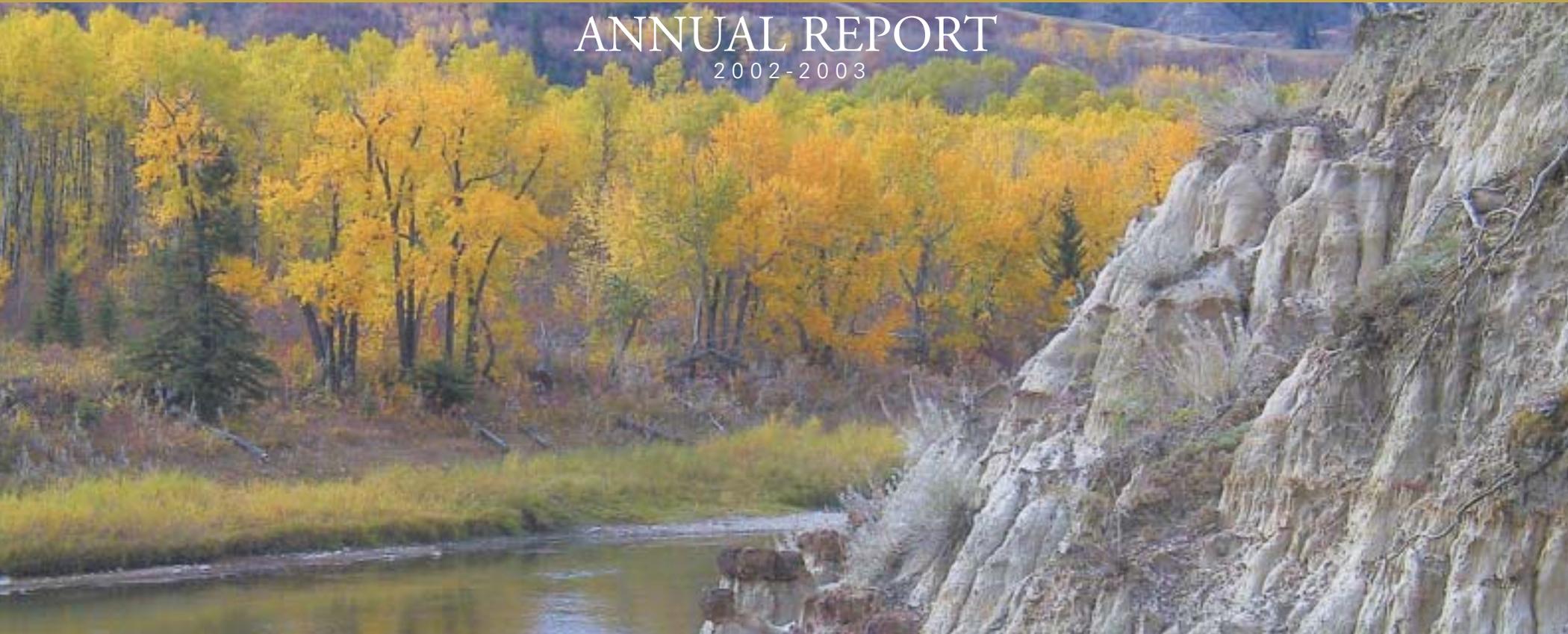


ANNUAL REPORT

2002-2003



Conservation Through Collaboration





In Memorial - Dave Maclean

The conservation community lost a valued team member this year with the passing of ACA's Dave Maclean. Dave passed away suddenly on March 7, 2003 while skiing in Fernie, BC. He was a good friend, seasoned professional and always willing to help in any way. ACA's southern regional team will especially remember Dave's cleverness, kindness and good humor. In honor of our friend and colleague, ACA has established the Dave Maclean Memorial Award at the Lethbridge Community College. This monetary award will be presented annually to a post graduate student who demonstrates outstanding academic achievement in the biological sciences program. This Annual Report is dedicated to Dave and his family in recognition of his important contribution to conservation work in Alberta.

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Alberta Conservation Association

ACA is a non profit, non government association formed in 1997 that works collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders to conserve and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fisheries and habitat. Our focus is to work as recognized leaders in the conservation community in Alberta and Canada.

We envision an Alberta where citizens understand and support good stewardship of our natural biological resources, where habitat integrity is maintained, where government, business and citizens work together for nature conservation and where future generations can value, enjoy and use those natural biological resources.

Our business is conservation; our product is information. Our objective is to be innovative, efficient and scientifically credible in developing, supporting and delivering conservation programs in Alberta. ACA has evolved into a high performing team based organization; our staff have an unwavering passion and commitment to Alberta's wildlife, fisheries and habitat.

"Conservation Through Collaboration" is more than our motto . . . it is the basis of ACA's internal organizational culture and the foundation of our external success in the funding and delivery of priority conservation programs.

Chairman's Message

It is six years into our DAO called Alberta Conservation Association and like all living things, we continue to develop and mature, continually defining ourselves within Alberta's conservation community.

Since our beginning we have been consistent in one area. That being our ability to positively impact the condition of our wildlife, fish and habitat in the province. This is, of course a constant we are proud of and we find ourselves wanting to build on it. Our primary source of funds we operate with, those contributed by hunters and anglers, remain at best, fairly constant. We would be nothing without these. Before we make any dramatic moves towards other fundraising to help us increase our impact on conservation, our immediate strategy will be to focus on doing what we do now . . . only better!

Our managing director, Steven Hull, has already reorganized many things administratively and met the challenge of highlighting and improving efficiencies within the organization. The Board of

Directors, myself, and all hunters and anglers owe a debt of gratitude to Steve and all the staff for their efforts.

What are the other ways we can achieve more with the same resources? For starters let's be sure that the work we do ourselves and the work we support is high quality, science based, and most importantly - useful! Steps have already started to assure this is the type of work we do and projects we support. We will strengthen this focus going forward.

What else? Well how about if we enhance the way we interact with other organizations that are involved in good conservation work? Let's improve and develop our coordination, support and facilitation (without competing) of other groups. As the old saying goes, two heads are better than one. If we can somehow exponentially work towards improving our natural resources, instead of everyone going it alone, why not?

Those are just a couple things the board wants to focus on in the months ahead. Of course we will continue to leverage our resources through corporate sponsored project specific partner opportunities, as we have done so successfully in the past.

As ACA improves all that we do, we have begun to be noticed in a good way. We are also able to tell more wonderful success stories. When more people understand how and why we do what we do so well, even more good things will come our way. The wildlife, the fish, their habitat and all of us who value and enjoy it so immensely, shall continue to prosper.



Terry Birkholz
Chairman



Managing Director's Message



ACA enjoyed another remarkable year of progress, change and accomplishment.

Our new organizational structure has been successfully launched with the development of a team based organization. Strategic business planning systems were established this year and we have refined the focus of our three major program areas of wildlife, fisheries and habitat. In conjunction with all these changes, ACA program teams accomplished significant work in project delivery, research and data collection.

We continue to fund over a million dollars annually in external project support and helped raise awareness of conservation issues through the successful Partners In Conservation Conference and support of scientific forums such as the Chronic Wasting Disease conference.

Fostering our approach of "conservation through collaboration", we continued to

enhance our conservation work by developing strategic alliances with academic and research institutions, different levels of government, industry and other conservation groups. Part of this year's focus was to increase communication and clarity with our major partner Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. A major step in accomplishing this was developing consensus around a Memorandum of Understanding complete with program agreements which were cooperatively developed between our organizations.

ACA's conservation successes would not be possible without the strong support of the Board of Directors and the dedication of our staff across the province. I would like to express my gratitude to the board for their confidence in staff to carry out ACA's new direction – and acknowledge the energy and commitment of ACA staff who successfully met this year's challenge of improving internal business systems while

juggling important field work and their expanding team member roles. We couldn't have done it without you.

Change is constant and our conservation work always needed. ACA teams have embraced constant learning and the pursuit of excellence as the best way to effect positive change on Alberta's wildlife, fish and the sensitive habitat they depend upon. It is gratifying to see different areas of ACA's conservation work being recognized. We are well positioned to face the exciting challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Steven Hull
Managing Director



ACA - A Team Based Organization

ACA is committed to developing a team based environment by educating and engaging staff as to what makes an effective team and how to incorporate that philosophy into our day to day work.

Team formation sessions, team charters and formal work plans guide staff on how their individual roles align with their team objectives which in turn create accountability to support ACA goals.

Focus on Core Values

We model other high performing organizations that have forged success by focusing key organizational attributes to all areas of internal and external business. ACA teams across the province are committed to the following values as the fundamental basis for every area of our

work: innovation, scientific credibility, collaboration, accountability, integrity and excellence.

Emphasis on Learning and Performance

ACA emphasizes continuous learning and high performance, creating systems that ensure ACA values are rewarded, that our performance is accountable and that individual and team excellence is monitored and constantly improved. Our commitment to staff is shown by rewarding employees not only for their contributions to

conservation work, but also for their ability to exemplify ACA values and behaviors. Staff recognition programs and ongoing learning across all teams are integral to our success.



2002-2003 Board of Directors

ACA is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors represented by conservation groups, industry, science, and the public at large. The board sets policy and provides direction and monitoring for the organization. The managing director is responsible for the ongoing operations and management of the organization in support of this focus and direction.

Chairman

Mr. Terry Birkholz
Alberta Professional Outfitters Society

Vice-Chairman

Mr. Don Pike
Trout Unlimited Canada

Secretary

Dr. Lee Foote
Public At Large, Northeast Region

Treasurer

Mr. Kelsey Kure
Public At Large, East Slopes Region

Directors

Mr. David Gursky
*Western Walleye Council **

Mr. Terry Welty
*Western Walleye Council **

Mr. Ken Ambrock
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Mr. Gerald Gustavson
Alberta Trappers Association

Mr. Robert Scammell
*Alberta Fish and Game Association **

Mr. David Powell
*Alberta Fish and Game Association ***

Mr. Glen Semenchuk
Federation of Alberta Naturalists

Alberta Representative
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

Dr. Mark Boyce
Public At Large

Mr. Donald Onofrychuk
Public At Large, Southern Region

Mr. Brian Bildson
Public At Large, Northwest Region

Mr. David Bissett
Public At Large

Alberta Conservation Association

Mr. Steven Hull - Managing Director

* Retired during the 2002/2003 fiscal year.

** Appointed during the 2002/2003 fiscal year.



ACA Environment



ACA Environment

Who We Are

The Alberta Conservation Association was formed on April 1, 1997 and is a registered, charitable organization committed to the conservation and enhancement of Alberta's natural biological resources. ACA is a Delegated Administrative Organization under the Alberta Wildlife Act, specifically Section Two (2) of the Wildlife Regulations. The Alberta Wildlife Act provides ACA with powers, duties and responsibilities enabling the Association to carry out activities related to the development and enhancement of populations and habitats of wildlife, fish and endangered species in Alberta. It also includes the ability to establish and collect levies on hunting and angling licenses in support of that work. ACA's Managing Director reports directly to the Board of Directors and oversees approximately seventy, highly trained, experienced staff working in fourteen offices across the province.

What We Do

Annually, ACA focuses several million dollars towards conservation efforts, delivering a wide variety of projects and programs across the province. We receive funding from a variety of concerned conservationists including significant contributions from hunters and anglers as well as corporate and industry partners. Every time a hunting or fishing license is purchased in the province, ACA receives a portion of the funds to implement important conservation projects for wildlife, fisheries and habitat. Program priorities are determined by provincial

and regional action plans and ACA's annual business plan. Typical conservation activities include research and data collection, hands on project delivery, monitoring, analysis and evaluation.

The Association often fulfills the role of a facilitator in bringing together partners from government, industry, and the conservation community to assess relevant issues and collaboratively implement solutions and provide information. ACA also functions as a funding agency providing over one million dollars annually for other conservation initiatives in the province.

What We Don't Do

It is important to recognize that ACA is non partisan, non regulatory and has no role in enforcing resource use; the Government of Alberta has the ultimate responsibility for the management and regulating of the province's natural resources. We are conduits of scientific information and as such ACA does not lobby or issue position statements on natural resource issues.



Who We Work With

ACA conservation initiatives benefit a wide variety of interest groups that include hunters and anglers, local, provincial and federal governments, industry, landowners, conservation organizations and the citizens of Alberta. ACA's Board of Directors was originally formed by representatives from concerned conservation groups that are still active and supportive of ACA today: Alberta Fish and Game Association, Alberta Professional Outfitters Association, Alberta Trappers Association, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, Trout Unlimited Canada and the Western Walleye Council. ACA's primary partner in many conservation projects is Alberta Sustainable Resource Development's Fish and Wildlife Division.

ACA Stakeholders and Member Groups:

- * Alberta Fish and Game Association
- * Alberta Professional Outfitters Association
- * Alberta Trappers Association
- * Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- * Federation of Alberta Naturalists
- * Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
- * Trout Unlimited Canada
- * Western Walleye Council

ACA programming also benefits:

- * Hunters and anglers
- * Alberta Government
- * Local governments
- * Industry
- * Other conservation-oriented groups
- * Youth and education
- * Science and Academic community
- * Landowners
- * Citizens of Alberta



ACA Employees

We recognize an organization isn't simply defined by its services and products – it is defined by its people. ACA staff are dedicated to making a difference to conservation through their collaboration with internal teams, external customers, partners and all varieties of stakeholders. ACA's passion for conservation is a tremendous strength valued by the organization and the important foundation of our new direction.

In 2002-2003, all ACA employees were introduced to a new team based organizational structure that consists of self-directed teams. A team based organization which educates and engages staff has proven to be successful in other organizations and ACA has chosen to apply this model to the business of conservation.

ACA is committed to creating a learning environment where the goals of the organization are clearly understood by teams and individuals, and employees exhibit ACA values in their everyday work. Over the past year, ACA has proven its commitment to this new direction by implementing a series of tools needed for this approach to be successful.

- * Launch of ACA's New Direction, decision to move toward a high performance organizational culture.
- * Re aligned personal performance process with organization's goals and culture.

- * Development of a team based organizational structure.
- * Increased collaboration among business units within ACA.
- * Began work to reduce staff turnover, move from project-focus funding increasing retention – enhanced our ability to recruit and retain employees.
- * Began regular survey of employees to measure satisfaction and engagement to assist us in our quest for continuous improvement in all of our internal processes.



ACA Operations



ACA programs are grouped into three major business areas, Wildlife, Fisheries and Habitat.

ACA Operations

ACA programs are grouped into three major business areas, Wildlife, Fisheries and Habitat. Our delegated responsibilities and additional projects we deliver fit within at least one of these areas.

As a part of our new strategic direction we have focused on clarifying our priorities within each program area. In 2002-2003, ACA's Wildlife, Fisheries and Habitat Teams were formed with their main goal to develop conservation programs based on clearly defined priorities. These program priorities were established in consultation with our major partner, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and were also used

to allocate funds for 2003-2004 projects. The development of these teams has aligned project coordination between ACA's four provincial regions and enhanced communication with our stakeholders and partners. The priorities developed by each team will be continually re-evaluated to reflect current conservation priorities in the province.

ACA programs are committed to scientific excellence in the collection, analysis and reporting of biological data, and when appropriate, the effective promotion and communication of scientific results.

Wildlife Team

ACA's Wildlife Team continues to develop a strategy for an accountable Wildlife Program based on clearly defined priorities. The team is working to ensure ACA is a major contributor to wildlife conservation in Alberta and to maintain a high standard of excellence and scientific credibility in ACA's Wildlife Programs.



Wildlife Program Priorities 2003-2006

The following highlights are examples of the type of work the Wildlife Team completed in 2002-2003. For a complete list of ACA projects, visit: www.ab-conservation.com.

Population Inventory Data

The execution of field surveys to describe the distribution and abundance of a species to aid in the effective management of wildlife by providing accurate trend information.

Sharp-tailed Grouse Population Monitoring

- * ACA surveys of sharp-tailed grouse breeding grounds build on existing data and determine trends in sharp-tailed grouse populations in order to ensure this heavily impacted species remains viable.

Implementation of Management, Conservation, or Recovery Plans

Management actions taken to maintain or re-establish the abundance and distribution of a species within their natural range.

Peregrine Falcon Monitoring

- * Population and productivity data will assist in determining what management actions will be required to ensure recovery of the peregrine falcon. ACA is involved in the implementation of the provincial peregrine falcon recovery plan to ensure resource managers have the necessary data to assess the overall health of Alberta populations.

Collecting and Compiling Data

The collection and integration of information on the abundance and distribution of a species and/or their habitat requirements to assist in the effective management of the resource.

Milk River Basin Species at Risk Conservation Strategy

- * The project developed a process to provide management of critical habitat across the landscape to achieve multi-species conservation. The process includes conducting surveys for selected species at risk to determine population and distribution data, modeling suitable habitat and developing beneficial management practices to guide stewardship activities across the landscape. Focusing on the Milk River Basin, the approach combines conservation strategies for species at risk and game species.

Habitat Inventory Data

The execution of field surveys to describe the diversity and abundance of physical habitats.

Habitat Use By Pronghorn Antelope

- * Pronghorn antelope are at the northern limit of their range and their population levels tend to fluctuate in response to climatic extremes. In order to keep antelope populations stable, the protection of adequate habitat is required. An assessment of the habitat utilized by antelope allows ACA's Habitat Team to determine what type of habitat is needed. An antelope working group was formed to plan a scientifically credible program studying the effects of land use practices on the distribution of antelope and other grassland wildlife.



Fisheries Team

ACA's Fisheries Team is striving to provide leadership in developing accountable and scientifically credible fish conservation programs that will positively influence fisheries management and conservation in Alberta.

The Fisheries Team worked collaboratively with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) on projects such as the lotic standards committee that will refine protocols for first-time small stream inventories and the planning of a joint workshop to resolve issues surrounding index-netting. ACA's Fisheries Team continues to use joint planning sessions with ASRD to identify key issues, desired outcomes, priorities and solutions related to fisheries programs in Alberta.

ACA Fisheries Program Priorities 2003-2006

The following highlights are examples of the types of work the Fisheries Team completed in 2002-2003. For a complete list of ACA projects, visit: www.ab-conservation.com.

Fish Populations, Trends and Status

Effective resource management depends on the availability of timely and accurate

information regarding status and trends over time. ACA is working towards developing and implementing rigorous processes that enable biologists to determine the condition of populations that are currently missing data, including non-sport fish species.

- * Conducting small stream inventories with partners.
- * Lentic stock assessments conducted on priority waterbodies.
- * Medium river stock assessment.
- * Small stream monitoring.

Sport Fish Harvest and Angling Effort

Fish harvest and fishing effort are key management parameters used to ensure sustainable use of fish stocks. Some sport fish in Alberta, such as walleye and pike, have management strategies that require specific data collection and analysis. Management plans for other species need

to be developed or revised and ACA is working to provide timely and accurate data needed to support these efforts.

- * Angler-use surveys conducted on priority lakes.
- * Assessment of alternate management strategies on Sturgeon and Calling lakes.

Cumulative Effects

The total influence of all human activities on aquatic ecosystems may exceed the "sum of the parts." In order to protect the basic elements of aquatic systems and ensure their sustainability, it is vitally important to understand the multiplicative effect of human activities. ACA is committed to studying and measuring these cumulative effects on our aquatic systems.

- * Stream crossing inventories and studies (roads, OHVs, etc.).
- * Northern Watershed project

Fish Habitat Status and Change

The condition of fish populations must be related to the status of the habitats that support them, so that habitat and fish management occurs in a synergistic and effective manner. Similar to its fish population studies, ACA is also developing a process to determine the status of fish habitat.

- * Working to enhance the status of fish habitat through riparian habitat assessment.

Habitat Team

ACA's Habitat Team is implementing strategies for its Habitat Programs which are efficient, credible and accountable and will benefit Alberta's wildlife and fish resources.



ACA Habitat Program Priorities 2003-2006

The following projects and/or highlights are examples of the types of work the Habitat Team completed in 2002-2003. For a complete list of ACA projects, visit: www.ab-conservation.com.

Riparian Habitat

Riparian habitats make up four percent of Alberta's land base. Yet eighty percent of Alberta's wildlife and fish species depend on this habitat at some point in their life cycle. ACA is committed to conserving this rapidly disappearing habitat through a variety of methods.

Riparian Conservation

- * The Riparian Conservation Program focuses on habitat conservation, stewardship and restoration activities intended to improve the habitat condition on crown and private riparian areas.

- * Approximately 190 kilometers of streams were enhanced in ACA's East Slopes and Southern Regions.
- * Approximately 170 kilometers of streambank fence maintained on key trout streams in the east slopes.

Habitat Supporting Species At Risk

ACA is committed to conserving and enhancing habitats that support species whose populations are diminishing due to reduced availability of the habitat upon which they depend.

Piping Plover Recovery Plan Implementation

- * ACA is a member of the Alberta Piping Plover Recovery Team and is working with its members to implement the provincial recovery plan. ACA was involved in conducting habitat assessments, which formed the basis for the development of 25 lake management plans for key piping

plover lakes in Alberta. These plans laid the foundation for future management actions.

Western Blue Flag Maintenance/Recovery Plan Implementation

- * As part of the implementation of the Maintenance and Recovery Plan for western blue flag in Canada, ACA is assisting with a key habitat initiative to help conserve the only Canadian population of western blue flag in Alberta. The objective is to determine and implement suitable management recommendations for western blue flag at the individual ranch level. In 2002-2003, range assessments and habitat management plans were developed and implemented for two ranches totaling 2,250 acres. The plans conserve not only western blue flag habitat but also foothills fescue native grassland, which benefit numerous other wildlife species

Critical Upland Habitat

These critical habitats could be defined as habitats that are limiting population viability, or are crucial to a particular species in a certain area or contribute a significant biological function to the ecosystem in question.

- * Prescribed burns completed at Canyon Creek (1,050 acres) and Hutton Creek (955 acres) in the northwest region increasing available forage and browse for ungulates. These areas are recognized critical wintering areas for elk, moose and deer. Partners include Alberta Conservation Association, Lands & Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Canada.

Two mechanical clearings completed:

- * 25 acres cleared in southwestern Alberta to stimulate re-growth of decadent browse species for moose.



- * 25 acres cleared in the Crowsnest Corridor to enhance elk winter range. This is the second clearing completed within the corridor totaling approximately 55 acres of enhanced winter range.

Habitat Supporting Recreation Opportunities

Conservation or enhancement of habitats that support consumptive (e.g. hunting, fishing) and non-consumptive (e.g. hiking) recreational opportunities for Albertans are important for ACA.

- * In the east slopes, ACA conducted lake aeration for rainbow trout at Millar's Lake and Beaver Lake. In addition to these lakes a new lake (Mitchell Lake) was developed for aeration in the winter of 2003/2004.

Buffalo Lake Moraine Conservation Project

- * The Buffalo Lake Moraine area is one of the few remaining areas remaining in Alberta that support original aspen parkland habitat. The Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Fish and Game Association, Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) collaborated to purchase 1,120-acre block of this sensitive land. The property is now managed in cooperation with a local landowner utilizing a community based plan that will not only insure the careful management of this critical area, but school groups, naturalists, hunters and other individuals have day use access to the property.

Habitat Securement

- * Purchased 160 acres of native wooded/shrub/grassland habitat near St. Paul in partnership with The Nature

Conservancy of Canada. The land is adjacent to the Therien Buck for Wildlife property (320 acres of secured natural habitat) and additional lands in the area that are maintained in a natural state. In 2002, prior to ACA and NCC purchase, this property was targeted for development (e.g. landfill, dirt bike track, etc.). Purchasing this property has protected a locally important habitat area while providing a secure and sustainable recreational use opportunity.

- * Acquired 160 acres of native habitat consisting of mature mixed aspen/spruce forest cover for Hines Creek Uplands near George Lake in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada and The Nature Conservancy of Canada. This land acquisition supports and enhances two existing habitat conservation areas: Ducks Unlimited Project (Erickson Wetland

Project – 480 acres), and an ACA and Ducks Unlimited cooperative project (West George Lake Uplands - 320 acres).

- * Purchased 160 acres in the Jefferson Moraine section of the Milk River Ridge for the "Jefferson Conservation Pasture" project which will establish a community-based plan to involve farmers and ranchers in a habitat restoration initiative. In cooperation with Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the total property purchased is approximately 3,093 acres.

Support Programs

ACA fulfills some of its moral, legal and ethical obligations through the following programs that the Association inherited through the legacy of the Alberta Wildlife Trust Fund. All ACA's support programs are coordinated with the Wildlife, Fisheries and Habitat Teams to ensure these programs are included in the development of team goals and priorities.

Report A Poacher

ACA's Report A Poacher (RAP) Program was created in 1990 to provide hunters and anglers with the opportunity to help protect our wildlife resources by reporting suspected resource violations by calling a toll-free phone number. ACA works with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to investigate each report and rewards are paid for resource related violations. The types of violations that the Report A Poacher Program aims to deter includes hunting or fishing out of season, night hunting, exceeding bag limits and illegal sale of wildlife or fish.

On average, the RAP Program receives over 3,000 reports every year. From these reports, approximately 1,000 charges are laid and the average reward paid is \$300, depending on the quality of the information provided. RAP also received over \$4,000 in donations this year, mostly coming from concerned citizens who were eligible for a reward but decided to donate the monies back into the program. The Report A Poacher toll free phone line is 1-800-642-3800.

Crop Damage Control

Since 1997, ACA has been responsible for the delivery and coordination of the Waterfowl Crop Damage Control (CDC) Program. The focus of the program is to prevent waterfowl damage to unharvested grain crops by implementing preventative measures including alternate feeding sites and the provision of scare cannons. With the assistance of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and Environment Canada, the CDC Program identifies areas of actual or potential operation, develops operational policies, and provides ongoing evaluation. The annual operating cost of the program is shared on an equal basis with Environment Canada. Thanks to this program, some form of waterfowl damage prevention

measure is available to all grain producers throughout Alberta. In 2002-2003, CDC dealt with 153 cases of potential waterfowl depredation on more than 240 different quarter sections of cropland.

Predator Compensation Program

ACA's Predator Compensation Program is funded by hunting license levies and is intended to reduce the financial burden incurred by livestock producers as a result of wildlife predation. Producers that have livestock killed or injured through predation by wolves, grizzly bears, black bears, cougars and eagles are eligible to make a claim. Livestock eligible for compensation include cattle, sheep, goats, bison and hogs. During 2002-2003, 108 claims were approved and over \$66,000 was paid to livestock producers.

Shot Livestock Program

The Shot Livestock Program is designed to compensate farmers and ranchers who have livestock killed or injured from accidental or negligent actions resulting from individuals using a weapon. Through this ACA program, livestock owners can apply for compensation if their animal was killed or injured during game bird or big game hunting seasons. Livestock that qualify for program eligibility included cattle, sheep, goats, bison, hogs and horses. This year, eighteen eligible claims for compensation were received with just over \$20,000 compensated to livestock producers.

Enhanced Fish Stocking

ACA's Enhanced Fish Stocking Program's goal is to enhance and increase fishing opportunities for Alberta anglers. The program supports stocking of rainbow trout that are about 20 cm or larger, into Alberta ponds in order to provide improved recreational angling opportunities. Sixty-seven water bodies were stocked with 132,100 trout in 2002. ACA works in collaboration with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to determine priority stocking locations and densities and ensure introduced stocks do not interact with native stocks.



Biodiversity and Species At Risk

This program is responsible for developing, coordinating and communicating ACA's provincial species at risk priorities. These priorities are developed in consultation with the Alberta Sustainable Resource Development's Fish and Wildlife Division (FWD). The FWD is responsible for the protection, management and recovery of Species At Risk in the province. ACA's role is to develop and deliver biodiversity and species at risk projects that address mutual ACA and FWD priorities. ACA assists in the implementation of actions laid out in provincial Recovery Plans and collects and compiles valuable data for wildlife managers to use in the status designation process. ACA also serves as a representative on the Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC), which recommends legal status to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development.

Recovery Teams and Plans

ACA representatives currently sit on the Alberta Recovery Team for the piping plover, peregrine falcon and western blue flag, as well as the Scientific Technical Committee of the Alberta Sage Grouse Recovery Team. These recovery teams are comprised of a variety of organizations and stakeholders to ensure participation from a cross-section of Albertans. This ensures that many different perspectives on the recovery of the species are presented and that consensus on recovery actions is achieved.

Alberta Amphibian Monitoring Program

- * Volunteer based program, attracted 75 new volunteers this year.
- * Communication and education through presentations, media coverage and newsletters.
- * Approximately 600 individuals, families, naturalist groups, schools and other organizations are on the mailing list for this program's newsletter.
- * 46 individuals and families contributed 333 amphibian observations this year.

Alberta Piping Plover Predator Exclosure and Population Monitoring Program

- * Population inventories conducted on 46 water bodies in Alberta.
- * 141 adults located on 19 water bodies.
- * 58 nests were found on 15 water bodies.
- * 47 nests had predator exclosures applied to them; 46 of these hatched (98%).
- * 11 nests were not exclosed; six hatched (55%).
- * 99 young were banded; 29 re-sightings of birds banded in previous years were also recorded.

Northern Leopard Frog Reintroduction Program

- * Four egg masses collected in early May produced 12,676 tadpoles.
- * 4,191 young-of-the-year frogs survived through metamorphosis and were collected from the rearing ponds, marked and released at designated sites.
- * At least 8 previously released leopard frogs were documented at the Raven River release site in 2002.
- * Two unconfirmed, considered reliable, observations of previously released leopard frogs were recorded at the North Saskatchewan River release site in 2002.
- * Leopard frog calling activity was recorded at the Raven River release site in spring 2002.
- * One leopard frog egg mass was documented at the Raven River release site, and was produced by previously released frogs.

Alberta Detailed Status Report Production

- * Commissioned seven new reports in the Alberta Wildlife Status Report series: western silvery minnow, St.Mary/shorthead sculpin, stonecat, mountain plover, northern leopard frog update 2003, sand verbena, slender mouse-ear cress.
- * Completed and distributed 5 reports in the Alberta Wildlife Status Report series: American badger, white-winged scoter, lake sturgeon, western silvery minnow, northern leopard frog update 2003.

Western Spiderwort Inventory

- * Conducted provincial inventory for western spiderwort, fulfilling the monitoring component of the Initial Conservation Action Statement for this species.
- * Recorded largest-ever population size in Alberta, approximately 7,500 plants.
- * Wrote, printed and distributed western spiderwort inventory 2002 report (Species At Risk Report No. 61).





ACA Supported Programs



ACA Supported Programs

In addition to on-the-ground program delivery, ACA also fulfills the role of a partner agency that provides funding support for external projects that complement our main program areas of wildlife, fisheries and habitat, ultimately allowing us to maximize our positive impact on conservation in Alberta. These collaborative programs fall under the headings of Conservation Funds, Community Partnerships and Academic Alliances.

ACA Conservation Funds

Grant Eligible Conservation Fund

ACA has been awarding grants since 1997 and contributes significant financial support to other conservation organizations and individuals through its Grant Eligible Conservation Fund (G.E.C.F.). Any individual or group is eligible to apply for funding if their project meets G.E.C.F. guidelines that support wildlife, fisheries and habitat programs. In 2002, forty-three projects were funded to a total of one million dollars by the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.

Habitat Securement Fund

This funding resource was created by ACA's Board of Directors to protect high priority habitat that are ecologically vital to the health of Alberta's wildlife and fish. Important habitat is identified and secured in accordance with ACA's Habitat Securement Strategy and

often purchased in a collaborative effort with other conservation organizations in order to maximize the beneficial impact.

ACA Community Partnerships

Provincial Museum's Wild Alberta Gallery

This year, ACA's announced its five year partnership commitment to support the Provincial Museum of Alberta develop the new "Wild Alberta" Gallery. The existing Habitat gallery closed in September of 2002 and will re-open in September 2003 as the re-energized "Wild Alberta" incorporating special effects, interactive tools, models and specimens to provide a different perspective on how humans have impacted the natural world. ACA's involvement as a major partner will ensure that the contributions of Alberta hunters and anglers to conservation efforts in the province are well represented.

ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife

Dr. Boyce's internationally recognized expertise has significantly enhanced ACA's efforts to support the conservation of Alberta's wildlife and fish resources.



ACA Academic Alliances

ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife

ACA endows an annual Chairholder position in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Science. Since 1999 Dr. Mark Boyce has filled the position of ACA's Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife, organizing and conducting world-class research programs in fisheries and wildlife biology. By addressing issues and problems relevant to Alberta's biological resources, Dr. Boyce supports ACA's goals for long-term sustainable fisheries and wildlife resources. Dr. Boyce's internationally recognized expertise has significantly enhanced ACA's efforts to support the conservation of Alberta's wildlife and fish resources. For more information regarding Dr. Mark Boyce and the ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife visit: www.biology.ualberta.ca/boyce.htm

Alberta Cooperative Conservation Research Unit (ACCRU)

ACA proudly supports this research unit that brings together a network of scientists focused on innovative research. ACCRU is a multi-institutional research and learning centre located on the University of Alberta campus that includes the University of Alberta, University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge. The goals of the program are to generate and communicate reliable scientific knowledge to drive effective stewardship of wildlife and fisheries resources. This program also prepares graduates with the knowledge, training, and leadership skills required to address resource management challenges of the future, and ongoing opportunities for continuing professional development for wildlife and fisheries managers and planners.

Biodiversity Grants Program

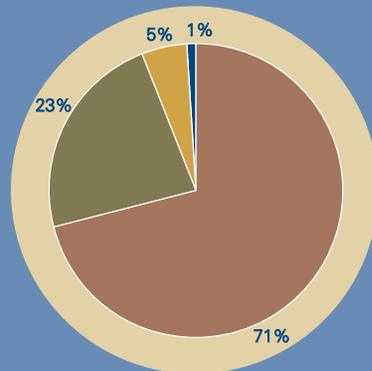
ACCRU also facilitates and supports other independently-managed and funded initiatives including the Challenge Grants in Biodiversity. Through ACA's support of ACCRU, the long term partnership with Challenge Grants in Biodiversity developed. ACA provides up to \$250,000 annually for support of outstanding graduate students and postdoctoral fellows doing research in Alberta. This successful partnership was celebrated in the spring of 2003 when the 200th recipient of the biodiversity grant fund brought ACA's contributions to date over the \$2 million dollar mark.

Dollars At Work

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

Revenue

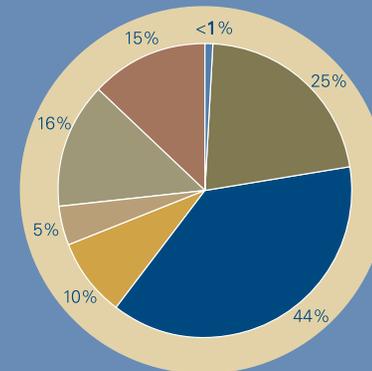
During the 2002/ 2003 fiscal year, the Alberta Conservation Association received \$9,801,503 from all sources combined. The major portion of this revenue, \$6,913,588 was derived from ACA's share of the levy on hunting and fishing licenses. The total levy is shared among the Alberta Government, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, licence issuers, IBM and ACA. ACA's share of this revenue, 40 percent, was leveraged to generate an additional \$2,289,758 in contributions from individuals, corporations and government departments. These funds were augmented by an additional \$468,030 in interest earned by long term investment.



Hunting and Angling	71%	\$ 6,913,588
Partner Contributions	23%	\$ 2,289,758
Interest	5%	\$ 468,030
Other	1%	\$ 130,127
TOTAL REVENUE	100%	\$ 9,801,503

Expenditures

Total annual expenditures were \$10,351,226 for this fiscal year. These funds were used to support a variety of programs, with priorities set by regional plans and ACA's annual operating plan. The Program Services category includes a variety of items that support year round delivery of programs throughout the province such as fixed asset amortization, insurance, audit and legal costs. The Support Programs category includes Report A Poacher, crop damage control, enhanced fish stocking, shot livestock and predator compensation programs.



ACA Chair of Fisheries and Wildlife	<1%	\$ 20,000
Habitat Programs	25%	\$ 2,555,715
Wildlife and Fish Programs	44%	\$ 4,509,734
Support Programs	10%	\$ 1,069,849
Regional Program Services	5%	\$ 576,009
Provincial Program Services	16%	\$ 1,619,919
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	100%	\$ 10,351,226

Auditors' Report

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

To the Members of Alberta Conservation Association:

We have audited the statement of financial position of Alberta Conservation Association as at March 31, 2003 and the statements of changes in net assets, operations and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Association's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many not-for-profit organizations, the Association derives a portion of its revenue from partner contributions, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the Association and we were unable to determine whether any adjustments to partner contribution revenue, net deficiency of revenues over expenses, assets, deferred revenue and net assets might be necessary.

In our opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of the revenues referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at March 31, 2003 and the changes in its net assets and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

May 28, 2003

Edmonton, Alberta

Meyers Norris Penny, LLP

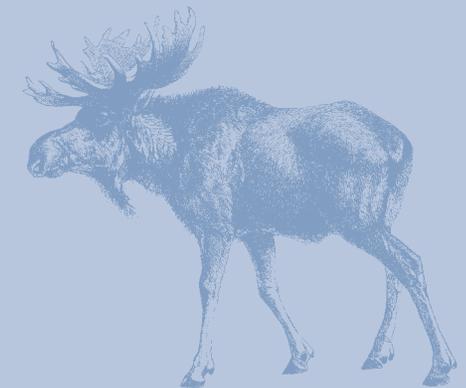
Chartered Accountants



Statement of Financial Position

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash (Note 4)	\$ 326,284	\$ 239,895
Accounts receivable	642,828	718,880
Goods and services tax receivable	56,909	39,606
Prepaid expenses	30,234	15,939
	1,056,255	1,014,320
Long-term investments (Note 2 and 4)	7,521,995	8,479,091
Capital assets (Note 3)	1,788,056	1,609,647
Total assets	10,366,306	11,103,058
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	774,485	832,960
Accrued vacation payable	229,053	206,943
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	551,162	810,116
Security deposits	9,268	7,510
	1,563,968	1,857,529
Commitments (Note 6)		
Net investment in capital assets	1,788,056	1,609,647
Unrestricted net assets	7,014,282	7,635,882
	8,802,338	9,245,529
	\$ 10,366,306	\$ 11,103,058



Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Alberta Conservation Association
 Year ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Net investment in capital assets		
Opening balance	\$ 1,609,647	\$ 1,365,160
Add: Net additions in year	478,532	585,236
Less: Amortization expense	300,123	340,749
Ending balance	1,788,056	1,609,647
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Opening balance	7,635,882	8,409,841
Add: Net deficiency of revenue over expenditures	(443,191)	(529,472)
Amortization expense	300,123	340,749
Less: Net assets purchased in year	478,532	585,236
Ending balance	\$ 7,014,282	\$ 7,635,882



Statement of Operations

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Revenue		
Fees and assessments	\$ 6,913,588	\$ 6,989,607
Partner contributions	2,289,758	2,154,221
Interest	468,030	531,411
Creative sentencing	57,395	-
Miscellaneous	45,938	134,821
Donations	26,794	25,907
Conservation subscriptions	-	18,225
Government of Canada	-	7,000
Total Revenue	9,801,503	9,861,192
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	3,805,053	3,257,736
Contracted services	1,784,249	1,490,405
Grants	1,618,459	2,407,196
Rentals	976,735	1,321,754
Materials and supplies	586,232	407,721
Amortization	300,123	340,749
Advertising	229,050	228,518
Fuel and lubricants	191,901	190,136
Travel	190,404	195,037
Repairs and maintenance	127,002	139,175
Hosting and conferences	120,530	39,449
Landowner agreements	112,354	172,017
Insurance	92,789	66,036
Office	92,364	96,170
Telephone and communications	60,324	59,341
Bank charges and interest	23,156	32,492
Utilities	20,993	19,241
Freight and postage	13,447	15,474
Fees, licenses and permits	6,061	5,497
Property taxes	-	346
Total Expenses	10,351,226	10,484,490
Other income		
Gain on sale of investments	102,913	94,599
Gain (loss) on disposal of capital assets	3,619	(773)
	106,532	93,826
Net deficiency of revenues over expenses	\$ (443,191)	\$ (529,472)



Statement of Cash Flows

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Operating activities		
Cash receipts	\$ 9,130,673	\$ 9,385,378
Cash paid to suppliers	(6,293,905)	(6,670,275)
Cash paid to employees	(3,782,943)	(3,232,159)
Interest received	470,624	557,429
Interest paid	(23,156)	(19,241)
Cash flows from operating activities	(498,707)	21,132
Investing activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(503,671)	(596,308)
Proceeds on disposal of capital assets	28,758	10,299
Purchase of long-term investments	(600,000)	-
Proceeds on sale of long-term investments	1,660,009	679,808
Cash flows from investing activities	585,096	93,799
Increase in cash resources	86,389	114,931
Cash balance, beginning of year	239,895	124,964
Cash balance, end of year	\$ 326,284	\$ 239,895



Notes to the Financial Statements

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

1. Nature of Operations

Alberta Conservation Association is incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act as a not-for-profit organization. Effective April 1, 1998, the Alberta Conservation Association was registered as a charitable organization under Section 149(1)(f) of The Income Tax Act. Its mission is to work together with Albertans to conserve, protect and enhance the province's natural resources.

2. Significant Accounting Policies

The Association follows accounting policies generally accepted in Canada in preparing the financial statements. The significant accounting policies are as follows:

Amortization

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Amortization is provided annually at rates calculated to write-off the assets over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Item	Diminishing Balance
Office equipment	20%
Aircraft	30%
Automotive	30%
Computer hardware	33%
Computer software	100%
Boats	15%
Trailers	20%
Communication equipment	10%
Other equipment	10%

Revenue recognition

Alberta Conservation Association follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Long-term investments

Long-term investments are carried at cost net of accumulated amortization of premiums and discounts purchased. The market value is \$7,794,237 at March 31, 2003 (2002- \$8,512,422). Premiums or discounts paid on purchase are amortized on a straight-line basis over the term of the instrument. This amortization is recorded as an adjustment to interest earned.

Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses

during the reporting period. Accounts receivable are stated after evaluation as to their collectibility and an appropriate allowance for doubtful accounts is provided where considered necessary. Amortization is based on the estimated useful lives of capital assets. These estimates are reviewed periodically and, as adjustments become necessary they are reported in earnings in the periods in which they become known.

3. Capital Assets

	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	2003 Net Book Value	2002 Net Book Value
Land	586,045	–	586,045	415,045
Automotive	1,241,742	690,024	551,718	592,674
Trailers	221,178	92,383	128,795	100,012
Aircraft	42,119	24,687	17,432	24,152
Boats	101,009	33,987	67,022	48,911
Computer hardware	357,572	209,419	148,153	167,985
Computer software	53,946	45,956	7,990	1,845
Office equipment	22,844	6,294	16,550	4,203
Communication equipment	28,203	9,060	19,143	25,787
Other equipment	326,085	80,877	245,208	229,033
	2,980,743	1,192,687	1,788,056	1,609,647

4. Deferred Revenue

Deferred revenue represents unspent resources from external sources such as government, not-for-profit organizations and industry and was restricted by the contributor for carrying out specific conservation projects in the current year. These funds have been carried forward to spend on future similar projects, at the discretion of the contributor. The restricted amounts held by the Association are included in cash and long-term investments.

	2003	2002
Deferred revenue, beginning of year	810,116	672,232
Add: contributions	2,030,804	2,292,105
Less: amounts recognized as revenue	(2,289,758)	(2,154,221)
Deferred revenue, end of year	551,162	810,116

5. Related Party Transactions

The Alberta Government provides the Association with space for its premises at no cost to the Association. The estimated value to the Association is \$160,000 annually. This agreement expired on March 31, 2003, and a new agreement has not yet been agreed upon. The financial effect of the new agreement on Association cannot be reasonably estimated at this time.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Alberta Conservation Association
Year ended March 31, 2003

The following member organizations are entitled to appoint representatives to the Board of the Association:

Organization	Number of Appointees
Alberta Fish and Game Association	1
Trout Unlimited Canada	1
Alberta Professional Outfitters Society	1
Federation of Alberta Naturalists	1
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta	1
Western Walleye Council	1
Alberta Trappers Association	1

The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development continues to appoint a Director, and these eight Directors elect six public at large Directors.

The following is a summary of the contributions made during the year by the Association to member organizations to carry out projects approved by the Board of Directors. These transactions are in the normal course of business and are measured at the exchange amount.

Organization	Amount Contributed	
	2003	2002
Alberta Fish and Game Association	207,056	352,295
Trout Unlimited Canada		
(Includes \$122,300 for Cows & Fish in 2002)	92,616	231,052
Federation of Alberta Naturalists	100,250	22,500

Included in accounts payable and accrued liabilities at March 31, 2003 are the following amounts payable to member organizations:

Organization	Amount 2003	Amount 2002
Alberta Fish and Game Association	32,426	4,646
Trout Unlimited Canada		
(Includes \$20,700 for Cows & Fish in 2002)	–	58,317
Federation of Alberta Naturalists	3,500	7,500

6. Commitment

The Association has entered into a commitment to donate \$20,000 a year to the Provincial Museum of Alberta. The donations will commence in 2004 and expire in 2008.

7. Financial Instruments

Interest rate risk

The Association holds bonds purchased at premiums and discounts, thus exposing the Association to fluctuations in interest rates. The actual value of the bonds may be more or less than their carrying value.

Fair value

The carrying amount of accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, accrued vacation payable and security deposits approximates their fair value due to the short-term maturities of these items. The fair value of long-term investments is disclosed in Note 2.

Credit concentration

Financial instruments that potentially subject the Association to concentrations of credit risk consist primarily of accounts receivable.

8. Remuneration of Directors and Senior Management

The following amounts were paid to directors, and senior management personnel who report directly to the Directors during the fiscal year:

Mr. Don Pike	4,218
Mr. Terry Birkholz	4,145
Mr. Gerald Gustavson	2,598
Mr. Glen Semenchuk	2,275
Mr. Bob Scammell	1,862
Mr. David Gursky	1,833
Mr. Donald Onofrychuk	1,818
Mr. Don Hayden	1,655
Mr. Kelsey Kure	1,611
Mr. Ken Ambrock	–
Dr. Mark Boyce	–
Dr. Lee Foote	–
Mr. Brian Bildson	–
Mr. David Bissett	–
Mr. Dave Powell	–

Senior management personnel

Managing director salary and benefits	87,535
Total	109,550

9. Comparative figures

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified in order to conform to the current year's presentation.

Partners In Conservation

ACA's business of conservation is based on collaboration. We actively seek out partners in order to maximize our impact on conservation work in Alberta. Together we are stronger. Partnered projects leverage dollars, combine resources, pool valuable data and become a catalyst for innovative solutions. ACA recognizes that effective partnerships exist at many levels. We work successfully with major corporate and industry partners, academic and government alliances, as well as community conservation groups, individual landowners, and any concerned citizen of Alberta. ACA extends its gratitude to the following partners for their support and contribution during 2002/2003 year:

Ainsworth Lumber Limited
Alberta Agriculture
Alberta Cattle Commission
Alberta Commercial Fisherman's Association
Alberta Community Development
Alberta Community Lottery Board
Alberta Environment
Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Hunter's Education
Instructors Association
Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
Alberta Provincial Rural Crime Watch Association
Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and
Wildlife Foundation
Alberta Research Council
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Alberta Trappers Association
Anderson Resources
Beaverhill Bird Observatory
Brightbank Lion's Club
Canadian Forest Products Limited
Canadian Wildlife Service
Cardinal River Coals Limited
Cavern Oil Limited
Centre for Wildlife Conservation - USA
City of Calgary
City of Edmonton

City of Lethbridge
Cows and Fish Program
Cypress Hills Provincial Park
Daishowa-Marubeni International
Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Dillberry Lake Provincial Park
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Edmonton Trout Fishing Club
Edmonton Old Timers Fishing Club
Environment Canada
Environmental Training Centre
Federation of Alberta Naturalists
Federation of North American Wild Sheep
Fishin' Hole
Fishing Alberta Television Program
Foothills Model Forest
Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park
Friends of the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery
Friends of Saskatoon Island Provincial Park
Government of Alberta Summer Temporary
Employment Program
Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship
Program for Species at Risk
Gregg River Resources Ltd.
Hinton Fish and Game Association
Hunting For Tomorrow Foundation
Icefield Helicopter Tour

Individual Volunteers
Inland Cement
Jack Alstad
Jasper National Park
King Motion Pictures
Len Thompson Lures
Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park
Let's Go Outdoors Radio Program
Lethbridge Community College
Living By Water Program
Manning Diversified Forest Products
McNeil Island Correctional Centre,
GeoAnalytic Inc.
Moonshine Lake Provincial Park
Municipal District of Opportunity
Municipal District of East Peace
Municipal District of Rockyview
Nature Conservancy of Canada
North American Waterfowl Management Program
Parks Canada
Peace Country Fly Fishers
Peace Parkland Naturalists
Provincial Museum of Alberta
Red Deer River Naturalists
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Shell Canada Limited

Slave Lake Pulp
Student Career 9 Program
Student Temporary Employment Program
Suncor Energy
Sundance Forest Products
Sunpine Forest Products
Talisman Energy
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
Tall Pine Lumber Company
The Calgary Zoo
Town of Fairview
TransAlta Utilities Corporation
TransCanada Pipelines Limited
Treaty 8 First Nations
Trout Unlimited Canada
University of Alberta
University of Calgary
University of Lethbridge
Village of Spring Lake
Waterton Lakes National Park
Weldwood of Canada Ltd.
Western Walleye Council
Weyerhaeuser Canada
World Wildlife Fund
Yellowstone to Yukon Science Grant
Y2Y Initiative - Wilberforce Foundation
Zama Community Society

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Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 4M9

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