

How to write BC Nature Resolutions

By the Resolution Committee

BC Nature establishes some conservation policies by means of resolutions from the membership. Resolutions pass through a formal process before being brought forward at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for voting by the membership. Resolutions are written in a particular style, explained below, and are need to addressed to a relevant federal, provincial, regional or municipal government politician or representative or any other relevant organization. Previous resolutions cover a wide range of conservation topics and are all listed on the website <https://bcnature.org/past-resolutions/>. When a resolution has received approval by the membership, a letter stating its passage is sent to the relevant politician or persons, requesting a response on the issue. Resolutions are therefore an important activity of the BC Nature membership and all clubs and members are encouraged to consider submitting one to an AGM.

If you have a conservation issue you are concerned about in your area of B.C. or one of wider relevance to all Canadian citizens, here is some information on preparing a BC Nature resolution.

Who can submit a resolution?

Any BC Nature member in good standing or BC Nature club. The name of the person or club proposing the resolution must be written under the title. That person, or a representative of the club, should be in attendance at the AGM to move the resolution and be prepared to speak briefly to its content and answer any questions from the audience. The Resolutions Chair conducts the Resolution part of the meeting and the voting procedures.

Timing:

Resolutions need to be submitted to the BC Nature Resolutions Committee well ahead of the AGM. Three months is typical, to allow for the resolution to be reviewed, and circulated to the membership for publication in the magazine and in the Annual Report.

Planning a resolution:

If a conservation issue is a concern to you or your club, and you think a resolution is needed, please check on the website whether there is already a resolution covering that topic. This would guide you as to whether a new resolution is needed or an update to an existing one. If no resolution already exists, feel free to contact the Resolutions Committee or members of the BC Nature Board to ask whether your topic is a suitable one for a resolution, or whether it can be dealt with as an ordinary motion at a Directors' meeting or the AGM. Resolutions are intended for conservation topics, while governance policies are the responsibility of Directors.

Writing the resolution: Step 1.

Resolutions are written in a very particular, conventional way. Since they become official policy for BC Nature, due care and consideration must be given to their wording. The standard form for the construction of all resolutions should be followed.

The Resolutions Committee can help with this if necessary, but it is worth looking at previous resolutions to see what the format should be. Do not try and rush through writing a resolution, as the extra time spent getting the wording correct will help ensure its passage by the membership. If something is ambiguous, unclear, or lacking in facts, it is less likely for the resolution to be passed.

A resolution needs the following: A title showing the subject matter; the name of the member or club proposing the resolution; a series of five or six (typically) “Whereas” statements that explain the reason for the core resolution, giving background justifications for the concern, scientific information, and so on; and one or more “Be it resolved” statements that hold the core resolution. This last statement or statements should be addressed to a government or other decision maker. For example: “Be it moved that BC Nature urge the Prime Minister of Canada to.....”.

Writing the resolution: Step 2

Once the resolution is drafted and approved by your club membership (if coming from a club) it should be submitted to the Resolutions Committee. The sponsoring member or club should also research the names and contact information (address, email, and phone number) of the government decision maker(s) to whom the resolution is addressed and enclose them with the resolution. This allows for a quick turnaround after your resolution passes and for sending out letters to the relevant people.

The Committee ensures that the resolution is correctly formatted, has the necessary information, and that there are no hindrances to sending it to the membership for voting. The resolution is then sent out from the BC Nature office to the membership, so that everyone can review it.

Final step: voting

At the AGM, resolutions are announced in order by the Resolutions Chair and each mover is invited to read and move their resolution. A seconder to the motion is requested by the Chair. Discussion follows, moderated by the Chair. A vote is then called, with numbers for, against, and abstaining counted if necessary. A motion is passed when a majority vote of 67% or greater is received. A motion may also be referred to another meeting, if for example, discussion is proving that there are problems coming to a conclusive vote. The vote is documented in the minutes. Following the AGM, the BC Nature President and Office Manager organize the sending of letters including the resolution to the relevant addressees. (as supplied)

Here is an example of a resolution from 2018 in the correct format:

Resolution 2018-01 - Banning the Use of Lead in Ammunition and Fishing Gear. Submitted by the Bulkley Valley Naturalists

Motion:

Whereas the Canadian government has taken action to protect Canadians from lead exposure by stopping the use of lead in gasoline and paint;

Whereas Environment Canada banned the use of lead shot for hunting most migratory game bird species in 1999;

Whereas lead shot and ammunition and lead fishing gear continue to be allowed for fishing and hunting activities that do not involve migratory game bird species;

Whereas scientific studies show that the continued use of lead-based ammunition and fishing gear poses significant health risks to humans and wildlife;¹

Whereas research shows that lead causes harm at far lower levels of exposure than was previously recognized and the World Health Organization has concluded that there is “no known level of lead exposure that is considered safe”;²

Whereas a statement released by scientists and health experts in the United States in 2013 notes that lead hunting ammunition poses a serious danger to people and wildlife and should be phased out;³

Whereas the Centre for Biological Diversity, the American Bird Conservancy, and other conservation, hunting, and veterinarian groups in the United States have submitted a Petition to the US Environmental Protection Agency, which provides detailed scientific evidence on harm caused to wildlife and humans by the use of lead shot, bullets, and fishing sinkers and calls for them to be banned under the US Toxic Substances Control Act;⁴

Whereas research has determined that ingestion of small lead fishing sinkers and jigs is a major cause of death in breeding common loons in eastern Canada and the United States;⁵

Whereas non-lead ammunition and non-lead fishing jigs and lures are available, are effective and cost only slightly more;⁶

Whereas in 2004, Canada's Minister of the Environment announced the government's intention to prohibit the import, manufacture and sale of lead fishing weights in Canada;⁷

Whereas the state of California is phasing in a ban on lead ammunition by 2019 and many EU countries and U.S. states have restrictions on the use of lead ammunition and lead in fishing gear.

Whereas Denmark has moved to ban lead ammunition.

Be it resolved that BC Nature call on the Canadian government to:

- Take action to eliminate the use of lead in ammunition and fishing gear.
- Collaborate with indigenous communities, the provinces, non-governmental organizations and commercial interests, to introduce an action plan to phase out the use of lead in ammunition and fishing gear.
- Initiate an educational strategy and a fund to assist in the transition to non-lead ammunition and fishing gear.

References:

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2. WHO, *Lead Poisoning and Health*, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs379/en/>
3. Health Risks from Lead-Based Ammunition in the Environment—A Consensus Statement of Scientists.

2013. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6dq3h64x>.

4. US Center for Biological Diversity, the American Bird Conservancy, the Association of Avian Veterinarians et al. Petition to the Environmental Protection Agency to Ban Lead Shot, Bullets, And Fishing Sinkers under the Toxic Substances Control Act. August 3, 2010. http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/get_the_lead_out/pdfs/Final_TSCA_lead_ban_petition_8-3-10.pdf.

5. Environment Canada. Wildlife and landscape science research topics: metals toxicology. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/wildlife-research-landscape-science/research-topics/metals-toxicology.html>). Wilush M. Hunters and anglers should stop using lead products, vet says. CBC, May 10, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/hunters-anglers-switch-from-lead-to-copper-1.3575131>. Fishing tackle kills a shocking number of loons. CBC, October 21, 2017. <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/october-21-2017-1.4363723/fishing-tackle-kills-a-shocking-number-of-loons-1.4363730>. Chiu, E. CBC News, Dec 29, 2016. Hunters urged to switch to copper ammo after bald eagle dies of lead poisoning. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/hunters-copper-ammo-cape-breton-eagle-lead-poisoning-1.3914901>.

6. Thomas VG. 2013. *Lead-free hunting rifle ammunition: product availability, price, effectiveness, and role in global wildlife conservation*. *Ambio*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13280-012-0361-7>.

7. Environment Canada, 2005, *Fishing Lead Free: A regulatory Proposal*. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/leadfree-canada2005.pdf>.

Writing a resolution is a very worthwhile way of participating in the democratic organization of BC Nature and contributing to our society's conservation efforts. While a little complicated, it is not difficult and there are experienced people available to help. Why not consider writing a conservation resolution for our next AGM!

Also, we are looking for new members on the Resolutions Committee so please contact me if you would like to help.

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BC Nature, Resolutions Chair, 2025