members of the

community.



**Figure 1.** The Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention Model. This model depicts evolving motives for volunteering and determinants of retention over the duration of their volunteer service (Hyde et al., 2016).

### **Recruitment and Volunteer Roles**

Recruitment is a pillar of successful volunteer programs. Associated primarily with increased capacity for mission fulfillment, new volunteers also offer avenues to expand organizational capacity through new ideas, diversity, and creativity (Dunn et al., 2020). Recruitment can take a passive form, for example, where a standard volunteer application is posted on an organizational website or involve intentional and targeted strategies based on organizational needs, such as recruiting for specific roles (Brewis et al., 2010, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; and Kruetzer & Jäger, 2011). New volunteers are recruited through organizational websites, social media and often by word of mouth (Dunn et al., 2020; Hyde et al., 2016). Recruitment may involve specific tactics to appeal to individuals with different motivations for volunteering, for example, highlighting intrinsic rewards as well as material benefits (Bennett & Kottasz, 2001, as cited in Alfes et al., 2017). Organizations where volunteers recruit other volunteers typically see better retention rates (Hager & Brudney, 2008), likely due to the influence of social norms (Taniguchi, 2011) as well as the implied positive experience associated with a personal endorsement.

Challenges associated with recruitment are typically mirrored by retention challenges (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Investments in volunteer recruitment must be supported by appropriate volunteer management strategies, systems, and staff for recruitment successes to translate into strong retention rates (Dunn et al., 2020). This includes embedding the necessary supports for volunteers at the organizational level in the form of planning and budgets (Dunn et al., 2020).

Volunteer experience is affected by how expectations and characteristics of the volunteer environment match the interests which motivated initial involvement (Hyde et al., 2016). Screening processes to ensure appropriate organizational fit and role placement improve retention rates (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Clarifying organizational needs and defining roles can be complemented by training programs to develop necessary competencies (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Developing clearly defined, meaningful roles along with screening practices helps to establish volunteer identity and influence competency and success, translates to organizational connection and commitment (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

This sense of organizational connection and commitment is important for establishing the social norms and psychological sense of community identified as key antecedents to volunteering in the Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention Model explored above (Hyde et al., 2016). Because experience is affected by how closely characteristics of the volunteer experience match initial motives (Hyde et al., 2016), ensuring early volunteer experiences highlight how key antecedents, like psychological sense of community and social norms, are exemplified within the community is a critical recruitment strategy. This is also an example of the importance of complementary functional and interactional practices, as functional management systems like screening processes can be instrumental in building interactional management capital in the form of volunteer identity, competency, and success, and thereby, organizational connection and commitment. Yet matching volunteers to specific roles is not a consistent practice (Dunn et al., 2020). While screening and matching at the recruitment stage should include attention to the volunteer's interests and goals for personal growth, flexibility is equally important to reflect the unique characteristics of the volunteer relationship (Hong et al., 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Recruitment, and consequently retention, require attention to both nature, in the form of the practical, functional aspects of a volunteer program and nurture, in the form of the social, interactional aspects of a volunteer program (Hager & Brudney, 2011).

### ***Developing Volunteer Competencies With Training***

Empowering volunteers to effectively embrace their role involves building on skill-based recruitment with training and professional development (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Coupling training with recruitment processes results in positive influences on both recruitment and retention (Alfes et al. 2015; Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Saksida, et al. 2017, as cited in Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Hager & Brudney, 2008). Timely orientation following recruitment assists volunteers to identify and develop both the skills and outlook needed to feel confident in their contributions to the organization's mission (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Further, opportunities to develop new skills or take on additional responsibilities translates to longer duration of service (Cnaan & Handy, 2005; and Cnaan et al. 2017, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). Studer and von Schnurbein (2013) explore the importance of training in the process of "sense-making", where volunteers, influenced by their values and socialization, develop attitudes and behaviours reflective of their perception of the volunteer context. Without the benefit of the internal perspective afforded to organizational staff, volunteer perceptions regarding the organization and their role in relation to the organization can be limited (Ward & Greene, 2018). Developing training programs offers a valuable opportunity to consider what volunteers need to understand their role in alignment with the organizational vision, needs, and values. Training and educational activities can also be leveraged as pathways to encourage participation (Camplin, 2009), allowing volunteers opportunities to establish social connections and develop organizational awareness.

Resources and guided training are the primary training formats provided to volunteers during onboarding process (Dunn et al., 2020). Ongoing investments in skill development beyond initial introductory training and mentorship or buddy programs with other more experienced volunteers were

less commonly reported, though both offer opportunities to support volunteer and volunteer program development from the functional and interactional management perspective (Dunn et al., 2020). Volunteer mentorship helps establish volunteer identity and community (Hyde et al., 2016; Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013), concurrently building social and organizational connection as well as peer-to-peer leadership capacity. Orientation and training processes are key inputs for a successful volunteer program, yet they require thoughtful investment at an organizational level in the form of both strategic planning and budgeting. Hyde et al. (2016) call for consistent standardized training to be made available to volunteers, while Dunn et al. (2020) advocate for efficiency in the form of online platforms dedicated to recruitment and training. Referring to the Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention Model (Figure 1; Hyde et al., 2016), investing in training helps ensure that volunteers are successful in their roles and feel they have made a meaningful contribution to a goal they understand, alongside people they have connected with. The result is a satisfying experience and increasing organizational connection, key predictors of retention.

### ***Autonomy Through Progressive Responsibilities***

Training is instrumental in supporting volunteers to manage progressive responsibilities related to their role and other volunteers. Role enlargement, enrichment and rotation increase satisfaction among volunteers (Lockstone 2004, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Trusting volunteers with progressive responsibilities proportionate to their experience has positive correlations with continued volunteerism (Cnaan & Handy, 2005; Cnaan et al. 2017, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). Guntert (2007, as cited in Studer, 2016), identified five volunteer role characteristics associated with satisfaction, including task variety, identity, significance, and opportunities for feedback and autonomy. Volunteers seek to take ownership of their role through the development of related capacities. Training and feedback, as well as duration of service, all build capacity for progressive responsibilities, which ultimately enables autonomy as a critical function of satisfaction.

Supporting the assumption of progressive responsibilities through ongoing training implies that volunteers are valued contributors worthy of organizational investment, translating to confidence and trust in organizational staff (Hager & Brudney, 2008). In turn, organizational staff are reassured of volunteer competency, creating the conditions for increased volunteer autonomy grounded in interactional encouragement and functional competencies (Camplin, 2009). Empowering progressive responsibilities and roles proportionate to a volunteer's skill set and organizational experience also establishes mechanisms for peer-to-peer mentorship and leadership from within the volunteer community. Feedback is another component of supporting progressive development among volunteers (Traeger & Alfes, 2019), though it must be provided in a constructive manner that recognizes the nuances of the volunteer-organizational relationship. Progressive and proportionate responsibilities, including role enlargement, enrichment, and variety, as well as mentoring others, all contribute to satisfaction and align with the Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention Model experiential predictors of retention, which is consistent with retention related literature across all volunteers.

Autonomy, an important factor in volunteer satisfaction, can be supported through progressive development and proportionate responsibilities. Volunteer empowerment positively correlates with engagement (Traeger & Alfes, 2019); volunteers appreciate the freedom to choose how to participate in organizational activities (Tang et al., 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; and Studer, 2016). Hager and Brudney (2008) found that close supervision of volunteers was associated with lower levels of retention. Similarly, an excess of bureaucratic processes involving limited flexibility and complex conditions for participation presents barriers to engagement and commitment (Güntert, 2007, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; and Kruetzer & Jäger, 2011); conversely, very low levels can alienate

volunteers when pathways to participation are not evident and social norms and expectations are not clear (Musick & Wilson, 2008, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Balance between process and flexibility is a recurring theme in the literature, and in this case suggests that volunteers thrive when they are empowered to exercise their own expertise with a degree of independence, particularly as they develop and hone their knowledge and skills with experience, training, and feedback.

While functional strategies such as training, feedback, and progressive responsibilities enable autonomy, opportunities to make choices and decisions must also be integrated into a volunteer program from an interactional perspective. Volunteer leadership must cultivate an environment where volunteers are inspired to choose to engage (Camplin, 2009). Yet the importance of balance must be reiterated; while volunteers appreciate and benefit from a level of autonomy, organizational processes and staff support are also critical to volunteer satisfaction (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014; Hager & Brudney, 2008).

### ***Volunteer Communication Strategies***

Thoughtful communication strategies foster and enhance trust, respect, and connection (Chandler, 2008, as cited in Camplin, 2009), all of which influence volunteer empowerment and satisfaction, and consequently, retention (Hyde et al., 2016). Integrating the interactional perspective into a communications strategy involves sharing the societal value of organizational contributions and highlighting the role and impact of volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014; Hager & Brudney, 2008). Recognition, which correlates with retention, (Hager & Brudney, 2008) is a key element of an effective communication strategy. Demonstrating appreciation is a cornerstone of the social exchange that distinguishes volunteers from paid employees. Incorporating the interactional approach, including recognition, into volunteer communications builds organizational pride, furthering satisfaction and organizational commitment (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014). Organizational operations updates should also be shared with volunteers. Perceptions of operations and expenditures inform how volunteers align their efforts, as well as their financial support (Hyde et al., 2016). Satisfying the functional perspective involves ensuring volunteers are aware of opportunities, supports, and resources. Access to information galvanizes action (Eimhjellen et al., 2014). Further, digital communication strategies, such as volunteer outreach through social media, can advance recruitment and mobilization, even among those less inclined to volunteer (Ackermann & Manatschal, 2018, as cited in Filsinger & Freitag, 2019).

Information should be disseminated regularly, and in diverse forms (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Newsletters, e-mails, and meetings are common methods of communication with EVs (Dunn et al., 2020). Traeger and Alfes (2019) advocate for collective meetings with the dual purpose of organizing and cultivating volunteer connections. Eimhjellen et al. (2014) highlight the importance of web-based communication, while Dunn et al. (2020) promote efficiency in the form of online platforms dedicated to recruitment and training. In addition to the benefits for recruitment and training, web-based platforms like social networking sites facilitate social connections, communication, and collaboration, which can be used to efficiently mobilize volunteers with group rather than individual coordination (Eimhjellen et al., 2014). While it was more common for social networking sites to be used among volunteers less than thirty years of age (Eimhjellen et al., 2014), older adults have also been found to use the internet for social support (Wagner et al., 2010; Erickson & Johnson, 2011; Thayer & Ray, 2006, as cited in Filsinger & Freitag, 2019). Online platforms reduce barriers to communication and foster social connectedness (Filsinger & Freitag, 2019); online communities oriented towards volunteering may serve a mutual benefit where organizational needs to facilitate volunteerism are satisfied, as are individual interests in social communities. Online platforms have also opened new avenues for volunteerism in the digital space (Ackermann & Manatschal, 2018, as cited in Filsinger & Freitag, 2019).

This is particularly relevant in the context of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the changing climate and efforts to reduce carbon use. Volunteer management frameworks supported by infrastructure and technology, though not widely employed and leveraged, have potential to efficiently mobilize volunteer innovation to advance organizational mission (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Macduff et al., 2009, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020).

Despite the multitude of benefits associated with a strong communications strategy, Hager and Brudney (2008) did find that communication could be associated with lower levels of retention, positing that over communication may transform volunteerism from a leisure activity to an obligation. As with many other relevant topics, the research around volunteer communications confirms that volunteer program development involves careful attention to balance. A volunteer communication strategy must consider the intent of the communication – information dissemination, calls to action, and collaborative exchanges to foster community – as well as frequency, all in relation to the specific volunteer community context.

### ***The Role of Community***

Communications are key to building social connections and a supportive community among volunteers and staff, which has an important role in the volunteer context. Socialization strengthens and enhances volunteer attitudes, contributions, and commitment (Betz & Judkin, 1975; Fedor, 2001, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Connections and bonds are formed through experiences of organizational service (Fineman, 2008, as cited in Ward & Greene, 2018). These connections build respect, trust, and commitment, all of which are instrumental in the development of leadership capacity from within the volunteer community (Camplin, 2009). A mutually beneficial relationship is established, where volunteers who lead and mentor other volunteers actively contribute to the process of sense making, identity construction, and community building (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Symbiotically, leadership volunteers benefit from increased leadership capacity, autonomy, and recognition through progressive and proportionate responsibilities within the volunteer community. The development of volunteer leaders, volunteer-organizational identification, and the volunteer community then translates to volunteer satisfaction and retention, and congruently, a strong volunteer program benefitting the organization mission and reputation.

Community is a dynamic and multifaceted aspect of a volunteer program and is critical to volunteer retention. Community serves interactional management in the form of social connection and experience, both of which are highlighted in Hyde et al.'s (2016) retention model (Figure 1). From a functional perspective, community can be leveraged for recruitment, skill development, and retention. Social pressure is often a motivating factor in the decision to volunteer (Penner, 2002, as cited in Hyde et al., 2016) and retention rates are particularly strong where volunteers have been recruited by other volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Retention is linked to social interaction and community participation (Cnaan & Handy, 2005; and Cnaan et al. 2017, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020) in the form of social norms, which are established through social connection (Hyde et al., 2016). Social norms are strong predictors of volunteer retention (Hyde et al., 2016), including in relation to the perceived expectation of continued organizational commitment and service to the cause (Hyde & Knowles, 2013; Finkelstein et al., 2005, as cited in Hyde et al., 2016).

### ***Benefits of Organizational Commitment***

While experience and satisfaction predict retention among new volunteers, organizational commitment, an extension of volunteer identity and loyalty, predicts retention among volunteers who have been involved for more than a year (Figure 1; Hyde et al., 2016, p. 58). While functional

considerations, such as meaningful roles, are influential in establishing organizational commitment, interactional management is critical. Interactional functions, including establishing organizational pride, identification, and relationships with leadership (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014), supporting participation in organizational planning (Wallaraff, 2010; Craig-Lees et al., 2008; Hong et al., 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013) and recognizing volunteers for their efforts (Hyde et al., 2016) all evoke organizational loyalty and commitment. Smaller organizations have been found to have higher volunteer retention rates, even though they also typically have less volunteer infrastructure, affirming the importance of nurturing volunteer relationships (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Organizational commitment must be cultivated through a combination of functional and interactional volunteer management dimensions, and while not necessarily an explicit task for volunteer managers, intention to build organizational commitment must be embedded within volunteer management frameworks as a foundational principle.

## **Conclusion**

This review of the literature related to volunteer management demonstrates the recurring theme of balance, and the application of functional and interactional management approaches to recruit and retain a community of impactful, satisfied volunteers. Volunteer management involves optimizing standardized practices to suit the organizational and volunteer program context, and balancing structure and process with flexibility (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Management practices that attend to both the functional and interactional nature of volunteerism are critical aspects of volunteer engagement and retention, creating the conditions for volunteer success.

Macduff et al. (2009) identify a gap in literature that was evident throughout this review; there is no theoretical framework applicable with consistency across the diverse organizational and volunteer contexts that characterize the sector. Due to the nature of volunteerism, the spectrum of types of volunteers, volunteer roles, and management approaches can lead to contradicting information, as is evidenced in the example of motives and cultural festival volunteers. This is also true of the types of organizations investigated. In Western Canada, where the author of this literature review resides, there are numerous environmental non-profit organizations with engaged volunteer bases, yet not one of the articles included in this review mentioned environmental organizations. Instead, health and social welfare, events, sports, and tourism were commonly identified. Many areas have yet to be investigated and discussed. As individuals in the developed world are increasingly committed to engaging in action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, volunteerism in the environmental sector is an important area of exploration.

## **Methodology and Methods**

This project involved two research phases. A literature review was initially conducted to develop an in-depth understanding of the relevant research; inform the development of project research instruments; and to better understand contextual factors associated with volunteerism to ground and interpret project findings. The literature review explored two major facets of volunteer research; traditional volunteer research, where volunteers assume long-term roles with a specific purpose and regular, recurring commitments, and episodic volunteer research, where volunteers engage in periodic, flexible roles. The intent in exploring both types of volunteerism as a foundation for this project was twofold. One, episodic volunteerism is increasingly popular, and with the self-organizing model Pacific Wild is interested in, many volunteers could likely be identified as episodic. Yet much of the episodic volunteer literature references foundational principles explored in traditional volunteer literature, which leads us to the second reason it was important to explore both types of volunteerism.

The literature review was followed by a primary research phase where Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves community members were engaged through an optional survey and focus group. This approach offered the opportunity to supplement literature review findings with perspectives that represented specific members of the Save BC Wolves community.

The University of Victoria Human Research and Ethics Board approved this project on April 7, 2022; ethics protocol number 21-0667 (See Appendix G).

This chapter details the project methodology, methods and key tasks, data analysis, conceptual framework, reliability and validity, and limitations and delimitations.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Pacific Wild seeks to understand how to further engage the Save BC Wolves online community and translate that engagement into action that contributes to the Save BC Wolves campaign objective of stopping the aerial wolf cull in BC. The organization has limited resources to further develop this program and limited capacity for direct supervision to facilitate action. A conceptual framework where interactional management, focusing on relationship and experience, and functional management in the form of systems and processes are complementary and necessary components of effective management of volunteer communities where organizational objectives, as well as volunteer recruitment and retention, are all key outcomes. How Pacific Wild volunteers envision their participation in the Save BC Wolves campaign and the tools and supports they need to contribute to campaign outcomes are key concepts to explored in this study.

### **Methodology**

This research project involving the Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves community was initiated to identify recommendations for the development of a community engagement framework to facilitate self-led volunteering salient to Pacific Wild and the Save BC Wolves community. Data collected through this project involved input from Save BC Wolves members as to their expertise, availability, and preferred mechanisms of communication, engagement, and support from Pacific Wild, specifically in terms of training, resources, and other tools to facilitate independent volunteer action. This data surfaced key themes for consideration in the development of the volunteer community, which have been translated into a series of recommendations for Pacific Wild. Pacific Wild will use these recommendations to develop a community engagement framework to more effectively promote action among community members and increase the impact of the Save BC Wolves community.

As the purpose of this research was to inform the development of a volunteer engagement framework for Pacific Wild, a case study design explored considerations for facilitating meaningful self-led action in the context of environmental campaigns with limited capacity for volunteer management. A mixed methods approach was selected as an efficient means of collecting data from a large group of people with significant geographical distribution while still collecting qualitative data and incorporating participatory elements.

## **Methods**

As more than 3,000 individuals from across Canada and the world are members of the Save BC Wolves community, a survey offered an accessible and affordable means of member input. Quantitative data from the survey surfaced key themes for further exploration, while qualitative data was also collected to ensure community members had an avenue to offer additional comments and perspectives. Including text boxes for qualitative data questions also allowed respondents to address areas that they considered important that were not included in the survey. Further data was collected through an online focus group involving those who self-selected to participate through the survey. Focus groups facilitated additional exploration of key themes identified through the survey, helped refine survey findings, and enhanced community engagement among volunteers with a high interest in participation.

Study instruments were developed after an initial review of the literature. The survey incorporated questions about key themes in the literature, adapted to suit the Save BC Wolves context, and focus group questions were also developed to correlate with these themes and the primary research question. The survey and focus group questions were then reviewed by the Pacific Wild team and revised to incorporate their feedback and insights.

### ***The Survey***

Individuals join the Save BC Wolves community by signing up to participate and interact through an online community platform. The Save BC Wolves community has approximately 3,000 members; all members were invited to participate in the voluntary survey (See Appendix A). Target completion rates for the survey were for 90-150, or 3-5% of Pacific Wild Volunteers.

With the support of Pacific Wild staff, the survey was distributed through the Save BC Wolves community platform, with an initial post on April 13th. While scheduled to remain open for two weeks, initial response did not meet completion targets and the survey was extended until April 30th. Low uptake can likely be attributed to several factors, including relatively limited action within the Save BC Wolves community, as well as the length of the survey itself, which took approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. A total of three reminder posts were shared by Pacific Wild staff following the initial recruitment post, which encouraged community members to complete the survey and support the ongoing development of the Save BC Wolves program. Response rates were significantly stronger after each reminder post. Depending on individual settings on the community platform, members would receive an email notifying them of new posts. The community was apprised of the target completion numbers, and updates about the number of completed surveys were also shared as comments on the recruitment posts.

The survey was developed to allow optional anonymous completion; respondents could choose to submit the survey anonymously or with personal information that could be used by Pacific Wild to coordinate future action. Eighty-four percent of respondents chose to include their personal information. The decision to include an optional anonymous submission function was made to ensure that community members felt comfortable sharing their perspectives, including critiques of the

program, without compromising their relationship with Pacific Wild staff. The option for an anonymous submission also helped to ensure that responses were not collected only from a small subset of the community who did not have concerns about sharing their perspectives.

Members who completed the survey also had the opportunity to enter a draw for a \$150CAD gift card to the location of the winner's choosing; this gift card was offered as an incentive to participate. Respondents could enter to win the gift card directly through the survey, or if they wished to submit their survey anonymously, a Google Form was linked to collect emails in such a way that they were not associated with survey responses.

A total of 117 surveys were collected with a 65% completion rate.

### **Focus Group**

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents had the option to indicate whether they would like to learn more about participating in a focus group, the second phase of data collection for this study. Because respondents had the opportunity to complete the survey anonymously, a Google Form was set up to collect the emails of those interested in learning more about the focus group but did not want their personal information associated with their survey responses. Forty-seven percent of respondents opted to learn more about the focus group.

Once the survey closed, those who indicated they were interested in learning more about the focus group were contacted through e-mail, directly by the researcher, with additional details, a *Doodle Poll* link, and a copy of the consent form (See Appendix B). The researcher was available to answer any questions about the focus group, and offered a timeframe to submit all questions, indicate availability, and provide a completed consent form confirming participation. A date and time were confirmed with seven participants, and an agenda (See Appendix C), a guide for participation (See Appendix D), including instructions for setting up online participation without sharing personal information, and a virtual meeting link was provided. Six participants attended the hour-long discussion, which began with a land acknowledgement. An overview of the project, focus group purpose, and outline; a round table introduction; and a brief exercise to establish terms of engagement were followed by a discussion around three concepts:

- How members get started in the Save BC Wolves Community
- Benefits and challenges of self-organizing
- Planning and tools to support effective action

The discussion was guided by a set of questions and prompts around these concepts (See Appendix E). Following the conclusion of the discussion, a summary of focus group learnings was sent to focus group participants for review, approval, and any final input (See Appendix F).

### **Data Collection and Analysis Tasks**

Data collection instruments were developed collaboratively with Pacific Wild and were reviewed and approved prior to distribution. Data collection and analysis took place over the course of two months in the spring of 2022, and involved the following key steps:

- Develop and refine instruments and consent forms for survey and focus group
- Secure ethics approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board
- Identify recruitment methods to engage with target community
- Recruit survey participants and responses through the Save BC Wolves online community

- Create follow up information for potential focus group participants and email list for distribution
- Secure date and time, as well as signed consent forms, for the focus group
- Host, record, and transcribe focus groups with six participants
- Code and organize data from surveys and focus groups
- Distribute focus group findings to participants to review and affirm
- Develop report outlining findings and distribute to Pacific Wild and Save BC Wolves community members

## **Data Analysis**

A grounded theory approach guided data analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to identify patterns and themes in both the quantitative and qualitative data sets, which were cross referenced with the literature to interpret and construct an understanding of the interests of the Save BC Wolves community. Recommendations for a community engagement framework for Pacific Wild were developed from these patterns and themes.

Quantitative data collected through the survey provided insights into the preferences and interests of Save BC Wolves community members. This information will be directly applicable to the ongoing development of the Save BC Wolves community management structures. For example, preferences about types of content and frequency of dissemination will provide practical guidance to Pacific Wild about communication and engagement. Qualitative data collected through the survey was reviewed and coded to identify recurring themes and the extent to which those themes were identified by survey respondents.

Data collected through the focus groups was recorded and transcribed. The transcript was then reviewed, with key points extracted from the discussion and collated. A thematic analysis approach was used, where key points were organized into groupings and larger categories. The structure of this study and the categories identified through the thematic analysis further supported an inductive analysis, where learnings were developed rather than tested, and information to inform Pacific Wild leadership of the Save BC Wolves community was identified.

## **Limitations, Delimitations, Strengths**

### ***Limitations***

As this is a case study, one of the primary limitations is related to generalization beyond specific organizational context. Given that the purpose of this study is to surface recommendations for Pacific Wild, this lack of generalization is not of particular concern, but should be considered if findings are applied outside of the Save BC Wolves community.

Two limitations emerged with respect to the literature. First, there is limited literature that explores self-organizing volunteers, as in the Pacific Wild community. Most literature espouses the importance of the volunteer coordinator. Second, the term “volunteer” may be a limitation itself; members of the Save BC Wolves community may not identify as volunteers. However, for the purposes of this project, where the intent was to determine how community members could be increasingly engaged in activities contributing to the organizational mission, volunteerism was identified as an appropriate concept through which to explore the research questions.

Participation was also a limitation; 117 responses were collected from more than 3,000 members. Where descriptive analysis looks at a sample population, rather than an entire population, it is important to note that the findings may not be representative of the entire community and are

representative of the respondent sample only. Those who participated in the survey and focus group likely represent a small portion of volunteers who are more interested and engaged, rather than the majority who did not participate. Response demographics indicate that the results of this study primarily represent community members who are forty-five or older who live in British Columbia, and who are professionals, self-employed, or are retired. Young people and people facing barriers to employment likely are not well represented in this sample. The rate of response was an anticipated challenge due to lack of activity and engagement in the community preceding the study. During the study the number of recruitment posts encouraging participation was increased due to initial low response. Posts included the target number of completed surveys (initially 150, adjusted to 100) and an update about total completed surveys.

A further limitation was the completion rate of the survey, which was 65%. This is likely mostly due to the length of the survey (25-30 minutes). Lower completion rate may also be partially explained by the inclusion of optional questions about personal identifying information.

Additionally, statistical analysis techniques and measures of internal consistency across questions, like Cronbach's alpha, were not applied to the results of this survey; reliability may be low. Findings reflect the interests and needs of current volunteers, which may shift with organization efforts to further grow and establish the Save BC Wolves community. The final limitation that must be considered, is that indicating interest through participation in the study is not equivalent to an active volunteer commitment; study participation rates and findings do not necessarily equate to, or translate to, volunteer activity.

### ***Delimitations***

This study collected input from volunteers to inform the development of recommendations for a volunteer framework; the volunteer framework itself is beyond the scope of this project. Research activities engage existing volunteers; new volunteers will not have the opportunity to offer insights to inform the development of the community at this time. Engaging existing volunteers over a limited time-period provides information in the form of a "snapshot", rather than an evolving picture reflective of unique contextual and cultural considerations.

### ***Strengths***

The purpose of this project is to support Pacific Wild to improve engagement and action within the Save BC Wolves community. The case study methodology, complemented by the literature review, surfaced information both specific to the community in question, as well as the general volunteer sector, allowing findings and recommendations to emerge that consider contextual application of generalized best practices.

The mixed-methods approach, including a focus group, ensured rich exploration of key themes and the quantitative data, as well as an opportunity to facilitate collaborative development of the community and build buy-in and leadership capacity among a small subset of volunteers. The mutual development of volunteers and the volunteer program can be leveraged within the community to build social connections, community, and organizational commitment. Further, specific strengths of volunteers who chose to share personal information when submitting their survey responses will allow Pacific Wild to engage with these volunteers on specific campaigns that benefit from specific areas of expertise found within the community and ensure that those individuals have opportunities to participate in ways that align with their strengths and interests.

## Findings

One-hundred-and-seventeen surveys were collected from more than 3,000 Save BC Wolves community members, with a completion rate of 65%. The survey was designed to provide insights into the interests and preferences of Save BC Wolves members with respect to their participation and engagement in the Save BC Wolves community. The survey was organized into eight sections that explored communications, community, knowledge and skill sets, taking action, leadership, motivations, recognition, and an optional demographics section.

The focus group was attended by six participants located primarily in BC, ranging from early twenties to retirement age. Through this discussion, focus group participants explored three concepts: getting started as a volunteer in the save BC wolves community; benefits and challenges of self-organizing among community members; and planning and tools to support effective action. These findings offered further context for learnings from the survey, including a better understanding of some of the emotions, perceptions, and barriers associated with advocating for wolves in British Columbia.

### Survey

Findings from the survey provided a wide variety of insights about the interests and preferences of Save BC Wolves community members. Learnings from the survey will offer Pacific Wild information to guide the further development of the Save BC Wolves community framework.

### Demographics

While there was an option to submit the survey anonymously, 72 respondents chose to share their personal information with the understanding that they may be contacted by Pacific Wild to participate in community activities. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the respondents are over the age of 45, with 31% of respondents identifying as part of the 65+ category (See **Error! Reference source not found.**). Thirty-three percent indicated they were employed full time, 28% were retired, 17% were self-employed, with others identifying as part-time, casual, unemployed, on-leave, or students.

Of the 72 respondents that chose to share their location, 63 lived in locations across Canada, with the majority located in British Columbia (See Figure 3), while others lived in the United States of America, Ireland, Germany, and Great Britain. Information about the gender of respondents was not collected as the researcher and Pacific Wild agreed that it was not specifically relevant to the research question.

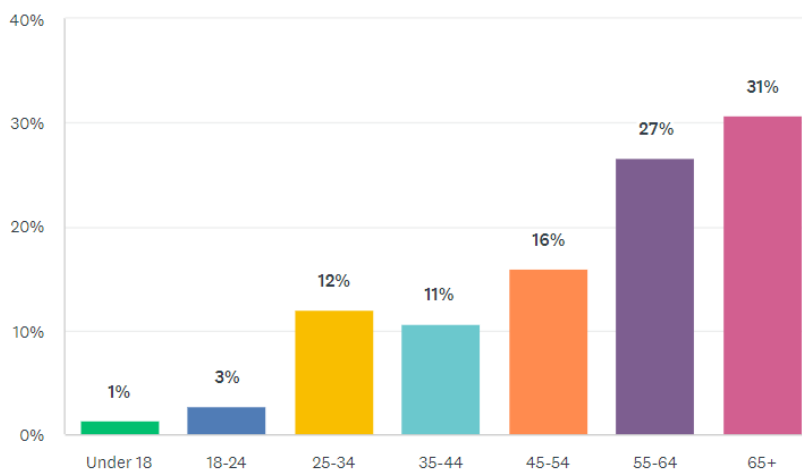


Figure 2. Age of Save BC Wolves community survey respondents.



*Figure 3. Location of Canadian survey respondents. Larger text indicates higher concentrations of respondents.*

### **Communications**

Fifty-three percent of respondents indicated they felt only somewhat informed about the Save BC Wolves community, with 88% requesting information on how to take action. Another 82% indicated they would like to be informed about progress towards ending the wolf cull, while 64% wanted to hear how Pacific Wild staff were taking action and 51% wanted to know how other community members were taking action. Information about other conservation initiatives was also of interest to 52% of respondents. Six responses were collected through the comment box, requesting information about research on the efficacy of wolf culls on caribou conservation; updates on Pacific Wild’s court case against the Province of BC; current policies and political accountability; the landscape of inter-organizational communications and collaborations; what can be learned from successful campaigns with similar conservation goals; and engaging content to prompt discussion.

A preference to receive information monthly was selected by 38% of respondents, 32% preferred weekly updates, and 24% preferred to receive information only when there were new developments or opportunities to take action. Respondents in the 18-24 and 55-64 age ranges were most likely to prefer communications with a weekly frequency, while all other age categories indicated a monthly preference for updates on community activities. The majority of respondents supplemented information about the wolf cull from outside of Pacific Wild; those over the age of 45 were more likely to do so. Traditional news media, other conservation groups, and individual advocates were the primary sources of information outside of Pacific Wild.

The Save BC Wolves online platform was another aspect of communications explored through this survey. Only 10% of respondents feel comfortable using the features of the Save BC Wolves online platform and only 4% indicated they engage on the platform. While 25% of respondents indicated that they engage occasionally on the platform, 22% said they would if they were more familiar. Those 45 and older were more likely to indicate that their engagement on the platform would increase if they were more familiar. Depending on the format, training to use the Save BC Wolves platform was of interest to 51% of respondents; 20% indicated they would participate in training regardless of format and 28%

were not interested in training for the platform. The answer “No” in response to the question “Would you be interested in training related to the Save BC Wolves online platform training to use the platform?” was the least likely answer to be selected across age ranges. Seventy-one percent of respondents preferred self-directed training. For some, virtual training was preferred due to geographic location. Thirty-five percent indicated they liked the online platform, while 47% of respondents shared that they did not use the platform enough to know if they liked it.

### Community

When respondents were asked if they knew other people in the Save BC Wolves community, 50% selected “No”, while thirty-six percent indicated they would like to know others in the community and 14% indicated they had existing connections within the community, ranging from a couple to many (See Figure 4). When asked how important it is to make friends or personal connections in the Save BC Wolves community, the average answer was two, on a zero-five Likert scale question where five was very important. Depending on the activity or the format, most respondents indicated they may attend community socials outside of volunteer activities. Nearly half of the respondents would invite a friend to join the Save BC Wolves community.

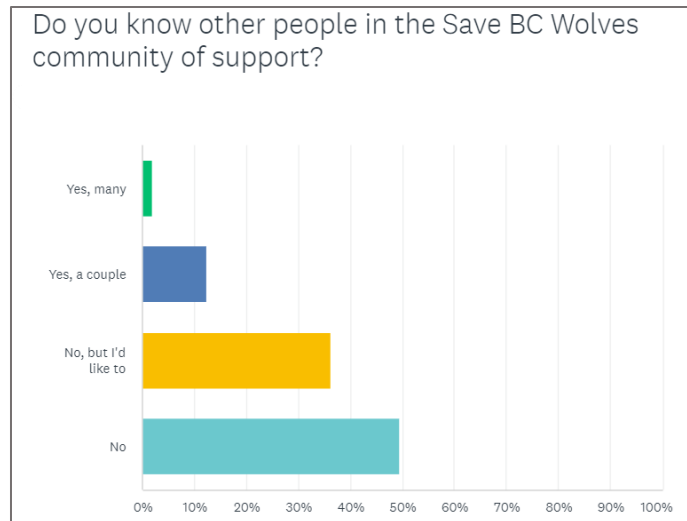


Figure 4. Respondents indicate their connections within the Save BC Wolves community.

### Knowledge and Skill Sets

Ninety-six respondents provided an answer to the question, “What are you knowledgeable about or skilled at? Please select all that apply”. Twenty-three responses were collected through the “Other” option in response to that question, and an additional sixty-two responses were collected from the comment box asking, “Please share a bit about your unique skills and talents and how you would like to contribute to the Save BC Wolves community.” Figure 5 depicts 48 areas of expertise indicated by respondents.

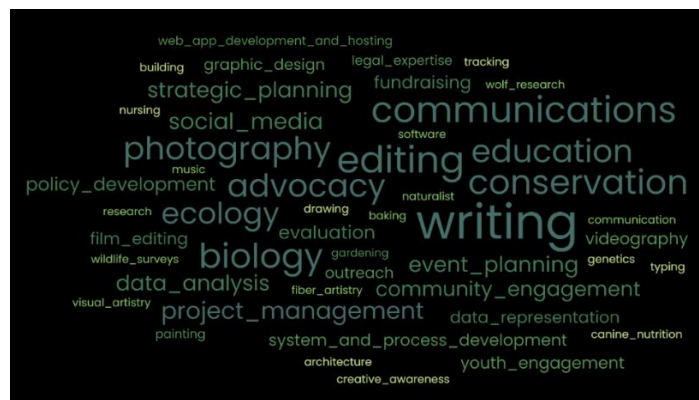


Figure 5. Areas of knowledge and skill sets within the Save BC Wolves community. Larger text indicates higher concentrations of respondents.

Writing was the most frequently identified skill, selected by 36 respondents. Editing was selected as a skill by 25 people, communications by 24, biology and conservation by 22 respectively, advocacy, education, and photography were all selected by 20 respondents, ecology by 18 and project management by 12. One respondent shared that they are skilled researchers, specifically with respect to locating, tracking, trapping, and handling gray wolves, while numerous others indicated an aptitude for the arts and creative awareness community initiatives. Responses demonstrated an interest among volunteers both to apply their own areas of expertise to efforts to end the wolf cull, as well as to develop new competencies. For example, one respondent wrote,

*"I've noted editing and writing because I do a fair bit of this in my work, I love writing and am a stickler for accurate communication. I'm interested in community engagement and event planning but don't really have formal experience in this area; I am keen to hone skills in this area should the opportunity arise."*

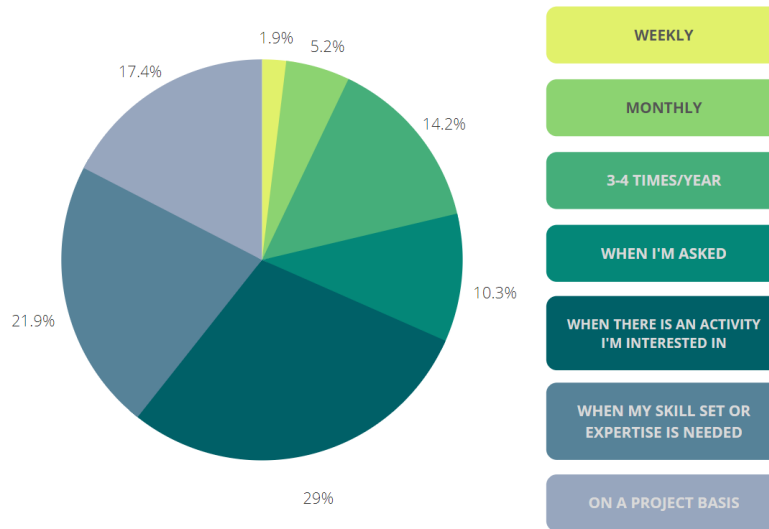
Responses can largely be grouped into six categories, with actions involving a spectrum of engagement ranging from quick ways to help, such as amplifying messaging, to more involved contributions such as research or strategic planning. Most members indicated their contributions could involve some form of **public advocacy**, including message amplification; event planning; or community engagement in the form of public education, outreach, or creative awareness involving the arts. Another significant area of interest relates to **communications**; several respondents expressed strong writing and editing skills, as well as conservation photography and videography skills and science communication expertise. **Political advocacy** was a major area of interest as many members expressed a commitment to e-mailing their political representatives or sharing petitions within their networks. Some respondents shared an interest in contributing to **strategic planning** and organizing initiatives within the Save BC Wolves community, while others were interested in supporting **research** or communicating with relevant researchers. Finally, some respondents also mentioned an interest in helping with **fundraising** initiatives or supporting the community through donations, particularly if there was a clear strategic plan in place for the community.

### **Taking Action**

When asked "Do you feel like you have a good sense of how you can take action to end the aerial killing of wolves in BC through the Save BC Wolves community?", 45% answered "No", 52% answered "Somewhat" and only 3% answered "Yes". Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated they would be interested in resources that would support them to take action. A combination of formats was preferred by 49%, with online reference documents and videos being the most popular. Twenty four percent of respondents were interested in training to take action, 45% might be interested, and 31% were not interested. In answer to this question, those in the age category 25-34 were most likely to be in favour of in person training. A strong preference for self-directed training, for example, on demand videos, was expressed by 63% and live virtual training was of interest to 40%. One response collected through the comment box asked, "How does a U.S. citizen take action?".

Ten most common skill sets identified within the Save BC Wolves community:

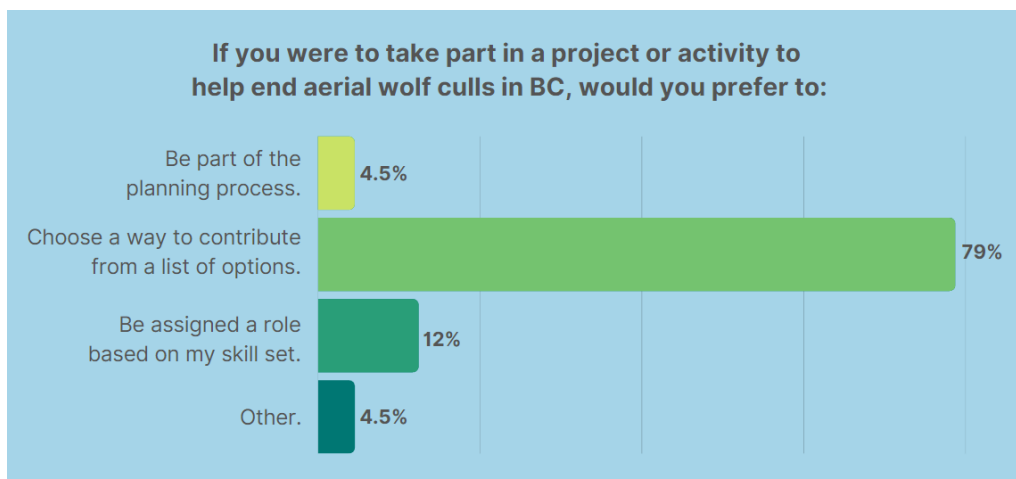
- Writing
- Editing
- Communications
- Biology
- Conservation
- Advocacy
- Education
- Photography
- Ecology
- Project Management



**HOW FREQUENTLY SBCW MEMBERS WANT TO PARTICIPATE**

*Figure 6. How frequently Save BC Wolves members want to participate in community activities.*

With respect to frequency of participation in activities to end the wolf cull, most respondents would prefer to be involved on a project basis in alignment with their interests or where their skill set is applicable (See Figure 6). Seventy-nine percent of respondents prefer to choose a way to contribute from a list of options, while 12% of respondents would rather be assigned a role based on their skill set, and only 4.5% would like to be involved in planning community activities (See Figure 7). Another 4.5% selected the “Other” option and indicated that they could not help at this time.



*Figure 7. Respondents indicate how they would like to contribute to Save BC Wolves activities.*

**Leadership**

A series of questions were asked to explore leadership potential among respondents. Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated they have a moderate to significant amount of experience planning projects, while 25% have some experience and 40% have none. The same responses were collected for a similar question about experience with project implementation. Using a zero-five-point Likert scale where zero was not at all and five was very, the majority of people, 69%, answered zero, one, or two when asked how comfortable they were with the idea of leading a small-scale project from start to

finish. Only 31% selected three or higher. Similarly, in response to a question asking how comfortable respondents were with coordinating the involvement of others in a small project, 74% indicated they were not comfortable by answering zero, one, or two. When asked about preferences related to organizing a project or activity in support of the Save BC Wolves goal, 39% said they would prefer not to organize a project or activity and 34% indicated they would prefer to “Collaborate with a small group and Pacific Wild staff to create a calendar of projects members can sign up to be involved in”.

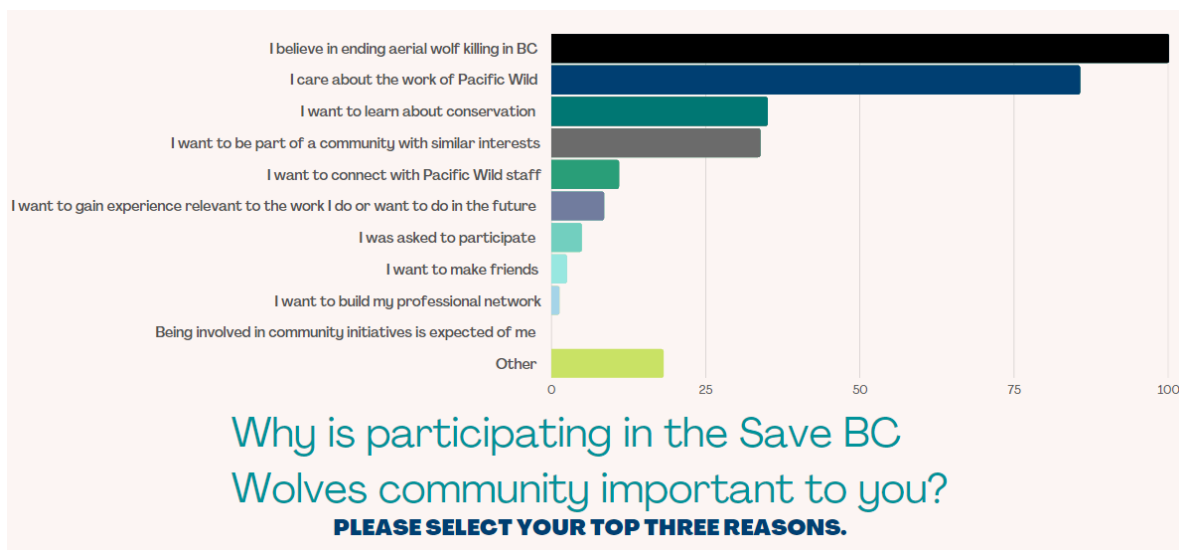
**Motivation**

Respondents were asked to select their top three reasons for becoming involved in non-profit or community initiatives. The top five selections included:

**Table 1.** Top reasons for becoming involved in non-profit or community initiatives.

<i>To help address issues that are important to me</i>	96%
<i>To support people doing meaningful work</i>	71%
<i>Community service is an important way to give back</i>	45%
<i>For personal growth</i>	37%
<i>Other</i>	22%

Having a voice or sharing one’s voice in support of conservation where government was reluctant to take action were predominant themes in the “Other” response box. One respondent answered, “Doing something about the scary future of the planet helps me feel less anxious and gives me a sense of control”. When respondents were asked to select their top three reasons for participating in the Save BC Wolves community specifically (See Figure 8), all respondents answered that they believed in ending aerial wolf killing in BC, 86% answered that they cared about the work of Pacific Wild, 35% indicated they wanted to learn more about conservation, and 34% wanted to be part of a community with similar interests. Eighteen percent shared an answer in the comment box; many of the answers touched on the respondent’s love for wolves or concerns about lack of action on critical conservation issues. One respondent shared, “I was raised to respect the land and animals and I want to ensure it is sustainable for future generations.”



**Figure 8.** Respondents indicate their top three reasons why participating in the Save BC Wolves community is important to them.

## **Recognition**

When asked for their top three preferences for recognition of their contributions towards ending the wolf cull, “With educational learning opportunities” was by far the most popular selection with 78% of respondents indicating this preference. Prizes, like Pacific Wild branded items, was also a popular choice, selected by 52%. A call or e-mail from Pacific Wild staff was selected by 43% of participants. Forty-six percent provided an answer in the comment box, the vast majority indicating that recognition was not important to them.

## **Focus Group**

Findings from a focus group discussion offered further context for learnings from the survey, including a better understanding of some of the emotions, perceptions, and barriers associated with advocating for wolves in British Columbia. Fifty-five survey respondents indicated an interest in participating in the focus group, though only ten responded to follow up information and confirmed their interest through a doodle poll to determine availability. Of the ten respondents, seven individuals, primarily located in British Columbia, with two participants joining from Alberta, took part in the online focus group discussion that took place over the course of an hour and a half. The remaining three people were unable to participate due to unforeseen circumstances; they were provided with a summary of the discussion and given the opportunity to provide additional feedback. Three participants identified in the 55-64 age category, while one individual identified as belonging to each of the following age categories: 45-54, 25-34, and 18-24. Those individuals who did not participate but provided feedback belonged to the 65+ category (2) and the 55-64 category. One individual opted not to provide personal information. A mutual decision between the researcher and Pacific Wild was made not to request information about gender as it was not considered necessary for the development of the volunteer framework, so gender data is not available. Insights from the focus group are summarized in this section.

Focus group questions prompted discussion around three key themes, which included getting started as a volunteer in the save BC wolves community; benefits and challenges of self-organizing among community members; and planning and tools to support effective action. The primary focus of the discussion centred on training, particularly around advocacy, because it was seen as critical in equipping Save BC Wolves community members to engage as new members, self-organize, and successfully share campaign messaging across a wide range of audiences.

## ***Developing the Community Knowledge Base to Inspire Action***

Advocacy is not without challenges; it can be intimidating and uncomfortable. Save BC Wolves members are concerned individuals who may not have pertinent training and experience, yet they want to feel informed and capable of facilitating discussion and dialogue that engages the everyday person to thoughtfully consider their position on the cull. One focus group member suggested that advocacy training would build confidence, as well as offer a foundation that can be adapted to diverse contexts or applied to specific skill sets. As a musician, they felt being more informed about the wolf cull may allow them to share the Save BC Wolves message through their musical talents. Save BC Wolves and Pacific Wild are interest groups where people who are already concerned about conservation gravitate; raising awareness is important as the everyday person does not know about the wolf cull even though environment and conservation issues impact everyone. Yet focus group members shared that people are often disinterested, disengaged, and apathetic about issues like the wolf cull. One participant expressed that because progress towards changing attitudes is difficult to see and feel, advocacy can be disappointing and discouraging, and make it seem as if action is ineffective. Several members of the

focus group shared the sentiment that knowledge offers a platform to engage in dialogue; even if a conversation is not met with enthusiasm, providing thought provoking information for reflection feels like meaningful progress.

Effective advocacy, including the ability to answer an array of questions in an informative way, involves understanding both the arguments for and against the cull. Understanding and countering opposing arguments requires familiarity with facts, data, and how wolf cull supporters benefit or perceive benefits. One focus group participant expressed that in their experience, "...you have to have a strong rebuttal with facts." Wildlife management and those supporting the cull are perceived to be predominantly male, with hunting, agriculture, or resource-based interests. They are confident and vocal with their support of the cull, which can be intimidating. This is in contrast with the Save BC Wolves community, who could be characterized as stereotypically "polite Canadians" or "tree-huggers", which affects how messaging opposing the cull is disseminated and received. The cull may also be perceived as a rural versus urban issue, where a high proportion of rural supporters of the cull consider environmental and animal welfare advocates to be urban dwellers ignorant of rural issues associated with wolves. Understanding Indigenous perspectives of the cull and alternative wildlife management practices is also essential. Without resources and training, Save BC Wolves members have a fear of compromising progress through escalated discussions with those in support of the cull, which prevents them from participating in or organizing group initiatives. One focus group member outlined their fears that their efforts may actually hinder progress towards ending the cull, saying, "I just feel...uncomfortable, and of course you don't want to make a mistake that p\*\*\*\*\* people off and then you put the whole situation back..."

Further, the group shared the sentiment that those in support of the cull very quickly organize to engage government officials. Reaching out to government officials can feel like a vulnerable exercise, and community members want to feel equipped to effectively make use of their own time and energy, as well as that of the official they are meeting with. One focus group participant shared their experience of meeting with their MLA as being intimidating. Not knowing official protocol or feeling confident in the messaging they wanted to share meant that it took them over a year to reach out to their MLA after first getting the idea. Having training and an opportunity to practice with others would have been helpful, particularly as the MLA had already been informed by advocates of the opposing position in support of the cull. They went on to say,

*"...we need to be prepared. What do the places [in support of the wolf cull] say? Because we have to be able to speak against them and not be blindsided when somebody says oh, but they said this, and you know, that should be OK. And if you don't have an answer ready it, you're just caught there."*

Politicians represent their constituents, and the Save BC Wolves community needs to represent themselves and engage other constituents and empower them to connect with their government representatives, yet the confidence and skills to do this need to be cultivated.

### ***Self Organizing***

Clarifying the Save BC Wolves objectives and priorities and developing a roadmap with the vision to achieve objectives was a key recommendation that emerged from the focus group. These strategic planning pieces will benefit member experience and increase community capacity to self-organize. The group identified program assets and activities that would complement the strategic vision and be instrumental to taking impactful action. Consolidated, accessible facts and data coupled with advocacy training, practice discussions, and tools and resources outlining what to do, and what not to

do, will improve confidence and serve as a foundation for the diverse and creative application of member skills, resulting in a multi-pronged, strengthened stance. Ending the cull is widely supported. Enabling and empowering people to communicate their perspective will amplify the voices of Save BC Wolves members, and increase Save BC Wolves membership. One focus group member referred to the work of Malcolm Gladwell (2000), noting that amplifying voices will help bring about the “tipping point”, which Gladwell explains as the moment when change can no longer be ignored. They further expanded on Gladwell’s work, where he draws on the 80/20 principle, that states that 80% of the work will be done by 20% of participants with specific skill sets and dedication to the cause. Yet organizational leadership must create the conditions for this volunteer group to bring about that tipping point as part of a dedicated community whose efforts and talents are strategically leveraged. Enabling this group to self-organize by facilitating connections and providing the necessary information and skills to sell the public on the importance of ending the wolf cull will be critical to the success of the Save BC Wolves strategy.

### ***Changing the Narrative***

Finally, there was considerable discussion within the group about how wolves as successful, adaptive species are vilified, yet species like the grizzly similarly impact caribou and other species, and have benefited from conservation initiatives that transform public perceptions. With perceptions of the “Big Bad Wolf”, people do not see wolves as critical members of an ecological community. Emphasizing ecological and science-based reasons to end the wolf cull was one strategy that was suggested, while studying successful conservation initiatives of other vilified species (orca, grizzly) to surface learnings to inform the Save BC Wolves strategy and approach was another. One focus group member even suggested that with their background in research and biology, they could lead a project focused on the initial identification of this type of information to be further developed for campaign messaging. Gladwell’s work was also referenced with respect to the “stickiness factor”, emphasizing that the specific content of a message must be memorably impactful to contribute to meaningful change.

Additional ideas for action, as well as areas members would like to learn more about to better understand the complexity of the issue, were also identified. While these ideas are not necessarily related to the research question, they have been documented for Pacific Wild (See Appendix F).

### **Summary of Research Findings**

Across both the survey and the focus group, the predominant message was that Save BC Wolves members want to be more informed. This includes both a better understanding the facts and data that support ending the cull and the arguments in favour of maintaining the cull, as well as how to organize and take action to share Save BC Wolves messaging. Clarifying priorities and objectives, providing more training and resources - primarily virtual and self-directed - would be beneficial to member’s capacity to be involved and self-organize. This includes training on how to use the Save BC Wolves online platform. Advocacy can be intimidating and discouraging, particularly when engaging with people who are not familiar with the issue or the vocal, confident supporters of the cull.

With respect to communications, regular updates with a weekly to monthly frequency are preferred. Some of the data collected about community connections was contradictory; making friends was not particularly important yet being part of a community with similar interests was. There was some interest in collaborating with other members, but in general, comfort with respect to leadership from within the group and self-organizing was low. Instead, members prefer to choose a way to contribute from a list of opportunities, rather than developing and implementing a new initiative on their own. Contributing to Save BC Wolves on a project basis, particularly where specific skills are needed or when

the project is especially interesting to members, is the preferred mechanism of involvement. Educational learning opportunities are a popular form of recognition.

The majority of respondents are 65 years of age or older. Many are employed full time or are retired, and most live in Canada. Collectively, they possess a wide variety of skills, including 48 skills or knowledge areas. Members are primarily motivated by their concern about the wolf cull and their interest in supporting meaningful work, and many believe that changing the perception of the wolf is key to the success of the Save BC Wolves campaign.

## Discussion and Analysis

Four sub questions guide the analysis of study findings in answer to the primary research question:

*How can Pacific Wild leverage volunteers to increase engagement and consequently, impact, in wolf conservation in a way that is feasible with current staffing and financial models?*

A significant challenge in answering this question arose both in the literature review, and in the primary study itself. There is limited literature about self-organizing of volunteers; much of the literature suggests that guidance both in the form of relationships with organizational staff and resources are important factors in successful volunteer mobilization and retention. It was also noted throughout the survey and the focus group that community members felt there were some significant barriers to their ability to self-organize, and that there was limited interest and capacity to self-organize. However, this may shift if volunteers develop increased confidence in their abilities to take action in alignment with the Pacific Wild vision for the Save BC Wolves community, which is possible with strategic investment into both the functional aspect of volunteer management in the form of resources, and interactional management in the form of relationships within the community and with Pacific Wild staff, as well as positive perceptions of volunteer impact, building confidence among volunteers and demonstrating progress towards the shared community vision. While the analysis and discussion that follows explores where Pacific Wild and other associated organizations may be able to leverage volunteer expertise and experience to develop tools to support capacity building within the community that may eventually translate to self-organizing, Pacific Wild staff will have to provide additional oversight within the community to successfully engage Save BC Wolves volunteers.

### Research Question #1

*What tools and information do Pacific Wild volunteers need to self-mobilize in meaningful activities that align with the Pacific Wild mission for the Save BC Wolves Campaign and Pacific Wild organizational values?*

#### **Information, Tools, and Training**

When asked whether respondents had a good sense of how they can take action against the aerial cull through the Save BC Wolves community, 45% answered “No” and 52% answered “Somewhat”. Only three percent of respondents indicated they had a good sense of how they can contribute to community goals, suggesting that tools and information, as well as training related to taking action are necessary additions to the Save BC Wolves program. Access to information galvanizes action (Eimhjellen et al., 2014); access to information must be enabled through both a functional and interactional lens. Focus group participants suggested that complementing information availability and support tools with training will further establish competencies within the Save BC Wolves community, which is consistent with the work of Dunn et al. (2020), who found that resources and guided training were popular formats for information sharing and development among volunteers. Volunteer capacities are critical to their interest and ability to take ownership of their role.

Most survey respondents felt resources for action would be beneficial, indicating a preference for a combination of formats including video and online reference documents. Respondents were less keen to engage in live training, preferring a self-directed model, yet discussions during the focus group

did indicate that advocacy training would be beneficial to complete as a collective, allowing participants to practice their learnings through dialogue with others. While much of the literature refers to training during onboarding, respondents identified learning opportunities as a key area of interest in terms of recognition for their involvement, which serves the dual purpose of developing relevant capacities while stewarding community members. Moreover, ongoing training allows consideration of specific topics that may be more relevant as the status of the wolf cull varies in response to evolving public opinion. There are additional implications for investing in training as an ongoing pillar of the Save BC Wolves program; opportunities to develop new skills enables members to take on additional responsibilities, equating to higher satisfaction levels and consequently, duration of service (Cnaan & Handy, 2005; and Cnaan et al. 2017, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020). Training that includes an interactive element facilitates social connections important to establishing community (Camplin, 2009). Finally, investing in training will also support the development of leadership volunteers, expanding capacity for self-organization within the group. Feedback may also be considered a tool for training and development. Though feedback is important for ongoing volunteer development (Traeger & Alfes, 2019), it must be handled delicately. A group review of the successes and challenges following community activities may offer a constructive avenue for providing peer feedback.

Volunteers must be aware of opportunities, supports, and resources from a functional perspective (Eimhjellen et al., 2014), and in the case of the Save BC Wolves community, where self-organization is a cornerstone of the program, this extends to awareness of community objectives and priorities, and strategies to achieve those objectives. This breadth of understanding will enable volunteers to identify their own unique ways to contribute, satisfying the balance between clarity of role and autonomy, while helping the Save BC Wolves campaign leverage the unique talents that exist within the community and amplify the voices, and potential, of the community. One focus group participant suggested that increasing capacity among volunteers to disseminate the Save BC Wolves message will help move the issue towards the “tipping point”, where the issue can no longer be ignored (Gladwell, 2000). In the case that community objectives, priorities, and strategies have not yet been identified, Save BC Wolves members could be instrumental in identifying and articulating such guideposts.

The functional perspective expands beyond awareness of how individuals can contribute. Community members must also be equipped with an in-depth understanding of a complex issue; survey participants and focus group members identified a multitude of areas they felt were important to better understand for effective advocacy. The predominant areas of interest for further education were related to wolf ecology, biology, and behaviour to better understand how wolves contribute to resilient ecosystems and to foster discussions that shift public perspectives away from that of the “Big Bad Wolf”; data and statistics on wolves in relation to caribou populations, as well as annual cull activities; the arguments in support of ending the cull and alternative management strategies that could be explored, as well as the arguments in support of maintaining the cull, and how to counter those arguments. Advocacy can be intimidating and uncomfortable, and Save BC Wolves members want to feel confident in their knowledge and position to facilitate discussion and dialogue on behalf of the Save BC Wolves community, demonstrating the importance of considering interactional volunteer management in relation to functional volunteer management.

Volunteers need access to training and information to feel confident and be successful in their roles and even further, assume leadership roles within the volunteer community. Integrating a functional and interactional approach, instilling both knowledge and confidence in volunteers, is critical to supporting progressive development and proportionate responsibilities through training. Empowering volunteers with knowledge and confidence correlates with increased capabilities and engagement (Traeger & Alfes, 2019), enabling autonomy, and building satisfaction (Tang et al., 2009, as cited in

Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; and Studer, 2016). Demonstrating trust and value of volunteers through supporting role enlargement has an effect on both satisfaction and retention (Cnaan & Handy, 2005; Cnaan et al. 2017, as cited in Dunn et al., 2020; Hager & Brudney, 2008; and Lockstone 2004, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Supporting progressive responsibilities within the community also has a positive impact on organizational staff, who are reassured of volunteer competency and can feel comfortable with volunteers leading progress towards community goals and the organizational mission (Camplin, 2009).

### ***Organizational Communication***

Communications are also a considerable component of ensuring community members have the knowledge and resources to take action. In contrast to a limited understanding about how to take action, Save BC Wolves community members generally feel informed. A significant proportion of respondents follow information outside of that provided by Pacific Wild, at least to some extent. Because community members are exposed to more general messaging through news media, other conservation groups, and individual advocates, Pacific Wild should ensure a focus on more specific details that enable and empower community members to engage at a higher level. While a general understanding of the cull provides a foundation for individuals to identify their own position and align their support, it does not necessarily support them to take action towards ending the cull, particularly given that the cull is considered a contentious and divisive issue. In addition to how to take action and progress towards ending the cull, new developments and new opportunities to take action were of particular interest.

In addition to providing specific information about how Save BC Wolves community members can help end the cull, organizational updates should be shared both in terms of progress towards ending the wolf cull and activities that Pacific Wild is involved in or coordinating, and how Pacific Wild is collaborating with other conservation groups. These organizational updates help community members shape their perception and understanding of the organization, the community, and where they can establish a role for themselves within the community (Hyde et al., 2016). Further, highlighting volunteers as individuals and how they've contributed to the Save BC Wolves campaign can inspire others with ideas of how to take action, serve as a recognition strategy, and build community. Advocacy in the modern context, where people are overwhelmed and increasingly apathetic in response to constant crisis, can be discouraging and isolating according to community members. Evidence of progress offers encouragement and a sense of collective impact. Sharing the societal value and impact of volunteer engagement helps build optimism and community in response to the challenges associated with advocacy (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014; Hager & Brudney, 2008).

Thoughtful communications strategies balance awareness of frequency and relevancy of content to build trusting relationships where community members are empowered to creatively apply their skill sets (Chandler, 2008, as cited in Camplin, 2009; Hyde et al., 2016). Over communication may overwhelm recipients (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Most Save BC Wolves members preferred information be disseminated monthly, though nearly as many preferred a weekly basis. This is consistent with the position of Traeger and Alfes (2019), who note the importance of regular distribution of information in a multitude of formats. Diversity in delivery formats was also of interest to the Save BC Wolves community. Informal virtual meetings, where community members can connect and learn together or from one another were also expressed as an interest. Traeger and Alfes (2019) espouse the importance of meetings for both organizing and volunteer connections. Further, focus group participants suggested that opportunities to collectively practice their advocacy skills would be beneficial.

## Research Question #2

*How do members of Save BC Wolves want to communicate with one another and self-organize?*

### ***The Save BC Wolves Community***

To address the question, “How do members of Save BC Wolves want to communicate with one another and self-organize?”, the concept of community is first explored. Learning about member’s perspectives and experiences of social connections and relationships within the community offers a foundational understanding of whether sufficient connections existed to support inter-member communication independent of Pacific Wild. Inter-member connection and communication are necessary to support self-organization and collaboration. Nearly 50% of respondents indicated that they did not know others in the Save BC Wolves community, while 36% indicated they did not know others but would like to. Only 14% have existing connections within the group. This suggests that the existing social connections to support independent organizing among community members may be lacking. While most respondents indicated that community connection within Save BC Wolves was not especially important to them, when asked about motivations for volunteering, 34% of respondents selected “The opportunity to be part of a community with similar interests”, as one of their top three reasons for volunteering. While these responses are somewhat contradictory, 80% indicated they would consider attending a community social in their response to separate question. Collectively, these findings suggest that community is an important underlying function of meaningful engagement and self-organizing potential within the Save BC Wolves community, particularly when considered together with the literature. Community strengthens and enhances volunteer attitudes, contributions, and commitment (Betz & Judkin, 1975; Fedor, 2001, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013) through respect and trust, and is instrumental in the development of leadership capacity from within the community (Camplin, 2009).

Integrating community building across community activities and messaging would be a beneficial priority in the next stage of developing the capacity of the Save BC Wolves community, from both the functional and interactional perspective. From a functional perspective, this involves developing internal processes and systems that establish community connections, for example, developing an onboarding process where new community members are introduced to mentors or regularly sharing profiles of members to help people get to know their fellow volunteers. From an interactional perspective, integrating opportunities for community members to connect through Save BC Wolves activities will enhance social connections, for example, facilitating a discussion in the comment section when posting news about the cull; including a breakout room with an icebreaker question as an introductory activity when hosting a learning opportunity; or having members themselves host or present during learning opportunities. These examples demonstrate the interrelatedness of the functional and interactional approach.

Another advantage of a strong volunteer community emerged through this study. It was noted in both the survey and the focus group that advocacy can be very isolating; developing a supportive community will not only contribute to engagement, leadership development, and retention, but also offer those advocating on behalf of BC wolves a support network to address barriers to advocacy such as isolation. Investing in community building as an early priority will support a relatively self-sustaining model where capacity for leadership, mentorship, autonomy, and progressive responsibilities within the community, all functions of volunteer participation, satisfaction, and consequently retention, will increase among volunteers proportionate to the duration of their engagement. This will likely result in a

shift in responsibility for community building away from Pacific Wild staff, as it will occur more organically among community members through the systems, programs, and social norms of the group.

### ***Communications Among Save BC Wolves Members***

The Save BC Wolves online platform is designed to facilitate member engagement, yet nearly 50% of study participants indicated that they do not post or interact on the platform and only 10% indicated they knew how to use the platform. An additional 22% indicated that they would interact via the platform more if they were more familiar with it while 51% were interested in training, with self-directed training as the preferred format. While some preferred use of social media sites, like Facebook, others preferred the separation of the Save BC Wolves platform from other networking platforms. The platform was noted by one respondent as “straightforward to use and easy to navigate”. Using online platforms to facilitate community organizing is supported by the work of Filsinger & Freitag (2019), who found that they reduce barriers to communication and foster social connectedness, and Eimhjellen et al. (2014), who recognize web-based platforms as having significant potential to mobilize volunteer activities by providing a mechanism through which volunteers can communicate and organize. Online platforms also increase avenues for virtual volunteerism, (Ackermann & Manatschal, 2018, as cited in Filsinger & Freitag, 2019), which is of particular importance to this community given their geographic disbursement. Further, Eimhjellen et al., 2014, found that while volunteers thirty years old or younger were more likely to use online networking platforms, older adults are increasingly using the internet for social support (Wagner et al., 2010; Erickson & Johnson, 2011; Thayer & Ray, 2006, as cited in Filsinger & Freitag, 2019). Given the demographics of study participants, many of which were over the age of 65 and retired, the Save BC Wolves online platform can be better leveraged to serve both social and community organization functions. As the concept of the Save BC Wolves community is to gather those in support of ending the cull to collaboratively take action through self organizing, ensuring the platform is well understood, and that content and information provided through the platform is interesting, informative and sparks dialogue is imperative to community connection and mobilization. Offering a brief step-by-step tutorial on how to set up an individual profile and reviewing the platform features immediately following member sign up, coupled with periodic tips shared on the platform, may help increase engagement, and consequently, community connections.

### ***Self-Organizing***

Self-organizing capacity within the Save BC Wolves community is closely linked to overall capacity development and social connectedness; members need to feel informed and supported to develop the confidence to self-organize. Comfort with project management was assessed to determine where there might be familiarity with coordinating projects that could translate into leading or supported projects organized within the community. While most respondents had little or no experience with project management, there was a strong cohort (35%) who had moderate experience, or a great deal of experience. However, within the context of Save BC Wolves goals, comfort leading a project and involving others in that project was minimal. When asked, “If you were to take part in a project or activity to help end aerial wolf culls, would you prefer to:”, 79% selected the option “Choose a way to contribute from a list of options” while only 4.5% indicated they would like to be part of the planning process. Similarly, when asked, “If you were to organize a project or activity to end aerial wolf culls, would you prefer to:”, the highest proportion of respondents, 39%, selected the option, “I would prefer not to organize a project”. However, 35% preferred to collaborate with a small group and Pacific Wild staff to create a calendar of projects members can contribute to. Only 1% were interested in creating their own project. One focus group participant shared,

*“My background is in project management...I don’t mind running something like that and getting it going, but I feel right now that I’m in this big city and I don’t have a map to get where I want to go and I don’t know if I should take the bus, or a car, or ride my bike. I don’t know the tools and information I need to do so.”*

This data suggests important considerations with respect to self-organizing from within the Save BC Wolves community. Community members do not feel they have enough information about the cull and Save BC Wolves priorities to successfully take action independently and in a meaningful way. While self-organizing capacity may be limited at this stage, with information, training, and some guidance from Pacific Wild staff, there is potential and interest within the group to lead projects in support of the cause. Hyde et al. (2016), consider investments in training as critical to ensuring volunteers have a clear understanding of pathways to achieve organizational goals and what they can do to be successful in their own contributions towards those goals. Clarifying the Save BC Wolves objectives and priorities was noted in the focus group and throughout the survey. Developing a roadmap with the vision to achieve community objectives would enable members to be more involved, with further implications for their connection to the organization, their overall satisfaction, and eventually, their capacity to support Save BC Wolves initiatives with decreased oversight from Pacific Wild staff.

A small group of respondents have indicated that they would like to be part of the planning process. Collaboration among staff and volunteers builds mutual respect and trust, as well as engagement, performance, and organizational connection among volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014; and Ross & Tries, 2010, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; and Wallaraff, 2010; Craig-Lees et al., 2008; Hong et al., 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; and Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Engaging a small leadership cohort to work collaboratively on a series of projects related to the Save BC Wolves community could be an effective model to support volunteer engagement and self-organization while involving only guidance and oversight from Pacific Wild staff. This cohort could identify key resources and training areas and with the support of Pacific Wild, develop and execute projects to establish and deliver these tools in collaboration with and for the benefit of other volunteers. Though this small group is interested in being involved in community planning, the vast majority (79%) prefer to choose a way to contribute from a list of actions or be assigned a role based on their skill set (12%). This suggests that oversight from Pacific Wild leadership may be necessary to facilitate engagement, though developing a leadership cohort, and continuously building it as existing members develop their confidence and new members join the community, could offer an avenue for self-organization with minimal oversight from Pacific Wild staff. Developing an annual calendar of action with this cohort of volunteer leaders may offer another avenue to satisfy the spectrum of interests expressed in relation to involvement in Save BC Wolves initiatives, where some wish to participate in planning, and others prefer to choose from a list or be assigned a role based on their skill set. This calendar could be developed around the skill sets within the community, for example, many respondents indicated they have communication and outreach skills; from April to June, the community could collectively work on public outreach initiatives. This could involve the leadership cohort, with guidance from Pacific Wild, identifying a specific number of outreach activities they wish to complete and a list of skills they think will be particularly relevant to the initiative, giving community members a clear goal to contribute to and helping them understand where they may best be able to contribute.

### **Research Question #3**

*What skills and expertise do Pacific Wild volunteers have that should be considered in the development of the volunteer framework?*

## ***Developing Community Priorities Relevant to Community Expertise***

Familiarity with the skills and expertise within the Save BC Wolves community surfaces valuable insights to inform the ongoing development of the Save BC Wolves program. Save BC Wolves members have expressed the importance of clarification on what they can do to contribute to efforts to end the cull. Developing a strategic priorities roadmap and a calendar of activations may help to address those interests, and these tools can be developed with the expertise of the community in mind. Considering community expertise in relation to priorities and community activities will help members be successful and confident in their endeavors on behalf of the Save BC Wolves. This approach aligns with the vision for Save BC Wolves as a self-organizing network of supporters, as members will have more capacity to self-organize in relation to areas they are familiar with and knowledgeable about. Further, Pacific Wild could leverage specific skill sets within the community to identify priorities and develop tools to support the program, such as a strategic priorities roadmap, a calendar of activations and other resources to support Save BC Wolves community members. By supporting the Save BC Wolves community to help develop these tools, Pacific Wild would be supporting capacity building for self-organizing.

### ***Role Alignment***

The exercise of developing a strategic priorities roadmap and a calendar of community activations with careful consideration of the talents within the Save BC Wolves community would also help Pacific Wild to identify training and learning priorities to support community members to successfully achieve priority objectives. This aligns with the work of Traeger and Alfes (2019), who promote the importance of clarifying organizational needs in relation to organizational priorities in order to identify gaps in knowledge that training can support. Clarifying organizational priorities also allows for the development of volunteer roles, which do not need to be complex or explicitly detailed, but help give volunteers a vision for how they can help and align them with roles that allow them to make meaningful contributions and benefit from the feeling of a positive impact.

While both the literature and the findings of this study confirm that volunteers prefer to choose how they would like to take part in community activities, familiarity with expertise within the Save BC Wolves community will also allow Pacific Wild to make direct asks of volunteers, when necessary. Though this may not be the preferred method of engagement, occasionally asking volunteers to support an initiative based on their specific skill set fosters relationships between Pacific Wild staff and Save BC Wolves community members. It also provides an opportunity to offer individuals who may be reluctant to engage due to limited understanding of how they can contribute with a clear idea of how they can get involved. When specific areas of expertise may be beneficial, but are not prevalent within the community, this knowledge will help Pacific Wild with skill-based recruitment. Including additional opportunities for new Save BC Wolves members to indicate their expertise and talents during the process of joining the community presents an easy means of collecting information that Pacific Wild can refer to when coordinating community action. Asking new members about how they want to contribute and what they want to learn about at this stage will also allow Pacific Wild to identify ways to support ongoing learning from within the community that aligns with the interests of members, helping increase member benefits and retention (Hong et al., 2009, as cited in Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Further exploration into the concepts of role alignment, and recruitment and orientation, which are linked to role alignment in the literature, were lacking in this study; member's perspectives on recruitment, the onboarding process or role alignment were not specifically explored. While role alignment is an important functional management practice in the literature, in the context of the self-organizing model of the Save BC Wolves community only 11% of respondents indicated an interest in

regular, recurring roles. Developing higher level strategic planning pieces designed to help volunteers conceptualize their own role that complements Save BC Wolves priorities as well as volunteer interests and talents is recommended instead of developing specific roles. However, role alignment was somewhat explored through questions about skill sets, the importance of professional development as a motive for joining the community, and by collecting information about what areas members wanted to learn more about. Considering role alignment more fluidly by correlating member skill sets and interests with community priorities will help engage volunteers outside of traditional prescribed roles that may not be functional within the self-organizing model. Yet it must be acknowledged that this approach involves balance. Community membership, and their skill sets, will evolve; strategic planning should not be based entirely around community expertise, but rather, should thoughtfully identify intersections between organizational goals and community expertise that can be best leveraged for impact. Maintenance of volunteer skill set data combined with regular feedback from volunteers, both of which could be collected in an annual survey, will help ensure this planning approach is evidence informed.

### ***Leveraging Community Member Expertise and Interests***

Forty-eight skill sets or knowledge areas were articulated by survey respondents. These skills sets can be leveraged to inform the activation calendar focus areas, as discussed above, and could also be used to develop internal resources for the community. For example, those who have experience in advocacy could collaborate to host an advocacy workshop for members; biology, conservation, and ecology experts could collectively establish a factsheet with the information requested by the community about wolf behaviour and the importance of wolves ecologically, which would help enable the Save BC Wolves community to partake in dialogue to change the perceptions of wolves; the writers, editors, communicators and photographers of the group could create an online awareness campaign to amplify factsheet messaging, and the educators could help develop an outreach campaign. These examples demonstrate how community members may be able to build the Save BC

Wolves community through a hybrid model where projects are collaboratively identified and developed by Pacific Wild staff and community members, supporting capacity building for self-organizing within the community both at an individual and community level. A breadth of knowledge and experience exists within the Save BC Wolves community that can be better leverage to support action and build capacity for self-organizing and internal leadership.

Further, survey respondents were asked about how they would like to take action. Six categories were identified in relation to the answers provided; public advocacy (public education and outreach); communicating Save BC Wolves messaging to a variety of audiences; political advocacy in the form of letter writing and petition dissemination; ecological or biological research related to wolves, or translating the findings of relevant research into attainable messaging; strategic planning and organizing; and finally, fundraising, either through making a direct donation or by supporting fundraising event planning. The ways that members want to be involved in the community is closely related to the skill sets identified within the community. These areas of expertise and interest will be important tools in identifying priority action areas for the Save BC Wolves community.

Ten most common skill sets identified within the Save BC Wolves community:

- Writing
- Editing
- Communications
- Biology
- Conservation
- Advocacy
- Education
- Photography
- Ecology
- Project Management

## **Research Question #4**

*What engagement, retention, and recognition strategies should inform the development of the volunteer framework?*

Throughout this project, including the literature review and the primary study, it became evident that engagement and retention strategies are not necessarily specific approaches, rather, engagement and retention strategies are embedded throughout all aspects of volunteer experience. While this research question specifically asks about engagement, retention, and recognition strategies, many of the important factors in engagement and retention have been addressed in response to other research questions. This section will consider elements of engagement and retention that have not yet been explored, including recognition, which can be considered as a dimension of both engagement and retention (Hager & Brudney, 2008).

### ***Engagement Through Alignment with Volunteer Motives***

All Save BC Wolves survey respondents indicated their primary motivation for joining the community was to contribute to the end of the wolf cull in BC. Other popular motives included supporting the work of Pacific Wild; being part of a community with similar interests; wanting to learn more about conservation and wanting to connect with Pacific Wild staff. Motives are an important aspect of interactional management; when integrated into a volunteer framework they align volunteerism with the social interests of members, translating into increased engagement. Motives for volunteering must be considered in a volunteer framework to foster exceptional experiences (Chacon et al., 2007; Hyde et al., 2016). Considering the motives of Save BC Wolves members leads to the identification of two primary learnings to inform the development of the volunteer framework and improve engagement among Save BC Wolves members: enabling action through training and building community.

The Save BC Wolves community has strongly expressed their interest in contributing to efforts to save wolves in BC from the aerial cull, suggesting that their satisfaction in their involvement with the community is predominantly related to their ability to take action. For Pacific Wild to benefit from this clarity of motives in the form of engagement, satisfaction, and retention, training and supports to take action must be enhanced, as discussed in previous sections. Interests in supporting the work of Pacific Wild and building knowledge about conservation both directly correlate with the predominant motivation to help end the cull, because Pacific Wild wants Save BC Wolves members to help them end the cull and members need learning opportunities to equip them to help Pacific Wild in this work. This cluster of related motives demonstrates the importance of facilitating quality learning activities as a tool for engagement. In addition, many respondents indicated an interest in educational or professional development opportunities in recognition of their contributions to the community (discussed in more detail below), which serves both to enable opportunities for action that align with volunteer motives and to demonstrate appreciation for that action. This is an example of how Pacific Wild can invest in strategic areas to ensure high quality returns on staff inputs to facilitate engagement and a positive experience for community members.

While community is an important retention factor itself, it may be particularly important in the case of the Save BC Wolves community considering that being in community with like-minded people was one of the primary motives expressed by respondents. This includes being in community with Pacific Wild staff; Hager and Brudney (2008) and Studer (2016) both recognize relationships between organizational staff and volunteers as important to volunteer engagement, experience, and retention, with benefits for staff as well, who can be assured of volunteer capabilities. As Pacific Wild has a small

staff team and limited capacity to directly engage with all volunteers, creative ways to make meaningful connections should be explored. This could include staff availability in answering questions related to self-organized projects; a quick video of a staff member saying thank you after a volunteer activity; or having staff occasionally host training sessions. Being in community with Pacific Wild staff relates to other motivates like supporting the work of Pacific Wild, which translates back to taking action within the Save BC Wolves community to end the cull. The interrelated nature of these motives and their primary relationship to taking action and being part of a community means that investments into these areas will be amplified in the form of volunteer engagement and consequently, experience and retention.

### ***Experience Translates to Retention***

The experience of volunteers throughout the duration of their service is a critical factor in volunteer retention (Hager & Brudney, 2008), making it difficult to identify specific retention strategies for Pacific Wild to employ in the Save BC Wolves community. Instead, retention strategies are woven throughout the volunteer experience across all levels of engagement, from onboarding new volunteers to fostering leadership among experienced and committed volunteers. Through this study, Save BC Wolves community members have expressed important factors of a meaningful experience, including:

- Access to quality information, training, learning opportunities, tools, and guidance to empower community members to confidently take action.
- Updates every 2-4 weeks about progress towards strategic objectives; action within the community; opportunities to take action; and relationships with other organizations involved in efforts to save BC wolves.
- Involvement in a community of individuals with common interests, including connections to Pacific Wild staff.

Another important consideration with respect to retention is the frequency with which community members want to participate in Save BC Wolves activities. More than 50% indicated they wanted to participate when there was an activity of interest, and 38% indicated they wanted to be involved when their skill set was needed. Another 30% were interested in volunteering on a project basis, while 25% wanted to participate 3-4 times per year, 18% would like to be asked to be involved when needed, and 11% wanted to participate on a weekly to monthly basis. Many said that limited availability was an important consideration, and that distance was also an issue. Quarterly initiatives should consider activities that require time-bound commitments short in duration. Virtual opportunities, or initiatives that can be applied in diverse contexts, should also be prioritized.

Considering the important factors in a meaningful experience and the specific logistics of involving volunteers - including frequency of participation and how to limit barriers to engagement - contribute to an approach where volunteer experience is prioritized with positive effects on volunteer retention.

### ***Recognition***

Volunteer retention is closely connected with initial motives and experiential satisfaction, including social enjoyment (Chacon et al., 2007; Hyde et al., 2016). Training and community, which have already been discussed extensively, are instrumental to facilitating a meaningful volunteer experience. Recognition is another important aspect of retention. Among Save BC Wolves volunteers, educational and professional development opportunities related to the cull were selected as the most popular forms of recognition. Pacific Wild branded prizes, like t-shirts, were also popular. Surprisingly, one of the most

common answers, which was not available as an option to select but was provided through the comment box, was that no recognition was needed. Respondents felt that Pacific Wild staff were working on a multitude of conservation initiatives and that staff time is best spent directly working on those initiatives. Save BC Wolves community members are not motivated by recognition. While this does suggest that recognition strategies may need only minimal investment, caution is recommended in adhering too strictly to these findings. While this sentiment was common, it was not one of the top selections, and had a similar response rate to another option, which indicated that a call or e-mail from Pacific Wild staff would be appreciated. Hager and Brudney (2008) and Dunn et al. (2020), both espouse the connections between recognition, satisfaction, and retention. Pacific Wild leadership should draw on interactional management concepts that offer multipurpose functions to nurture relationships with Save BC Wolves community members and recognize them for their contributions. This could involve sharing a thoughtful thank you message via the Save BC Wolves platform after a group effort; sharing profiles of volunteers, as mentioned in relation to building community; seeking feedback from the community on the program; and creating a stewardship matrix where volunteers are rewarded with meaningful tokens of appreciation in relation to duration of service or achieving significant milestones. A combination of these approaches equates to a recognition program that demonstrates appreciation for volunteer contributions without requiring substantial investments of energy or resources.

## **Discussion and Analysis Final Thoughts**

The interrelated nature of functional and interactional volunteer management is highlighted throughout this discussion and analysis. Strategic investments by Pacific Wild staff can address both functional and interactional management considerations to increase capacity and confidence of Save BC Wolves members to take action towards ending the aerial wolf cull in BC, thus enabling community members to self-organize. Investments in training and resources; community building; and strategic communications that highlight how volunteers can help and foster connections among one another and with Pacific Wild staff will serve both functional and interactional considerations.

### ***Program Staffing***

At this juncture it is important to acknowledge the implementation dimension of these recommendations; staff resources are a major consideration. Though the intent of the program is to operate independent of ongoing staff management, the findings from both the literature review and the data collected from within the community suggest that staff engagement is critical to solidifying the establishment of this group and facilitating its further development and evolution towards a framework conducive to independent action. The literature review highlights the importance of relationships between staff and volunteers, and emphasizes engagement processes, such as communications, that are a function of staff roles. Findings from quantitative and qualitative data also indicate a role for organizational staff in the development of the program vision and resources, as well as coordination and oversight of learning and training opportunities. Yet there is an inherent tension between these findings and one of the key considerations in this project, which was to surface strategies Pacific Wild could employ to support increased independent mobilization among this group without allocating additional staff resources. The recommendations that follow attempt to strike a balance between the findings and organizational staffing constraints, however, the development of this program would greatly benefit from Pacific Wild investing in a part time role for the duration of at least one year, dedicated to fostering the connection and capacity for this group to operate independently and make meaningful inroads towards addressing aerial wolf culls. In addition to developing the tools and resources identified as key to enabling independent action, a significant component of this work would be dedicated towards

cultivating volunteer leadership among existing members and establishing the systems and processes for members to step into leadership roles that align with their expertise. For example, this could include a community advisory group that coordinates systems such as quarterly education sessions for volunteers and calendar of initiatives throughout the year that volunteers can sign up to lead or participate in.

## Recommendations

One of the key learnings surfaced through this study was that Save BC Wolves members do not feel equipped to take action or contribute to the Save BC Wolves community through self-organizing. However, there is potential within the community for stronger engagement, increased activity, and eventually, self-organizing. The following recommendations have been developed to balance the model of self-organization Pacific Wild is seeking with the limitations expressed by community members.

Recommendations consider a breadth of literature and the survey and focus group findings, including the interests, preferences, and talents of community members who participated in the study, and were strategically selected to build capacity for self-organizing without significant changes to program management. Recall the four sub-questions guiding this research:

- Research Question #1 – What tools and information do Pacific Wild volunteers need to self-mobilize in meaningful activities that align with the Pacific Wild mission for the Save BC Wolves Campaign and Pacific Wild organizational values?
- Research Question #2 – How do members of Save BC Wolves want to communicate with one another and self-organize?
- Research Question #3 – What skills and expertise do Pacific Wild volunteers have that should be considered in the development of the volunteer framework?
- Research Question #4 – What engagement, retention, and recognition strategies should inform the development of the volunteer framework?

A note below each recommendation title links recommendations to the research questions they pertain to; recommendations often address multiple research questions indirectly. For example, Recommendation #4 suggests cultivating a community of leaders – while this primarily addresses questions two and three, indirectly, this recommendation also addresses question one as this cohort of leaders offers the community an additional tool for self-organizing and question four in that volunteer experience, and therefore engagement and retention, is linked to opportunities to match responsibilities to skills and experience, as well as opportunities to assume progressive responsibilities. Regarding research question three, there is not a recommendation addressing this question specifically, however, considerations of the skills and expertise of Pacific Wild community members are embedded throughout most recommendations.

### **Recommendation #1 – Articulate a Vision for the Save BC Wolves Community**

*This recommendation primarily addresses research question one, however, it also pertains to the other three research questions indirectly.*

Articulate a vision for the Save BC Wolves community that can guide engagement and eventually, self-organizing. While the goal of stopping the wolf cull is clear, exactly how Save BC Wolves community members can contribute to that goal is not. A collaborative effort between Pacific Wild staff and those Save BC Wolves community members who are interested in participating in action planning could identify key priority areas to guide community action. These priority areas should consider both the potential to effect change as well as the areas of expertise that can be leveraged within the Save BC

Wolves community. Annual goals for each priority area, as well as a high-level review of key steps to achieve those goals would offer Save BC Wolves members clarity on how they can contribute, along with time-bound understandings of what their commitment entails. A means to measure progress towards these goals should also be articulated, with an annual assessment to document progress and impact of the program. This collection of tools should strike a balance between offering enough information to enable self-organizing within the established parameters while not being too prescriptive to be intimidating or minimize creative approaches. The key pillars concept could further be translated into an annual activation calendar to concentrate efforts strategically and to alleviate Pacific Wild staff supervision across all pillars. Each quarter in the calendar could have a specific focus.

For example, one key pillar could be “Political Advocacy”, which could be a concerted effort in the community over the course of three months. Goals under the political advocacy pillar may include hosting an advocacy training session; identifying a specific target number of discussions between Save BC Wolves community members and their provincial representatives; and identifying a specific target number of letters sent from the Save BC Wolves community directly to their representatives. A high-level review of key steps might involve creating a summary of advocacy learnings from the training session to be distributed among members and a resource sheet helping members prepare for conversations with their representatives or craft letters to their representatives highlighting specific problems with the cull and how representatives can enact change.

## **Recommendation #2 – Develop a Learning and Training Program**

*This recommendation primarily addresses research questions one and two, however, it also pertains to the other two research questions indirectly.*

Develop a learning and training program that facilitates knowledge building and fosters social connectedness to enable engagement and self-organizing. Brief, easily digestible resources in a variety of online formats were requested by members to help build their knowledge and capacity to contribute. Based on the priorities, program pillars, and the annual calendar discussed in the first recommendation, Pacific Wild could identify and develop complementary learning and training tools to support knowledge development among community members. Reference survey findings to identify initial focus areas to invest in and engage Save BC Wolves community members to develop learning and training resources. To draw on an earlier example, those who have experience in advocacy could collaborate to host an advocacy workshop for members, which could be recorded and distributed to the community, as well as posted within the online platform as an ongoing reference and for future members to access. Further emphasis should be placed on creating a learning journey for members that highlights key resources outside of those specifically offered by Pacific Wild. This could include video playlists, recommended readings, and links to relevant articles. Ongoing capacity building could also involve “mini-information bites” about the cull, wolves in general, or even the Save BC Wolves platform. While self-directed learning opportunities were preferred, some areas of interest benefit from in-person training, in which case a virtual format is suggested. Live training should also be considered for areas where it would be beneficial for members to engage in dialogue or practice their learnings. When live events are hosted, integrate a social component to foster relationship building within the community. For example, start a training session with breakout rooms where each room is given a question to discuss, or conclude a training session with each member identifying a key point they will take away from the discussion to encourage interaction.

### **Recommendation #3 – Enhance the Save BC Wolves Internal Communications Strategy**

*This recommendation primarily addresses research question four.*

Enhance the Save BC Wolves communications strategy by including additional content that enables action and builds community to increase engagement. Ask a monthly question of the community through the online platform to encourage dialogue; every second month profile a different volunteer and the action they have taken to support the community to model creative ways to contribute; share successes and wins with the community, no matter how small, in the form of a short video clip from Pacific Wild staff so community members feel connected to staff and encouraged by progress; host quarterly meetings reviewing recent successes and upcoming plans; and make specific requests for support, including when and how the community can take action to facilitate action. Engage the Save BC Wolves community in developing communications content – for example, if a research paper is published examining the impacts of the cull, request support from community members with biology and science communications backgrounds to review the paper and identify the key facts and messages. Pacific Wild staff could provide a final review before distributing content to the community as a new resource. Developing a stewardship matrix, where volunteers who have contributed at specific levels are eligible for different benefits, for example, a Pacific Wild t-shirt, while ensuring to thank volunteers for their efforts, either individually or collectively, with a quick e-mail or shout-out on the platform, is an important element of this internal communications strategy. The internal communications strategy should also include a mechanism to collect input from Save BC Wolves members on a regular basis; an annual satisfaction and interests survey is recommended to help guide the ongoing development of the program. This survey will help ensure that members have an opportunity to share their perspectives, which can then be applied to program activities including adapting and updating the priority areas of investment developed through the first recommendation.

### **Recommendation #4 – Cultivate a Cohort of Community Leaders**

*This recommendation primarily addresses research questions two and three, though indirectly serves questions one and four.*

Cultivate community leaders among Save BC Wolves members to engage highly committed members and strengthen the community. A small group of individuals expressed interest in being involved in strategic planning both through the survey and the focus group; others raised the possibility of subcommittees. While both options likely require Pacific Wild staff guidance, these models accommodate and empower those who are most available and committed to contribute at a high level, modeling engagement, and eventually, self-organization, to other community members and expanding the scope of the work of Pacific Wild staff. These community leaders could offer meaningful insights to Pacific Wild staff and contribute to the development of resources for other community members, like the community strategic priorities or the activation calendar. They could also assume other roles, like responding to discussion posts designed to prompt dialogue within the community as a means of encouraging others to participate, or welcoming new members as part of a mentorship program, or offering training based on their areas of expertise.

### **Recommendation #5 – Broaden the Onboarding and Orientation Process**

*This recommendation primarily addresses research questions one and two, though indirectly attends to questions three and four.*

Broaden the onboarding process to collect additional information about members and integrate a brief orientation component to the community. Collecting information about member areas of expertise and interests in supporting Save BC Wolves, including interests in working in a collaborative leadership capacity, will allow Pacific Wild to identify those with leadership interests, as well as strategic objectives for the Save BC Wolves community that leverage the talents of its members, enabling confidence, success, and capacity to self-organize. Maintain the integrity of this data with updates through the annual survey to ensure that planning related to member skill sets and interests is informed by quality evidence. Offer a brief orientation to the Save BC Wolves strategic priorities roadmap and the annual action calendar, as well as the self-organizing model, to promote a community of action and ensure familiarity with community objectives. Automate an introduction to the Save BC Wolves platform, including a short tutorial on setting up an individual profile and a review of what to expect in relation to communications through the platform.

### **Recommendation #6 – Develop a Framework for Self-Organizing**

*This recommendation primarily addresses research questions one and two, but indirectly responds to question four.*

Develop a framework for self-organization to help community members develop their own means of contributing to the community. Creating a simple form that members can work through to reflect on and solidify their ideas for taking action and then submit to Pacific Wild staff for review, comments, and suggestions, will help members to think through their plans and confirm alignment with Save BC Wolves priorities, and ensure that Pacific Wild staff feel comfortable with their approach. A bi-weekly “office hours” session with the lead wolf campaigner, where a set time period is available every second week for Save BC Wolves members to attend a virtual drop-in meeting to ask questions or confirm their approach would not only offer reassurance with respect to taking action, but also build relationships among community members and with Pacific Wild staff. Finally, a post activity review process where members involved in an activation or project convene to review their work with the guidance of a review document would integrate an ongoing learning lens that would benefit both community members and Pacific Wild through reflection on and documentation of collective learnings.

### **Recommendation #7 – Allocate Part Time Role to Manage Program Development**

*This recommendation does not address one of the research questions, but was developed in response to study findings.*

Allocating one part time staff member to coordinate the ongoing development of this program would enable the expeditious implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations to ultimately develop a framework for independent, meaningful action. While this contradicts with the initial intent Pacific Wild indicated, where staffing models would remain constant, the recommendations to institute the appropriate processes, structures, and resources for community members to actively contribute to the group’s goal to end the aerial wolf cull do require an investment of staff oversight and time. Dedicating a staff member to the development of these elements of an independent volunteer

framework would simultaneously enable relationships to be established which will support engagement with the framework, furthering the goals of the community and of Pacific Wild.

### **Recommendation Implementation Strategy**

Recommendations one and two are considered foundational to enabling action within the Save BC Wolves community. They should be implemented prior to the remainder of the recommendations. However, recommendation four, which should be considered carefully as it would require ongoing input from Pacific Wild staff, could be initiated concurrently to empower volunteer support in the implementation of recommendations one and two. Similarly, recommendation three could be implemented immediately, however, as there are somewhat regular communications to the Save BC Wolves community, adjustments to the communications strategy could be implemented following the first two recommendations so that the results of those projects guide communications content. Content of onboarding and orientation materials from recommendation five will benefit from the learnings and decisions that emerge from implementation of initial recommendations, and finally, recommendation six, while important, is not immediately necessary due to the hesitations about taking action that were expressed throughout the study. The initial five recommendations will help build capacity for self-organizing, which will then be supported through the self-organizing framework suggested in the sixth recommendation. Lastly, recommendation seven has been included to capture some of the key learnings that emerged from the literature review and from the study itself. This recommendation has been included as the final recommendation because it does not align with Pacific Wild's initial guidelines for this project. The other recommendations are designed to take place without a dedicated staff member, though they will need staff guidance. Instituting the seventh recommendation initially could be a foundation for all other recommendations. Alternatively, if this recommendation cannot be acted upon, the other recommendations can still be implemented when existing organizational staff have capacity, however, an extended timeline for establishing the conditions for this community to organize independently in the absence of a dedicated community coordinator should be recognized.

## Conclusion

This project was designed to surface a better understanding of the perspectives and interests of the Save BC Wolves community members and their capacity for self-organizing, to inform Pacific Wild's ongoing development of this volunteer community. Through this case study, 117 surveys were collected and six community members participated in a focus group, offering a multitude of insights that were carefully reviewed to identify strategic areas of investment in the form of seven recommendations for Pacific Wild to consider that will build self-organizing capacities within the community, thus expanding the scope of the Save BC Wolves campaign.

While this study is specific to the Save BC Wolves community context, the findings were consistent with the volunteer literature emphasizing the importance of integrating complementary functional and interactional approaches for effective volunteer management. Volunteer engagement and retention are dependent on both the organizational structural processes that cultivate clarity of purpose and facilitate effective action, as well as the social exchange that distinguishes volunteers as unique stakeholders in non-profit initiatives, where volunteers benefit from confidence in their ability to make a meaningful and impactful contribution to a cause of importance and the relationships within the volunteer community.

This study is unique however, in that it considers a volunteer community involved in an environmental conservation issue; there were no mentions of volunteerism within the environmental context in the literature reviewed for this project. Though many of the learnings that emerged through this project were consistent with the literature, volunteer motives were an area of variance, though this is not entirely unexpected. As noted in the literature, motives for volunteers with nonrecurring roles varied substantially across contexts. In the case of the environmental context, the predominant motive for involvement was concern about the issue. In other settings, motives for episodic volunteers are oriented more towards civic duty and social benefits. Understanding whether the uniformity of motives identified within the Save BC Wolves community is broadly applicable across environmental contexts may help other organizations in the environmental sector to optimize their volunteer programs to leverage the energy and expertise of their supporters. Another area identified for further investigation is that of community supports for volunteers in relation to the isolating and discouraging reality of advocacy in the context of controversial issues. Whether volunteer communities mitigate these challenges and barriers to volunteerism merits further study.

With respect to the Save BC Wolves community specifically, this study found that Save BC Wolves members need clarification of community priorities and increased access to the relevant information and training to be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to contribute to the Save BC Wolves community through self-organized action. There is currently limited capacity to self-organize, but there is considerable potential within the community provided strategic investments are made by Pacific Wild to help enable competencies among members to support a self-organizing model. The seven recommendations made as a result of this study are intended to guide that strategic investment. Those recommendations include:

- Articulating a vision for action and developing the tools to empower community members to translate that vision into action drawing on their unique expertise and talents;

- Developing a learning and training program to support the vision for action;
- Enhancing the internal communications strategy to foster connections among members and with staff;
- Supporting the development of leadership capacities among volunteers;
- Providing additional clarity about the experiences, resources, and how people can help during the onboarding process in the form of an orientation, and;
- Developing a framework for self organizing to support members who want to coordinate an initiative in support of community goals.

Engaging volunteers to contribute to the development of the Save BC Wolves program through the development of the resources and processes identified in the recommendations will build connections among community members and Pacific Wild staff and enable action among the membership while simultaneously building capacity for self-organizing and ensuring the community is reflective of its members.

While the self-organizing model may not be immediately available to Pacific Wild through the Save BC Wolves community, it can be cultivated through investments in functional and interactional management. Investments in the form of the recommendations detailed above must be prioritized for the Save BC Wolves initiative to benefit from the interests, expertise, and energy of its community members.

## References

- Alfes, K., Antunes, B. & Shantz, A. D. (2017). The management of volunteers – what can human resources do? A review and research agenda. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28:1, 62 – 97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1242508>
- Boezeman, E. J. & Ellemers, N. (2014). Volunteer leadership: The role of pride and respect in organizational identification and leadership satisfaction. *Leadership*, 10(2), 160 – 173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715012467487>
- Brudney, J. L. & Meijs, L. C. P. M. (2009). It Ain't natural: Toward a new (natural) resource conceptualization for volunteer management. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(4), 564 – 581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764009333828>.
- Camplin, J. C. (2009). Volunteers leading volunteers. *Professional Safety*, 54(5), 36 – 42. [https://aeasseincludes.assp.org/professionalsafety/pastissues/054/05/F2Camplin\\_0509.pdf](https://aeasseincludes.assp.org/professionalsafety/pastissues/054/05/F2Camplin_0509.pdf)
- Chacon, F., Vecina, M. L., & Davila, M. C. (2007). The three-stage model of volunteers' duration of service. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 35, 627 – 642. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2007.35.5.627>
- Cnaan, R. & Handy, F. (2005). Towards understanding episodic volunteers. *Vrijwillige Inzet Onderzocht [Voluntary Effort Studied]*, 2(1), 29 – 35. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294689552\\_Towards\\_understanding\\_episodic\\_volunteering](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294689552_Towards_understanding_episodic_volunteering)
- Cordasco, L. (2021, October 26). *B.C.'s wolf kill program 'unlawful', court challenge contends*. Vancouver Sun. <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/b-c-s-wolf-kill-program-unlawful-court-challenge-contends>
- Dunn, J., Chambers, S. K. & Hyde, M. K. (2015). Systematic Review of Motives for Episodic Volunteering. *Voluntas* 27, 425 – 464. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-015-9548-4>
- Dunn, J., Scuffham, P., Hyde, M. K., Stein, K., Zajdlewicz, L., Savage, A., Heneka, N., Ng S., and Chambers, S.K. (2020). Designing organizational management frameworks to empower episodic volunteering. *Voluntas*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00226-5>
- Eimhjellen, I., Wollebæk, D. & Strømsnes, K. (2014). Associations online: Barriers for using web- based communication in voluntary associations. *Voluntas*, 25, 730 – 753. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-013-9361-x>
- Filsinger, M. & Freitag, M. (2019). Internet use and volunteering: Relationships and differences across age and applications. *Voluntas*, 30, 87 – 97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-0045-4>
- Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point*. Little Brown.
- Hager, M., & Brudney, J. (2008). Management capacity and retention of volunteers. In M. Liao-Troth (Ed.), *Challenges in volunteer management* (pp. 9 – 27). Information Age Publishing. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309458471>

- Hager, M. A., & Brudney, J. L. (2011). Problems recruiting volunteers: Nature versus nurture. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 22(2), 137 – 157.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1002/nml.20046>
- Harding, L.E., Bourbonnais, M., Cook, A.T., Spribille, T., Wagner, V., and Darimont, C. (2020). No statistical support for wolf control and maternal penning as conservation measures for endangered mountain caribou. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 29, (3,051 – 3,060).  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-020-02008-3>
- Howl to Horgan. (n.d.). Howl2Horgan. <https://howl2horgan.org/>
- Hustinx, L., Haski-Leventhal, D., & Handy, F. (2008). One of a kind? Comparing episodic and regular volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. *International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, 25(3), 50 – 66.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292803098\\_One\\_of\\_a\\_kind\\_Comparing\\_episodic\\_and\\_regular\\_volunteers\\_at\\_the\\_Philadelphia\\_Ronald\\_McDonald\\_House](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292803098_One_of_a_kind_Comparing_episodic_and_regular_volunteers_at_the_Philadelphia_Ronald_McDonald_House)
- Hyde, M.K., Dunn, J., Bax, C. and Chambers, S.K. (2016). Episodic volunteering and retention: An integrated theoretical approach. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(1), 45 – 63.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0899764014558934>
- Kreutzer, K. and Jäger, U. (2011). Volunteering versus managerialism: Conflict over organizational identity in voluntary associations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 40(4), 634 – 661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010369386>
- Macduff, N. (2005). Societal changes and the rise of the episodic volunteer. In J. Brudney (Ed.), *Emerging areas of volunteering* (Vol. 2, pp. 49 – 61). Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Associations.
- Macduff, N.F., Netting, E. & O'Connor, M.K. (2009). Multiple ways of coordinating volunteers with differing styles of service. *Journal of Community Practice*, 17(4), 400 – 423.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10705420903300488>
- Nichols, G. (2013). The psychological contract of volunteers: A new research agenda. *Voluntas*, 24, 986 – 1,005. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-012-9294-9>
- Pacific Wild. (2021, October 4). *Press release: Pacific Wild delivers 500,000 signatures opposing provincial wolf cull program to the B.C. legislature.* <https://pacificwild.org/press-release-pacific-wild-delivers-500000-signatures-opposing-provincial-wolf-cull-program-to-the-b-c-legislature/>
- Pacific Wild. (n.d.-a). About – Our Story. <https://pacificwild.org/about/our-story/>
- Pacific Wild. (n.d.-b) Make A Difference – Join the Save BC Wolves Online Community.  
<https://pacificwild.org/make-a-difference/join-the-save-bc-wolves-online-community/>
- Pacific Wild. (n.d.-c). Save BC Wolves. <https://pacificwild.org/campaign/save-bc-wolves/>
- Pacific Wild (n.d.-d). Save BC Wolves. <https://www.savebcwolves.org/>
- Pacific Wild. (n.d.-e). Volunteering. <https://pacificwild.org/volunteering/>
- Pynn, L. (2020, October 7). *B.C. Cattlemen’s Association dispatches trappers to kill wolves under provincially funded program.* The Narwhal. <https://thenarwhal.ca/bc-cattlemens-association-livestock-wolves/>

- Raincoast Conservation Foundation. (2020, July 15). *Research: Addressing poor statistical support for wolf control and maternal penning as conservation measures for endangered mountain caribou*. <https://www.raincoast.org/2020/07/poor-statistical-support-wolf-control-conservation-measures-endangered-mountain-caribou/>
- Studer, S. (2016). Volunteer management: Responding to the uniqueness of volunteers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(4), 688 – 714. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764015597786>
- Studer, S. & von Schnurbein, G. (2013). Organizational factors affecting volunteers: A literature review on volunteer coordination. *Voluntas*, 24, 403 – 440. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-012-9268-y>
- Taniguchi, H. (2011). The determinants of formal and informal volunteering: Evidence from the American time use survey. *Voluntas*, 23, 920-939. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-011-9236-y>
- Traeger, C. and Alfes, K. (2019). High-performance human resource practices and volunteer engagement: The role of empowerment and organizational identification. *Voluntas*, 30, 1,022 – 1,035. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00135-2>
- Ward, J. & Greene, A. (2018). Too much of a good thing? The emotional challenges of managing affectively committed volunteers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 47(6), 1,155 – 1,177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018783276>

## Appendix A

### Survey, Including Letter of Implied Consent



#### **Community Engagement to Develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action**

**Win \$150CAD and Help Us Help You Save BC Wolves!**

#### **Letter of Information for Implied Consent**

Please review this information for details about this survey.

Dear Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves Community Member,

**Thank you** for participating in Phase One of an organizational research project with Pacific Wild, Community Engagement to Develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action!

I, Lindsay Barnett, am a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. Conducting a research project is a core component of the Master's of Community Development program. This study is supervised by Dr. Lynne Siemens, Associate Professor at UVIC. You may contact me or Dr. Siemens for further information about this study; contact information is provided at the bottom of this page.

This study is designed in collaboration with Pacific Wild Director of Community and Systems, and Lead Wolf Campaigner, Laurie McConnell, and Chloe Hajjar, Communications Assistant and Campaigner.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to better understand the interests of Pacific Wild's Save BC Wolves community members and how to effectively support community members to independently take action to help end aerial wolf culls in BC.

#### **Importance of this Research**

This project will help Pacific Wild engage Save BC Wolves community members with support, tools, and recognition for self-led action to end aerial wolf culls in BC.

#### **Participant Selection**

You are invited to participate in this project as a member of the Save BC Wolves community.

#### **What is Involved**

Participation involves completing the following survey, which will take approximately 25 minutes.

At the end of the survey you will have the option to indicate if you would like to participate in a focus group to further inform the development of the Save BC Wolves community engagement framework.

**Inconvenience**

Potential inconveniences include the time to complete the survey. Those with limited technology or internet access may have additional inconveniences.

**Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to survey respondents.

**Benefits**

Potential benefits for participants include personal reward associated with contributing to the development of a community of interest that aligns with personal interests and values; collaborative professional and personal capacity building opportunities; and expanded personal and professional networks.

Potential benefits for Pacific Wild include increased capacity of Pacific Wild to facilitate meaningful engagement of the Save BC Wolves community, increasing the potential to end the wolf cull in BC.

Potential benefits to society include increased capacity for civil engagement and increased pressure to discontinue policies that have been demonstrated as ineffective with no benefits for conservation and negative implications for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Potential benefits to the state of knowledge (possibly, if published) include increased understanding of strategies to engage and mobilize communities of interest in independent actions to address social and environmental issues.

**Compensation**

Participants may choose to enter a draw at the end of the survey to win one (1) \$150CAD gift card to the vendor of their choice (within reasonable parameters). Entering the draw does not guarantee a prize.

For those who wish to submit this survey anonymously, a separate link to enter is provided.

**Voluntary Participation**

Completing this survey must be completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without consequences or explanation simply by exiting the survey.

Surveys can be submitted anonymously, or with your personal information. If you submit a survey including your information and later choose to withdraw, please notify Lindsay Barnett by e-mail (l.barnett@live.ca) to have your responses excluded. Anonymously submitted surveys cannot be identified and therefore cannot be excluded.

Should you choose to withdraw from the study you will not be eligible to win the \$150CAD gift card.

### **Anonymity**

Surveys can be submitted anonymously or with your personal information.

Including your personal information will help Pacific Wild understand how you want to be engaged, what opportunities might be of interest, and how to mobilize the Save BC Wolves community.

Should you choose to share, your personal information will not be associated with your responses publicly in any way. See the confidentiality section for further details.

You can enter the draw for the gift card if you submit your survey anonymously or with your personal information.

### **Confidentiality**

Personal information included in your survey will never be shared publicly in any format, but will be available to Pacific Wild staff. This information will be stored confidentially and will only be accessed by Pacific Wild staff coordinating Save BC Wolves activities.

Pacific Wild will maintain the following data for respondents who choose to include their personal information in their surveys:

- Availability and preferences for frequency of participation
- Knowledge and skill sets
- Interests in planning and leadership roles within the community
- Preferences for recognition

### **Dissemination of Results**

Study findings will be shared with Pacific Wild and all Save BC Wolves community members in the form of a final report. This report will be presented, shared, and verbally discussed with the Researcher's UVIC Defence Committee, and then posted online. Study findings may be published. The identity of all participants will be confidential.

All information collected through this survey may be used in a future case study evaluating the Save BC Wolves volunteer engagement framework.

### **Disposal of Data**

Data from this survey will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's personal computer. It will be kept for five years to allow for a possible case study evaluating the Save BC Wolves volunteer engagement framework developed from recommendations put forward through this study, and then deleted.

Pacific Wild will maintain the data indicated in the confidentiality section for the purposes of coordinating action within the Save BC Wolves community; data will be stored confidentially and used only to coordinate Save BC Wolves community activities.

## Contacts

For further questions about this study, please contact:

Lindsay Barnett Lead Researcher UVIC Graduate Student lbarnett@live.ca 778-877-0558	Dr. Lynne Siemens Research Supervisor UVIC Associate Professor siemensl@uvic.ca 250-721-8069	Laurie McConnell Director of Community and Systems; Lead Wolf Campaigner Pacific Wild laurie@pacificwild.org 604-741-7950	Chloe Hajjar Communications Assistant & Campaigner Pacific Wild research@Pacifcwild.org 905-617-0637
--	--	---	---

You may also verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

By completing this survey, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED**, indicating that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

\* 1. Would you like to take this survey to help Pacific Wild offer an excellent experience for Save BC Wolves community members?

Yes

No

## Communications

These questions help us to understand what kind of information you want to receive, and how you want to receive it.

\* 2. Do you feel informed about the Save BC Wolves community?

Yes

Somewhat

No

\* 3. What kind of information would you like to see more of from Pacific Wild?  
Please select all that apply.

Suggestions on how to take action to support the Save BC Wolves' mission to end the aerial wolf cull

How other community members are taking action

Suggestions on how someone with my specific skillset might be able to contribute in an impactful manner

How Pacific Wild staff are taking action to end the aerial the wolf cull

Progress towards ending aerial wolf killing

Other conservation initiatives with parallels to the Save BC Wolves initiative

Other (please specify)

\* 4. How frequently would you like to see information from Pacific Wild about the BC wolf cull?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- 3-4 times per year
- Only when there are new developments or new opportunities to take action
- Other (please specify)

5. Do you follow information about the wolf cull outside of that offered by Pacific Wild?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

6. What sources do you follow for updates about the BC wolf cull?  
Please select all that apply.

- Traditional news media
- Other conservation groups
- Individuals speaking out
- Nothing specific, but I hear about it occasionally

Other (please specify)

### Community Connections

These questions help us to understand how to support social connections within the community.

7. Do you know other people in the Save BC Wolves community of support?

- Yes, many
- Yes, a couple
- No, but I'd like to
- No

\* 8. How important is it to you to make friends and personal connections through the Save BC Wolves community?

0 - It is not important 5 - It is very important

\* 9. Would you attend community socials that took place outside of action-based/volunteer activities to connect with other community members?  
Please select all that apply.

- Yes, in person
- Yes, online
- Maybe
- Depends on the activity
- No

10. Would you ask a friend to join the Save BC Wolves community of support?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

#### Save BC Wolves Online Platform

These questions help us to understand how the [Save BC Wolves online platform](#) is used and could be improved.

Note - The Save BC Wolves online platform is the platform through which you received information about this survey.

\* 11. Do you know how to use the features of the [Save BC Wolves online platform](#) for community members?

- Yes
- A little bit
- No

\* 12. Do you post or engage with other posts in the [Save BC Wolves online platform](#)?

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No
- I would if I was more familiar with the platform

\* 13. Would you be interested in training related to the [Save BC Wolves online platform](#)?

- Yes
- It depends on the format
- No

\* 14. Would you prefer training related to the [Save BC Wolves online platform](#) be:  
Please select all that apply.

- Self-directed  
Ex. A reference document or video that you can access on demand.
- Delivered live, virtually  
Ex. A virtual training night hosted by Pacific Wild and/or other members of the Save BC Wolves community.
- Delivered live, in person  
Ex. An in person training night hosted by Pacific Wild and/or other members of the Save BC Wolves community.
- I am not interested in training for the online platform
- Other (please specify)

15. Do you like the [Save BC Wolves online platform](#)?

- Yes
- I prefer other community platforms  
Ex. Facebook Groups, etc.
- No
- I do not use the platform enough to know if I like it yet
- I do not know how to use the platform yet

Suggestions for other options are welcome!  
Ex. Social media groups, monthly meetings, etc.

## Knowledge and Skillset

These questions help us to understand the unique skills, talents, and knowledge within the Save BC Wolves community and how Pacific Wild can support and coordinate engagement of community members.

\* 16. What are you knowledgeable about or skilled at?  
Please select all that apply.

- Advocacy
- Biology
- Communications
- Community Engagement
- Conservation
- Data Analysis
- Data Representation
- Ecology
- Editing
- Education
- Evaluation
- Event Planning
- Film Editing
- Fundraising
- Graphic Design
  
- Legal Expertise
- Outreach
- Photography
- Policy Development
- Project Management
- Social Media
- Strategic Planning
- System/Process Development
- Videography
- Writing
- Youth Engagement
- Other (please specify)

---

17. Please share a bit about your unique skills and talents and how you would like to contribute to the Save BC Wolves community.

### Taking Action

These questions help us to understand how Save BC Wolves community members might want to contribute to efforts to end aerial wolf killing in BC.

\* 18. How frequently would you like to participate in Save BC Wolves activities?  
Ex. host or attend an event to raise public awareness, participate in a learning session for community members, etc.  
Please select **up to three** preferences.

- Weekly
- Monthly
- 3-4 times per year
- When I'm asked
- When there is an activity I'm interested in
- When my skill set or expertise is needed
- On a project basis  
Ex. I would like to be involved in a project and contribute through the duration of that project, and then take a break before working on another project.
- Other (please specify)

\* 19. If you were to take part in a project or activity to help end aerial wolf culls in BC, would you prefer to:

- Be part of the planning process
- Choose a way to contribute from a list of options
- Be assigned a role based on my skill set
- Other (please specify)

\* 20. Do you feel like you have a good sense of how you can take action to end the aerial killing of wolves in BC through the Save BC Wolves community?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

\* 21. Would you be interested in **resources** on how you can take action to end the aerial killing of wolves in BC?  
Ex. Having access to a document about how to host your own outreach booth at a community event.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

\* 22. What is your preferred format for **resources** on how to take action be:  
Please select all that apply.

- Video
- Online reference document
- Print reference document
- Community member handbook
- Interactive course
- A combination of formats
- I am not interested in resources about how to take action

Other (please specify)

\* 23. Would you be interested in **training** on how you can take action to end the aerial killing of wolves in BC?  
Ex. Attending a training session on how to host your own outreach booth at a community event.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

\* 24. Would you prefer that **training** on how to take action be:  
Please select all that apply.

- Self-directed  
Ex. A reference document or video that you can access on demand.
- Delivered live, virtually  
Ex. A virtual training night hosted by Pacific Wild and/or other members of the Save BC Wolves community.
- Delivered live, in person  
Ex. An in person training night hosted by Pacific Wild and/or other members of the Save BC Wolves community.
- I am not interested in training about how to take action

Other (please specify)

25. Optional - Please share any ideas, suggestions or comments about training on how to take action to end the aerial wolf cull in BC.  
Ex. Cool training or resources you've seen elsewhere, what might help you feel comfortable about taking action, or anything else you think would help us set our community members up for success while taking action to end the aerial wolf cull in BC.

### Planning and Leadership

These questions help us to understand the comfort level of community members to initiate projects and lead activities where other community members are involved.

26. How much experience do you have **planning** projects?  
Ex. Planning an event or a communications campaign.

- A great deal
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all

27. How much experience do you have **implementing** projects?  
Ex. Executing an event or delivering a communications campaign.

- A great deal
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all

\* 28. How comfortable are you with the idea of leading a small-scale project from start to finish?  
Ex. organizing an outreach booth at a community event.

0 - Not comfortable at all 5 - Very comfortable

\* 29. How comfortable are you with the idea of coordinating the involvement of other community members in a project you are leading?  
Ex. coordinating Save BC Wolves community members to educate visitors of an outreach booth at a community event.

0 - Not comfortable at all 5 - Very comfortable

\* 30. If you were to organize a project or activity to end aerial wolf culls in BC, would you prefer to:

- Create your own project idea
- Choose a project idea from a list
- Collaborate with a small group of community members to identify a project idea
- Collaborate with a small group and Pacific Wild staff to create a calendar of projects members can sign up to be involved in
- I would prefer not to organize a project
- Other (please specify)

---

---

### Motivation and Recognition

These questions help us to understand what made you want to get involved in the Save BC Wolves community and how we can show our appreciation.

\* 31. In general, why is it important to you to be involved with non-profit or community initiatives?  
Please select your top **three** reasons.

- To help address issues that are important to me
- To support people doing meaningful work
- To spend time with friends
- To make friends
- To build my professional network
- To acquire experience relevant to my professional aspirations
- To be have more opportunities to participate in professional development initiatives
- Community service is an important way to give back
- Giving to non-profit organizations is an expectation of employers
- Giving to non-profit organizations is an expectation of my peers
- For personal growth
- Other (please specify)

---

---

\* 32. Why is participating in the Save BC Wolves community important to you?  
Please select your top **three** reasons.

- I believe in ending aerial wolf killing in BC
- I care about the work of Pacific Wild
- I want to be part of a community with similar interests
- I want to make friends
- I want to learn about conservation
- I want to build my professional network
- I want to gain experience relevant to the work I do or want to do in the future
- I want to connect with Pacific Wild staff
- I was asked to participate
- Being involved in community initiatives is expected of me
- Other (please specify)

\* 33. How do you want to be recognized for your contributions to the Save BC Wolves community?  
Please select your top **three** preferences.

- With cool prizes like Pacific Wild t-shirts
- With recognition certificates
- With professional development opportunities  
Ex. project management course, public speaking course, etc.
- With educational learning opportunities  
Ex. ecological role of wolves, tips for public advocacy for volunteers, etc.
- With a group appreciation event or activity
- With a call or email from the Pacific Wild staff
- With a public acknowledgment
- Other (please specify)

34. Optional - What are you interested in learning more about as a member of the Save BC Wolves community?

**35. Final Comments**

Please share any additional thoughts about the Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves online community.

Our intent with this study is to develop structures and supports to help our community members contribute to efforts to stop aerial wolf killing in BC; all suggestions and comments are welcome. If you have experienced an issue or barrier to participating in this community that has not been covered in this survey, or that you would like to expand on, please let us know.

**Optional - Personal Details and Availability**

Pacific Wild is seeking ways to engage our community of wolf supporters in the fight to save wolves in British Columbia! Many of you have unique skills and talents to broaden the reach of this message, and have asked 'what can I do?'. We'd love to know more about what you want to see happen in the network, how you want to be engaged, and how you think we can mobilize this group to greater effectiveness in the fight to save BC wolves. Your information will help us do that. We will only contact you in relation to these efforts.

Your information will never be posted publicly or inside the Save BC Wolves online platform unless you choose to post it yourself.

Your survey is still very helpful without providing this information. If you wish to submit this survey anonymously, please skip this section.

Your survey is still very helpful without providing this information. If you wish to submit this survey anonymously, please skip this section.

36. First and last name

37. E-mail address

38. Location

City/Town

Province/State

Country

39. Age

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

40. Employment status

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Casual
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Self-employed
- Student
- Other (please specify)

Prize Entry

\* 41. Would you like to be entered to win a \$150CAD gift card to the location of your choice?

- Yes, and I have provided my information above
- Yes, but I would like for my responses to be anonymous (If you select this option, please follow the link on the next page)
- No

Prize Entry for Anonymous Survey

If you wish to submit your survey **anonymously**, [please click here to enter to win the \\$150CAD gift card.](#)

If you have already provided your information in your survey, please skip this step.

## Phase Two of this Project, Focus Group

\* 42. Would you be interested in learning more about what is involved with participating in Phase Two of this project, a one hour focus group?

If you select yes, information about participating in the focus group will be sent to you by e-mail. Selecting yes does not commit you to participating in the focus group.

- Yes, and I have provided my information above
- Yes, but I would like for my responses to this survey to be anonymous (If you select this option, please follow the link on the next page)
- No

### Focus Group Interest for Anonymous Survey

If you wish to learn more about participating in Phase Two of this project, a focus group discussion about the Save BC Wolves Community, [please click here to provide your e-mail](#).

If you have already provided your information in your survey, please skip this step.

## Appendix B

### Focus Group Consent Form

#### Save BC Wolves

#### *Community Engagement to develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action*

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, @6:00pm PST

<https://uvic.zoom.us/j/89161725984>

#### **FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM**

*Facilitated by Lindsay Barnett, UVIC Master's of Community Development Student*

Dear Pacific Wild Save BC Wolves Community Members,

I am pleased to invite you to participate in Phase Two of an organizational research project with Pacific Wild, *Community Engagement to develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action*.

I, Lindsay Barnett, am a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. Conducting a research project is one of the core components of the Master's of Community Development program. This project is being supervised by Dr. Lynne Siemens, Associate Professor at UVIC. You may contact me or Dr. Siemens for further information about this survey. Contact information is provided at the conclusion of this letter.

This study is conducted in support of Pacific Wild, in collaboration with Director of Community and Systems, and Lead Wolf Campaigner, Laurie McConnell, and Chloe Hajjar, Communications Assistant and Campaigner.

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this research project is to better understand the interests of Pacific Wild's Save BC Wolves community members and how to effectively support community members to independently take action to help end aerial wolf culls in BC.

#### **Importance of this Research**

This research will help Pacific Wild engage Save BC Wolves community members with support, tools, and recognition for self-led action that contributes to the Save BC Wolves goal to end the wolf cull in BC.

#### **Participant Selection**

You are invited to participate in this study as someone who has expressed an interest in participating in the Save BC Wolves campaign, have completed the survey from Phase One of the study, and have indicated your interest in participating in Phase Two of the study, a focus group.

## **What is involved**

Participation includes:

- Coordinating with the Researcher to determine availability for focus group (15 minutes, responding to e-mails and an anonymous Doodle poll)
- Participating in a focus group hosted online via video conferencing platform Zoom (1 hour, dialogue with other participants about key themes from the survey)
  - o This discussion will be recorded and transcribed. The recording will be deleted following the Researcher's successful project defence presentation at UVIC. The transcript and the Researcher's notes will be saved on the Researcher's personal computer in password protected files for five years; these files will not include any personal identifiers.
- Reviewing Focus Group findings (30 minutes, independently reviewing summary of findings to ensure accuracy. Findings will be sent to participants via e-mail to review)

All activities take place from a location of your choice.

You may withdraw from the focus group at any point. Due to the nature of the focus group setting, if you withdraw from the study, your input up until the time of withdrawal will still be used in the study.

## **Risks**

Potential risks to participants include emotional or social discomfort due to sharing personal perspectives in a group setting.

Measures to address these risks include:

- Participants will have the option to use a pseudonym;
- A brief exercise at the outset of the discussion will establish parameters for the group to ensure a safe space;
- The recording will be viewed only by the researcher; transcripts will not include any names or other personal identifiers; the recording will be deleted following the Researcher's successful project defence presentation at UVIC. Transcripts and the Researcher's notes will be saved on the Researcher's personal computer in password protected files; these files will not include any personal identifiers;
- No specific references to individual input will be used in the findings in any way.

## **Benefits**

Potential benefits for participants includes personal reward associated with contributing to the development of a community of interest that aligns with personal interests and values; collaborative professional and personal capacity building opportunities; and expanded personal and professional networks.

Potential benefits for Pacific Wild include increased capacity of Pacific Wild to facilitate meaningful engagement of the Save BC Wolves community that contributes to increased potential to end the wolf cull in BC.

Potential benefits to society include increased capacity for civil engagement and increased pressure to discontinue policies that have been demonstrated as ineffective with no benefits for conservation and negative implications for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Potential benefits to the state of knowledge (possibly, if published) include increased understanding of strategies to engage and mobilize communities of interest in independent actions to address social and environmental issues.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanation. Due to the nature of the focus group setting, if you withdraw from the study, your input up until the time of withdrawal will still be used in the study.

### **Ongoing Consent**

This consent form pertains to participation in the focus group, as well as in the review of focus group findings.

All information collected through this study may be used in a future case study to determine the efficacy of the Save BC Wolves volunteer engagement framework.

### **Anonymity**

You will have the option to use a pseudonym during the focus group; instructions to change your participant name will be sent in advance of the focus group should you wish to protect your identity. Contact information, such as e-mail addresses, will not be shared among participants. However, due to the nature of a focus group, your identity during the discussion may not be completely anonymous.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is limited due to the nature of a small group setting; participants may be identified by other members of the group.

To protect confidentiality of participants, names or other identifiers will not be used in the final transcript of the discussion.

The recording, transcript and notes will be saved locally on the Researcher's personal computer (rather than in a cloud-based service) in password protected files.

### **Dissemination of Results**

Study findings will be shared with Pacific Wild and all Save BC Wolves supporters in the form of a final report. This report will be presented, shared, and verbally discussed with the Researcher's UVIC Defence Committee, and then posted online. Study findings may be published. The identity of all participants will be confidential.



## Appendix C

### Focus Group Agenda

#### Save BC Wolves

#### *Community Engagement to Develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action*

May 10th, 2022, @6:00pm PST

<https://uvic.zoom.us/j/89161725984>

#### AGENDA

*Facilitated by Lindsay Barnett, UVIC Master's of Community Development Student*

<b>Welcome and land acknowledgement</b>		<b>6:00pm</b>
<b>Introduction to Lindsay</b>		
<b>Round table introduction of group</b>	<i>Please introduce yourself using the name you wish to go by during the focus group, and briefly share what it is that you love about wolves!</i>	
<b>Overview</b>	<i>Lindsay to review project and focus group purpose, the plan for today, consent form, confidentiality, and data recording and storage.</i>	<b>6:05pm</b>
<b>Rules of Engagement</b>	<i>Lindsay to share principles to guide respectful dialogue and ensure a safe, comfortable environment. You will be invited to add your own suggestions.</i>	<b>6:10pm</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p><i>Group discussion of community action in the context of the Save BC Wolves community. Key themes we will explore include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>How do people get started?</i></li> <li>- <i>Benefits and challenges of self led action</i></li> <li>- <i>Cultivating leadership from within the community</i></li> </ul> <p><i>We may explore other themes based on where the conversation leads! Our intent is to hear your input about the Save BC Wolves community and how Pacific Wild can support volunteers to be involved.</i></p>	<b>6:15pm</b>
<b>Wrap Up and Debrief</b>	<i>Reviewing key discussion points What have we missed? Is there anything we should further explore?</i>	<b>6:45pm</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>Next steps: reviewing the summary document What you can expect from the project</i>	<b>6:55pm</b>

## Appendix D

### Focus Group Reference Guide

#### Save BC Wolves

#### *Community Engagement to develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action*

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, @6:00pm PST

<https://uvic.zoom.us/j/89161725984>

### FOCUS GROUP REFERENCE GUIDE

*Facilitated by Lindsay Barnett, UVIC Master's of Community Development Student*

Thank you for participating in this focus group to offer insights into the development of the Save BC Wolves community of support! This guide is provided to support a great experience as you participate. Please refer to this guide for:

- An understanding of the focus group structure
- The process to withdraw as a participant
- Instructions on how to use Zoom
- Instructions on how to increase your privacy as a participant

#### Focus Group Structure

##### General

- 6-10 participants
- 1 hour long (plus coordinating time)
- Consent form signature required in advance

##### Focus Group Outline

- Welcome
- Introduction to Lindsay, the researcher; Group introductions
- Review of project purpose and focus group purpose
- Review of consent form, including confidentiality and data storage
- Brief exercise on rules of engagement to ensure a respectful, safe, productive environment
- Discussion

#### Withdrawing from the Focus Group

##### In Advance

- E-mail Lindsay ([l.barnett@live.ca](mailto:l.barnett@live.ca)) indicating you have chosen not to proceed

##### During the Focus Group

- Send Lindsay a private message via the Zoom chat function; this will ensure that your withdrawal is not confused with a technology glitch.

- There are no consequences for your withdrawal; your withdrawal will have no impact on your relationship with Pacific Wild or the Save BC Wolves community.
- Due to the nature of a focus group, should you choose to withdraw, your contributions will still be considered in this study.

### Using Zoom

*These instructions are provided for those that are not familiar with Zoom and do not have Zoom installed. If you have Zoom installed and require assistance, please let me know!*

1. Click the meeting invite link I've sent you.
2. When the page opens, click the blue button that says "Launch Meeting".
3. Once you do so, a pop up prompting you to download Zoom *may* appear, close this pop up.
4. You will notice below the "Launch Meeting" button that there is now a **Join From your Browser** link. Click this link.
5. In the **Your Name** field, enter a display name. \*See below if you are using a pseudonym.
6. Click **Join**. You will see a message asking you to wait: I will let you in! The meeting is set so that your camera *should* be off and your mic *should* be muted when you join in.

### Your Privacy and Identity in a Virtual Zoom Meeting

Given the nature of the small group setting for the focus group, your identity may not be entirely confidential. While complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed, if you would like to participate but you prefer that your identity not be known to other participants, here are a few suggestions:

- 1) Come up with a pseudonym! Set this pseudonym as a Zoom name, and introduce yourself using it.
  - a. **If you do not have an account** and are signing in as a guest, you will be prompted to enter a display name; please use your pseudonym.
  - b. **If you have an account** and need help changing your name, click here: [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363203-Customizing-your-profile#h\\_01F6MWFY3D62ANBVYSB7ZNNS7](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363203-Customizing-your-profile#h_01F6MWFY3D62ANBVYSB7ZNNS7)
- 2) Turn off your camera.
 

*\*Your camera will be turned off when you enter the meeting.*

For help turning off your camera on the Zoom platform, click here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/4404456197133-Turning-video-off-when-joining-a-meeting>
- 3) Change your Zoom photo.
 

*\*This does not apply if you do not have a Zoom account.*

For help changing your Zoom photo, click here: [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363203-Customizing-your-profile#h\\_01F6MWFY3D62ANBVYSB7ZNNS7](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363203-Customizing-your-profile#h_01F6MWFY3D62ANBVYSB7ZNNS7)

## Appendix E

### Focus Group Questions and Prompts

#### Save BC Wolves

#### *Community Engagement to Develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action*

May 10th, 2022, @6:00pm PST

<https://uvic.zoom.us/j/89161725984>

#### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS**

*Facilitated by Lindsay Barnett, UVIC Master's of Community Development Student*

- 1) What do new Save BC Wolves community members need to get started and take action?
  - How can Pacific Wild support community members to become involved in a project or start a self-led project?
  
- 2) What do you think some of the benefits and challenges of self-led community action are?
  - Is leadership from within the Save BC Wolves community important to coordinating action?
  - Are you comfortable planning and leading a project?
  - What would you need to be comfortable planning and leading a project?
  - How can we identify leaders within the community?
  
- 3) What planning sessions and tools might be beneficial to the group to facilitate commitment and action among community members?
  - What role does Pacific Wild play in developing these tools?
  - What role does Pacific Wild play in overseeing the use of these tools?
  - How do you envision contributing to volunteer community project planning?
  
- 4) What do you think is the most important next step for Pacific Wild to take to increase action in the Save BC Wolves community?

## Appendix F

### Focus Group Findings Presented to Participants for Review

#### Key Learnings

Engaging the public is challenging; people are disinterested, disengaged, and apathetic. Progress towards changing attitudes is difficult to see and feel, which can be disappointing and discouraging, and make it seem as if action taken is ineffective.

Advocacy can be intimidating and uncomfortable. SBCW Members are concerned individuals who may not have pertinent training and experience yet want to feel informed and equipped to facilitate engaging discussion and dialogue, without fear of compromising progress.

Clarity of SBCW objectives and priorities, and a roadmap with the vision to achieve objectives, would benefit members, along with consolidated, accessible facts and data. Advocacy training, practice discussions, and tools and resources outlining what to do, and what not to do, will improve confidence and serve as a foundation for the diverse and creative application of advocacy skills, resulting in a multi-pronged, strengthened stance.

Ending the cull is widely supported. Enabling and empowering people to communicate their perspective will amplify these voices.

SBCW and PW are interest groups where people who are already concerned gravitate; raising awareness is important as the everyday person does not know about the wolf cull even though environment and conservation issues impact everyone.

Effective advocacy, including the ability to answer an array of questions in an informative way, involves understanding both the arguments for and against the cull. Understanding and countering opposing arguments requires familiarity with facts, data, and how wolf cull supporters benefit or perceive benefits.

Wolves as successful, adaptive species are vilified, yet species like the grizzly similarly impact caribou and other species and have benefited from conservation initiatives that transform public perceptions. With perceptions of the “Big Bad Wolf”, people do not see wolves as critical members of an ecological community. Studying successful conservation initiatives of other vilified species (orca, grizzly) may offer learnings to inform SBCW.

Politicians represent their constituents; SBCW needs to engage those constituents. Those in support of the cull very quickly organize to engage government officials.

Wildlife management culture is dominated by hunters, in contrast with the SBCW community who could be characterized as stereotypically “polite Canadians” or “tree-huggers”. Contrasting gender representation likely between SBCW and opposition, which may influence approach to advocacy.

## Insights and Ideas

### Consider:

- Activities requiring a substantial time commitment will have limited participation.
- What can people outside of BC do in the absence of being able to engage their political representatives?

### Ideas for Action:

- Associate economic benefit with wolf conservation.
- Film protest of departing helicopters.
- Expose financial supporters and beneficiaries of the publicly funded cull.
- Send cards to political representatives as soon as the cull takes place to ensure representatives are aware of both the cull and support to end it.
- Media ads or other means of engagement with high viewership outside of Pacific Wild network.
- Netflix exposé.

### Areas to Learn More:

- Why the cull was renewed?
- What organizations support ending the cull?
- What are the Indigenous perspectives on ending the cull?

We do not know the outcomes of culling wolves; we do not know best.

## Appendix G

### Ethics Protocol Certificate of Approval



University  
of Victoria

Office of Research Services | Human Research Ethics Board  
Michael Williams Building Rm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada  
T 250-472-4545 | F 250-721-8980 | [uvic.ca/research](http://uvic.ca/research) | [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)

### Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Lynne Siemens (Supervisor)	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER 21-0667 Expedited review - delegated
PRINCIPAL APPLICANT: Lindsay Barnett Master's student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 07-Apr-2022
UVIC DEPARTMENT: Public Administration PADM	APPROVED ON: 07-Apr-2022
	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 06-Apr-2023

PROJECT TITLE: Community Engagement to develop a Volunteer Framework for Independent Action

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS:  
Laurie McConnell - Representative of Client Organization, Pacific Wild ([www.pacificwild.org](http://www.pacificwild.org))

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:  
CND Research Ethics Certificate.pdf - 15-Jan-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Survey Recruitment Methods.docx - 15-Mar-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Focus Group Recruitment Methods.docx - 15-Mar-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Community Group Approval\_Pacific Wild.docx - 15-Mar-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Survey.docx - 15-Mar-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Focus Group.docx - 15-Mar-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Survey\_Letter of Information for Implied Consent.docx - 15-Mar-2022  
Lindsay Barnett Ethics - Focus Group Consent Form.docx - 16-Mar-2022

### Conditions of approval

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

**Amendments**  
To make changes to the approved research procedure in your study, please submit "Amendments" or "Annual renewal with amendments" form. You must receive research ethics approval before proceeding with your amended protocol.

**Renewals**  
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

**Project Closures**  
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

### Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria's policies for research involving human participants.

Dr. Sandra Gibbons  
Chair, Human Research Ethics Board

Dr. Matthew Murphy  
Vice-chair, Human Research Ethics Board

Certificate Issued On: 07-Apr-2022