



Alberta Conservation
Association

Annual Report 2021/22



2021/22 Snapshot

- We continued to support staff in a fully remote working environment during COVID restrictions.
- ACA had over 54,000 followers on Facebook, 7,049 on Twitter, 2,257 on LinkedIn, 6,300 on Instagram, 721 YouTube subscribers, and 83,134 subscribers to our e-newsletter. Social media continues to play a significant role in our communications during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Kids Can Catch events across Alberta welcomed 850 adults and children and 35 organizations, partners, and sponsors. During this year, COVID-19 restrictions prevented many events from happening, but allowed those who did host events to become creative with ways to bring audiences in safely.
- We initiated a volunteer, online turkey brood survey to better understand annual recruitment over time. We heard back from 17 people who reported 165 sightings including 49 hens, 76 poults, 11 males, and 29 with sex unknown.
- We captured and translocated 23 wild turkeys in winter 2022 from a known viable population in southwestern Alberta and released these birds in another area suitable for a breeding population.
- In all, 122,803 twenty-cm long trout (111,993 rainbow, 6,640 brook, 2,300 brown, and 1,870 tiger trout) were stocked into 65 ponds in regions of the province where trout angling opportunities are limited.
- Eight new financial partnerships were established in support of fish stocking and aeration projects.
- In all, 89 rivers/creeks and nine ponds were surveyed, generating information on fish population status, distribution, fishing effort, spawning and rearing habitat, and water quality.
- We added three new conservation sites and expanded two existing conservation sites, totalling 878.2 acres (355.4 hectares) with a land value of approximately \$1,237,175.
- We are currently managing 37 Landowner Habitat Program Agreements, conserving 6,715 acres (2,717.4 hectares) of wildlife and fish habitat.

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Annual Report 2021/22



Our Vision

An Alberta with an abundance and diversity of wildlife, fish and their habitats; where future generations continue to use, enjoy, and value our rich outdoor heritage.

Our Mission

ACA conserves, protects, and enhances fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for Albertans to enjoy, value, and use.

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Cover (Project): Owl River Fish Habitat Protection
Description: Water samples being collected for analysis by ACA staff
Photo: ACA



Board of Directors 2021/22

Executive

Bill Abercrombie, Chairman – Alberta Trappers Association

Robert Gruszecki, Vice Chair – Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

Sandra Mellon, Treasurer – Public At Large, Northwest Region

Greg Shyba, Secretary – Public At Large, Central Region

Directors

Ken Ambrock – Northern Board Liaison

Tom Bateman – Director Emeritus

Dr. Mark Boyce – ACA / University of Alberta Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife

Fred Calverley – Trout Unlimited Canada

Randy Collins – Alberta Fish & Game Association

Dr. Brian Joubert – Nature Alberta

Dr. Brian Joubert – Public at Large, Academic Representative

Neil Keown - Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Alberta Chapter

Patrick Long – Director Emeritus

Richard Mellon – Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta

Perry McCormick – Pheasants Forever

Chuck Priestley – Public At Large, Northeast Region

Travis Ripley – Minister's Representative

Jeana Schuurman – Alberta Professional Outfitters Society

Richard Stamp – Public At Large, Southern Region

Brent Watson – Alberta Bowhunters Association

Vacant – Public At Large, Business Representative

Vacant – Public At Large, Indigenous Board Representative

Vacant – Treaty 8

Dr. Todd Zimmerling – ACA Administration, President and CEO

Member Groups



About ACA

Alberta Conservation Association’s (ACA) Communications, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Land Management program staff work on projects around the province to ensure that wildlife, fish, and their habitats flourish. ACA is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving, protecting, and enhancing these elements for Albertans to enjoy, value, and use now and for generations to come.

Delegated Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to being a non-profit organization, and a registered charity, ACA holds special status as a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO), which means that we deliver responsibilities as outlined in the *Wildlife Act* and defined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP). In our role as a DAO, results from our population studies, surveys and assessments feed directly into AEP management plans and can form the basis for fishing and hunting regulation changes and evaluations of new management strategies.

Abbreviations Index

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
ABMI	Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute
ac	acre
ACA	Alberta Conservation Association
AEP	Alberta Environment and Parks
AFGA	Alberta Fish & Game Association
AHEIA	Alberta Hunter Education Instructors’ Association
AOP	Annual Operating Plan
AVAMP	Alberta Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program
CCEG	Conservation, Community, and Education Grants
cm	centimetre
CPIC	Corporate Partners in Conservation
CPUE	Catch per unit effort
CSM	Conservation Site Management
DAO	Delegated Administrative Organization
DO	dissolved oxygen
DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
FSI	Fish Sustainability Index
h	hour
ha	hectare
HCS	Habitat Conservation Strategies
HLP	Habitat Legacy Partnership
HMP	Habitat Management Plan
HSF	Habitat Securement Fund
HUC	Hydraulic Unit Code
IT	Information Technology
Km	kilometre
LHP	Landowner Habitat Program
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRRRWQSI	Milk River Ridge Reservoir Water Quality Stewardship Initiative
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
PLUZ	Public Land Use Zone
RAP	Report A Poacher
SAR	Species at Risk
SGDD	Summer growing degree days
SHARP	Species Habitat Assessments and Ranching Partnerships
SMRID	St. Mary River Irrigation District
UFA	United Farmers of Alberta
UOM	upper Oldman
WIN	Wildlife Identification Number
WMU	Wildlife Management Units
WSCT	westslope cutthroat trout
µg/L	micrograms per litre
RAP	Report A Poacher
SHARP	Species Habitat Assessments and Ranching Partnerships
SMRID	St. Mary River Irrigation District
TUC	Trout Unlimited Canada
WIN	Wildlife Identification Number
WSCT	westslope cutthroat trout
µg/L	micrograms per litre



Project: Riparian Conservation Project
Description: Habitat conserved under riparian
habitat enhancement agreement on the Owl River
Photo: ACA, Mike Ranger

Message from the Chairman

Greetings,

I am pleased to endorse our Annual Report for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. When I review the pages and see what was accomplished over the past year, the breadth of our scope of operations, the volume and diversity of projects, it is very impressive. Over the past few years, the difficulties of coping with the pandemic and the challenges it created were enormous to say the least. What strikes me is that through all that uncertainty the constancy of delivery of projects and programs, the management of lands and habitat and the continued engagement with the public never faltered. It has been said that hardship, challenge, and adversity reveal the character of people and I think the character of this organization, its staff, board, and members is very evident.



The other stand out in this year's report is that almost without exception, every project, program, event, and initiative outlined is followed by a long list of partners and supporters. This I believe speaks to the heart of the ACA and the broader conservation community in Alberta. Hunters, anglers, trappers, and naturalists believe in the core values represented in our organization and support the collective premise that we can do much more together than as individuals. The efficiency and capabilities of the ACA and its member groups is not lost on government, the academic community, or the corporate sector. I believe that ACA is regarded as a go-to organization that can be depended on to deliver on behalf of its partners, and the opportunity to expand that role will continue as we move into the future.

One aspect of the conservation mandate that ACA has really embraced over the past few years is that of communicating the benefit and opportunity of participating in outdoor activities beyond our current sphere of support to society at large. We don't need or desire every Albertan to be out on the land with rod and gun. But we do need the acceptance and support of a predominantly urban society, and that is the long game that must be supported through education, information, and positive engagement if we are to provide continuing opportunities for our future generations. I am very happy to see ACA taking on this role and expect to see positive results in the future.

On a final note, I must acknowledge the passing of board member Ken Ambrock. The self-proclaimed rock star and walleye catching master brought humor, integrity and dedication to the ACA board and he will be missed.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bill Abercrombie'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'B' and 'A'.

Bill Abercrombie, ACA Board Chair

Waterfowl Warmup

presented by:



Yeti Roughrider Rentals



Waterfowl W

ing Clays Team

Project: Waterfowl Warmup
Description: Todd Zimmerling
Photo: ACA, Charmaine Brunet

President and CEO's Message

The 2021/22 fiscal year was another strong one for ACA. Although we still struggled with ups and downs of the COVID-19 pandemic, we at least started to find a routine and a level of normalcy, even if normal was different than it was pre-COVID-19.

From a project point of view, this year was full steam ahead. If you take a look through this *Annual Report*, you will find a myriad of different projects. On the wildlife side, we continued to expand our MULTISAR and connectivity project participants. We gained feedback from landowner and hunters with respect to access issues, and of course, we kept the pheasant release sites going, to name just a few projects. For fisheries some the highlights were expanding the lake aeration program, developing a plan for using channel catfish as a potential stocking species, and increasing our work on native trout. Our Land Management staff continued to manage close to 400 conservation sites and 24 fisheries access sites, while at the same time looking for new opportunities to secure habitat for the future. As always, they were a busy bunch. Communications staff were once again run off their feet. There never seems to be a lack of information that has to get out to our stakeholders, or in the case of the ABHuntLog feature on iHunter or landowner surveys, information that has to be collected from stakeholders.

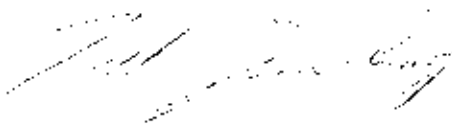
Overall, this past year felt less stressful than the first year of COVID-19, but there were plenty of ups and downs with restrictions coming and going. In the end, just like everyone else in Alberta, we got through it. I want to commend ACA staff for the drive they showed to get the work done and ensure we provided the resources and information for our stakeholders without blaming “supply chain issues!” On a more somber note, ACA and Alberta as a whole, lost a great conservationist this past year, when long-time Board member and former AEP Executive Director Ken Ambrock passed away. Ken is remembered as a dedicated conservationist, an avid walleye angler and an all-around great guy. He will be missed by all of us.

Have a read through this report and check out what has been accomplished. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. If I don't have answers, I will find someone who does. In the end, ACA is working for you, our stakeholder, so we should be able to answer your questions in a timely manner. If we can't, then we are failing. We also don't mind hearing that you think we are doing a good job. You can certainly send me an email along those lines, and I will pass it along to staff.

As we roll into the 2022/23 fiscal year, and society seems to be opening up again, and our lives are getting busier, I do hope those of you that took up fishing and hunting over the past two years remember to still take the time to get out to fish and hunt. You may not be able to fish or hunt as much as you did when your kids' hockey, soccer, basketball, dance, and everything else was closed down, but hopefully you can still find some time to take a relaxing break with the family and enjoy Alberta's outdoors.

Have a great year.

Sincerely,



Todd Zimmerling

President and CEO
Alberta Conservation Association

Project: Management Plan Development
Description: ACA staff conducting habitat assessments at Flatbush 4 Conservation Site
Photo: ACA, Meagan Butler

Our People. Our Culture.

Health and Safety

Health and safety for all persons involved with ACA work is a key element in our workplaces, whether at the office or out in the field. ACA's Health and Safety Program was established, and is continually maintained and improved, to provide the necessary tools for our staff and others to work in a manner that meets and exceeds Occupational Health & Safety standards. The end goal is always that everyone working on ACA projects goes home healthy and safe!

All workers (employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors, etc.) are required to comply with ACA's Health and Safety Program to protect themselves and others, which creates a safer and healthy work environment for everyone involved.

2021/22 Overview

- In 2021/2022, there were 59 incidents with a rate of 33.62 incidents per 100,000 payroll hours.
- Most incidents consisted of near misses (16), minor injuries (+/- first aid) (19), and vehicle damages (10).
- The results of the 2021/2022 Employee Survey were positive in that 95% of ACA staff are supportive of the Health and Safety Program, including documentation and practices. The committee continues to engage with staff to improve workplace health and safety.
- Once again, COVID-19 significantly altered the overall health and safety environment for the entire year, with the associated regulations and restrictions of Alberta Health Services (AHS) often changing over that period. Despite these challenges, ACA proactively implemented all AHS measures and incorporated best practices wherever possible, to meet or exceed provincial requirements so that ACA work was completed, and everyone's health and safety was maintained.

Human Resources

ACA completes many conservation projects over considerable territory each year, thanks in large part to our 80 permanent staff and numerous seasonal staff. Employee satisfaction continues to be a priority for the organization. It is the employees who move the organization forward; therefore, it is important to ensure we provide them with the best environment and opportunities to keep them satisfied and engaged.

Numerous employees reached work anniversary milestones this year. We extend our congratulations and thanks to the following individuals who achieved significant Years of Service milestones:

20 Years of Service

Julie Landry-DeBoer

15 Years of Service

Peter Aku, Brad Hurkett,
Leila Lassey

10 Years of Service

Layne Seward, Mike Verhage

5 Years of Service

Charmaine Brunes, Jeff Forsyth,
Stephen Nadworny

2021/22 Overview

Employee Survey

- 91% of employees agree they are satisfied with ACA as a place to work.
- 96% of employees are satisfied with having a good work-life balance. This is very important to our organization as ACA has a culture that values work-life balance.
- 86.5% are satisfied with ACA's benefit plan.
- 80.20% are satisfied with the whole compensation package available to them. This figure decreased by 19.4% from the previous year.
- ACA will continue to invest in its employees to ensure a supportive and engaging work culture.

Health and Wellness

ACA continues to put a strong emphasis on employee mental health and wellness this year because of the pandemic and the increased level of stress and anxiety it has brought with it. ACA's Employee Assistance Program saw an increase in utilization which is an indication that employees are reaching out. ACA's top priority has always been its employees and we have been there to support them through these unprecedented times.

Employee Retention

Staff turnover was at 12.7%, compared to 6.2% the previous year. Although ACA saw a higher turnover, employee exit interviews determined no common concern. Staff retention will still be in the forefront for the coming year.

Recruitment

We continue striving to hire people who are qualified and also the best fit for the organization. Finding that person who fits with the ACA culture is part of the recruitment process.

We filled four permanent positions and continue to look at efficiencies in determining where new hires are needed.

Professional Development

Giving employees the tools they need to succeed continues to be a priority for ACA. We recognize that ongoing leadership, team building, and interpersonal training and support is vital to individual growth and success.

Information Technology

The management and ease of access to systems and databases continues to be a focus for Information Technology (IT). IT is committed to discovering and implementing solutions that increase operational efficiencies and provide strong systems to support the work of our teams.

With changes in the workforce and in digital technology, it is essential for staff to access files from within the office or out in the field and to work on projects in conjunction with other researchers almost anywhere in the province. The IT team is committed to supporting this collaboration. We consult with staff, talk with partners, and meet with experts in the field to develop systems that ensure staff can focus on their work using efficient processes.

Work continued this year on our long-term plan for technology. Remote work and mobile accessibility were a top priority this year, especially with the need for staff to work remotely during COVID restrictions. We continued to improve online tools, budgeting systems, resource management, and cloud technology. The IT team discussed our priorities with management to ensure alignment with all other resource and functional areas. This collaboration allows the team to better anticipate and meet needs as they arise.

Upgrading to a cloud-based accounting software was a priority this year, along with continuing to enhance tools for remote work environments. Our technology partner continues to work collaboratively with us by providing 24/7 helpdesk support to our staff. The team continues to look for ways to find cost savings, increase efficiency, and improve service to our staff and external partners.

2021/22 Overview

- We continued to support staff in a fully remote working environment during COVID restrictions.
- We continued improving staff remote collaboration by leveraging existing software.
- We accessed expertise by using targeted consultants to increase the timing and effectiveness of IT solutions. IT staff are actively involved in planning and delivering the systems they oversee and maintain, which creates an environment of accountability and strong customer support.
- We continued updating and improving systems to provide better and more consistent online access for staff. Our goal is to streamline system entry to make an efficient and user-friendly environment for staff, whether they are entering data or retrieving information for monitoring the progress of their projects.
- We upgraded to cloud-based accounting software Dynamics 365, which is scheduled to go live on October 1.



Business Development

ACA partners with many corporations (big and small), municipalities and community organizations that sponsor, donate, and otherwise support our conservation work and values. These partnerships are integral to helping us achieve the annual goals of our programs including Fisheries; Wildlife; Land Management; and Information, Education, and Communications. Over the past few years, we have also seen a dramatic increase in support for our growing number of Kids Can Catch events that continue to engage and educate people about fisheries and fish conservation in communities across Alberta.

Many of our partnerships are formally recognized in our Corporate Partners in Conservation (CPIC) program, which provides unique opportunities for businesses, municipalities, and organizations to be directly plugged into ACA's conservation work. Our CPIC participants benefit from ACA's promotion of these partnerships and can promote their affiliation with us through their own communications.

Business Development also generates additional revenue through advertising sales to support our communications activities online, and our in-house publications: *Conservation Magazine* and *Alberta Discover Guide*.



Project (above): Waterfowl Warmup

Description: ACA Vice President Ken Kranrod doing a shotgun demonstration at Waterfowl Warmup

Photo: ACA, Charmaine Brunes

Project (left): Taber Pheasant Festival

Description: ACA staff Sarah Vriend releasing pheasants

Photo: ACA, Sam Vriend

2021/22 Overview

- We are pleased to recognize 13 companies that are either a new CPIC or have renewed/increased their ongoing support for ACA programs and projects:
 - Black Box Customs
 - Cool As A Moose / Big Bear Trading Company
 - County of Grande Prairie
 - County of Northern Lights
 - Dentons Canada LLP
 - Haul-All Equipment Ltd.
 - Lethbridge County
 - McKay Roughrider Resources
 - Parkland County
 - Thor Resources Inc.
 - Town of Cochrane
 - Town of Morinville
 - Vortex Canada



Our Conservation Programs

Information, Education, and Communications Program

Our Communications Resource Program's primary role is keeping conservation and our work in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Land Management recognized and valued within Albertans' diverse lifestyles, corporate sectors, and communities. We engage stakeholders through multimedia platforms and events, develop hunter and angler retention and recruitment initiatives, and pursue opportunities to strengthen partnerships in conservation.

2021/22 Overview

- In partnership with Hunting for Tomorrow and Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA), the Wildlife Identification Number (WIN) Card Reimbursement Program supports the recruitment of young hunters. In 2021/22, over 1,370 information packages were sent to youths who had completed the hunter education course.
- ACA had over 54,000 followers on Facebook, 7,049 on Twitter, 2,257 on LinkedIn, 6,300 on Instagram, 721 YouTube subscribers, and 83,134 subscribers to our e-newsletter. Social media continues to play a significant role in our communications during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We printed and mailed out 35,000 copies of the *Alberta Discover Guide*—a free annual publication that provides a list of conservation sites accessible for hunting, fishing, and hiking—to subscribers and to distribute to hunting and fishing licence retailers across Alberta. The guide is also available online and as an app. There were 172,469 page views of www.albertadiscoverguide.com between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022.
- Harvest Your Own increased its social media audience to 3,461 (+476) Facebook followers and 1,235 (+539) Instagram followers. In this timeframe, we have also seen growth in the Harvest Your Own podcast hosted by Brad Fenson, which currently has all-time downloads of 7,027.
- Over 13,000 subscribers received *Conservation Magazine* thanks to the combined efforts of writers, editors, biologists, and designers. This free publication is produced biannually and highlights ACA projects and topics about conservation.
- We supported the Wildlife, Fisheries, and Land Management Resource Programs; and Business Development with visual communications, on-demand design, and media services such as regional advertising, site signage, and social media.
- Kids Can Catch events across Alberta welcomed 850 adults and children and 35 organizations, partners, and sponsors. During this year, COVID-19 restrictions prevented many events from happening, but allowed those who did host events to become creative with ways to bring audiences in safely.
- Views of the wildlife camera section of our website accounted for 24% of web traffic, and the affiliated species at risk contest quiz reached over 45,000 people and had 974 participants.
- The Phillip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum conservation display on Alberta's species at risk was still on display to increase its viewing for the public as it had been limited the previous year due to the pandemic.

Project: Kids Can Catch
Description: Happy participant fishing at Kids Can Catch Africa Center event
Photo: ACA, Budd Erickson

Advertising and Marketing

Advertising is key to achieving a number of long-term goals within the *Strategic Business Plan*, primarily to increase public recognition of ACA's brand; to increase conservation awareness by creating positive profiles of hunting, fishing, and trapping; and to develop corporate partnerships. Project or event promotional advertising engages various audience targets and supports ACA's public brand recognition. Our "It's an Alberta Thing" campaign is a direct approach for establishing relationships with stakeholders that is non-government and contemporary. This is significant for keeping conservation valued within today's varied priorities and cultures.

Advertising supports several ACA programs, projects, and events that include Report A Poacher, *Alberta Discover Guide*, ACA's Fish Stocking project, Taber Pheasant Festival, ACA's Wildlife Cameras project, aeration thin ice warnings, the Corporate Partners in Conservation Program, grazing tenders, and the Kids Can Catch project.

Alberta Discover Guide

The *Alberta Discover Guide* is a free, annual publication that provides outdoor enthusiasts with a list of conservation sites that can be accessed primarily for hunting, fishing, and hiking. The sites are private land owned by ACA or its conservation partners, or public land that is managed by ACA on behalf of the Crown. All sites are available for public use and have been made available through conservation efforts by ACA and its partners.

The publication is a major project for ACA's Information, Education, and Communications Program. Advertising is coordinated and produced for free for ACA member groups. Editorial content is developed and written in-house. The communications team coordinates print production and updates and maintains the subscription database. For 2021/22, we printed 35,000 copies of the guide to mail out to

subscribers and to distribute to hunting and fishing licence retailers across Alberta. The guide is also available online and as an app. There were 172,469 page views of www.albertadiscoverguide.com between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022.

Partnerships

Advertisers, Alberta Fish & Game Association and affiliated clubs, Ducks Unlimited Canada

Alberta Discover Guide app

The *Alberta Discover Guide* app was created so users of the *Alberta Discover Guide* have a convenient way of accessing information about conservation sites on their mobile device in pursuit of hunting or angling opportunities. The app also provides ACA with a platform for advertising content from ACA's stakeholders and other organizations and businesses focused on fishing, hunting, and conservation. In 2021/2022, around 4,787 Android users and 3,300 iOS users downloaded the app. The codebase for the app has been updated to a more contemporary programming language allowing faster in-house updates and deployments, and future feature development.

Annual Operating Plan

Our *Annual Operating Plan* (AOP) informs Albertans, our stakeholders, and partners about the projects we undertake within the current fiscal year, as well as how revenue is directed to our resource programs. Our board members approved the AOP 2022/23 prior to being posted on our website at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Annual Report

Our *Annual Report* informs our stakeholders how ACA has used funding, details on the conservation outcomes achieved, and how ACA has performed relative to its stated goals. Our Board of Directors received and reviewed the 2020/21 Annual Report for approval. The *Annual Report 2020/21* was posted on our website by September 2021.

Conservation Magazine

Our *Conservation Magazine* is a free, biannual publication that highlights the projects and success we and our member groups experience in the province. ACA's Communications team produces the magazine. It covers topical conservation issues and helps bridge understanding between the hunting and angling communities and the larger conservation community. The magazine also helps increase our profile across Alberta and is used as a tool by some of the following program areas to reach out to potential donors and partners: Fisheries, Wildlife, Land Management, and Business Development. We mail the magazine to our subscribers and distribute it at trade shows and events. It is also available online: www.ab-conservation.com/publications/conservation-magazine/

In 2021/22, we printed a combined 30,000 copies, including articles about the important balance between conservation and agriculture, the science behind fish stocking, and partnerships in conservation with the oil and gas sector. The total number of subscribers now exceeds 13,000.

Partnerships (advertising)

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta One-Call, Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, Canadian National Railway, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Nature Alberta, Nature Conservancy Canada, Shell Canada Energy

Emerging Issues

The Information, Education, and Communications Program must be able to respond to communications needs that arise as ACA projects, partnerships, opportunities, or crises develop. This team provide services in design, copywriting, photography, editing, print production, and digital media to ACA's executive, Business Development and Human Resources teams, as well as our member groups. On-demand requests for communications support include, but are not limited to, media releases, aeration updates (social and digital media), pheasant release site updates (social and digital media), drone footage documentation, and member group website support.



Final Report Series

Our Fisheries and Wildlife Resource Programs are responsible for submitting reports every year on the projects they have been working on to describe the findings of the work. The Information, Education, and Communications Program is responsible for coordinating the editing, proofing, formatting, and finalization of these reports; and making sure they are available to the public, and ACA's stakeholders and partners through our website. One Wildlife report and one Fisheries report were completed for 2021/22.

Grants Fund Annual Report

The aim of the *Grants Fund Annual Report* is to document the grants fund procedures and provide an overview of activities and results of projects financially supported through ACA grants (the ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants [CCEG] and the ACA Research Grants [RG]) each fiscal year. For 2021/22, the Grants in Biodiversity will again be added to the *Grants Fund Annual Report*

as the program is now operated by ACA. ACA funnels over \$1.5 million into conservation work in Alberta through the grants. For the 2021/22 grants funding allocation, we received 2,518 ACA CCEG and ACA RG applications, of which 1,453 projects have been awarded grants. As of 2021/22, approximately \$21.9 million has been granted to conservation-related projects throughout the province.

Harvest Your Own

Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions in North America seeing a growth in the number of hunters. This increase is often attributed to an interest in organic and local food, and hunting as an empowering way to actively and ethically source your own protein. The gap is that new hunters, in particular men, women, and youth from urban areas, may not have a network of family and friends to help them learn to hunt. Harvest Your Own aims to provide new hunters with timely and relevant content that will help them get started and have success in the field and kitchen.

In 2021/22, Harvest Your Own increased its social media audience to 3,461 (+476) Facebook followers and 1,235 (+539) Instagram followers (Twitter is no longer an active platform for Harvest Your Own). In this timeframe, we have also seen growth in the Harvest Your Own podcast hosted by Brad Fenson, which currently has all-time downloads of 7,027.

Internal Communications Needs

The Information, Education, and Communications Program provides creative and technical services to the President & CEO; Human Resources and Business Development teams; and the Wildlife, Fisheries, and Land Management resource programs. Working with program managers, regional managers, and project leads, this team ensures ACA programs and projects receive the media and materials needed for their success.



Wild game is good food.

Baked Bear Beans with Venison Pastrami Sammy

HarvestYourOwn.ca



Project: Harvest Your Own
Description: Ad ran in Savour Calgary magazine
Photo: Josh Glover

Kids Can Catch Program

Kids Can Catch is a province-wide program in which ACA partners with community and corporate partners to create free family fishing events at lakes and ponds. We developed Kids Can Catch as a way to invite Albertans to fish at stocked and natural waterbodies and to hook new and young anglers on fishing, fish conservation, and responsible angling. In 2021, Kids Can Catch events across Alberta welcomed over 850 adults and children and 35 organizations, partners, and sponsors. During this year, COVID-19 restrictions prevented many events from happening but that allowed those that hosted events to become creative with ways to bring audiences in safely.

Partnerships

AltaLink, Big Lakes County FCSS, Cabela's Canada, Cabela's Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund, City of Lacombe, Coronation Community Support Services, Coronation Elks,

County of Grande Prairie Parks & Recreation, D&M Concrete Products Ltd., Dow Chemical Canada, EQUUS, Foster Park Brokers, Fountain Tire, Innisfail Fish & Game Association, Joussard Community Association, Lacombe Co-op, Larry & Janis Schmidek, Lesser Slave Lake Watershed Council, MNP LLP – Taber, Onoway Fish & Game Association, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association, Riverrunner Recreation, Sun Sport Recreation Ltd., Sunny 94, Terry's Lease Maintenance Ltd., Thompson-Pallister Bait Co. Ltd., Town of Taber, The Launch at Sylvan Lake, Town of Sylvan Lake, TransAlta, United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), Walleye Master Tackle & Bait Ltd., Wolf Midstream, Wolverine Guns & Tackle/Zebco, Zone 3 Fish & Game

On-site Signage (formerly Conservation Site Signs)

Each conservation site has branded signage to recognize our partners,

provide wayfinding for users, and notify users of restrictions on site. Our Information, Education, and Communications Program works with our Land Management, Fisheries, Wildlife, and Report A Poacher programs to produce signs for conservation sites and their boundaries; to support participating landowners; for fisheries access sites; pheasant release sites; recreational opportunity enhancement sites; and lake aeration sites. Signs are also developed for thin ice areas (warnings), interpretive trails, and in support of stakeholder communications and the ACA Grants Program.

In 2021/22, we produced 13 conservation site signs, two landowner habitat signs, two riparian conservation site signs, one lake aeration site sign, two recreational opportunity enhancement signs, one habitat connectivity and access project sign, and various other signage.

Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum Display

The Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum's Conservation Education Room is an opportunity to provide education outreach within an existing tourist and education programming destination. ACA has signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding to lease unoccupied space and provide exhibits annually that profile contemporary conservation challenges. In its second year, ACA secured exhibit partnerships and developed free-standing displays and custom digital production on Alberta's species at risk. During the pandemic, COVID-19 restrictions stalled updates and public access.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum, Royal Alberta Museum

Social Media

Social media allows ACA to connect with, inform, and grow audiences. By using Constant Contact, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and now LinkedIn, we can inform the public and our followers about ACA projects, support our member groups, recognize and thank Corporate Partners in Conservation, promote upcoming events, and respond to questions and comments about conservation in Alberta.

Stakeholder Communications

To foster positive business relationships and partnerships in conservation sectors, ACA promotes projects and events for our stakeholders and member groups whenever possible. This support might appear as a feature article in *Conservation Magazine*, social media support, or web/media support and training.

Waterfowl Warmup

Waterfowl Warmup is a fundraiser in support of the Report A Poacher Program. Proceeds from the event support efforts to educate the public about responsible hunting and angling and the negative impacts of poaching. In all, 24 teams participated in Waterfowl Warmup this year due to relaxed COVID-19 restrictions (last year we were limited to 16 teams). The winning team name and members' names were added to the Waterfowl Warmup plaque on display at ACA's office in Sherwood Park. Winning team members each received an individual trophy and prize bag to take home.

Partnerships

ARKK Engineering Corporation, Bear Scare Ltd., Beaverhill Sporting Clays, Brad Fenson Outdoors, Cabela's Canada, Canis Outdoors, Cycle Works Motorsports – Calgary, Dee-Jay Plumbing & Heating Ltd., Dentons Canada LLP, Direct Horizontal Drilling, Dive Bomb Industries, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Foster Park Brokers Inc., High Caliber Products, Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP, Korth Group: Fabarm and Retay, Martin Motor Sports, Maverick Inspection Ltd., Safe and Sound Hearing Solutions, Beretta/Benelli/Tikka/Sako, Winchester® and Browning®, Yeti Roughrider Rentals Ltd.

Website Maintenance and Development

ACA's website provides an accessible gateway to information about our work using current technology to engage users. It is perhaps the primary platform we use to work toward increasing our profile in Alberta, one of the long-term goals of ACA's 10-year Strategic Business Plan.

In 2021/22, the ACA website achieved approximately 646,112 page views, with the average user spending 1:38 minutes per visit.

Wildlife Cameras

The peregrine falcon and ferruginous hawk cameras provide a bird's-eye view into the daily lives of each species as they fight for mates and territory, catch food, and raise their young. In 2021/22, ACA ran three peregrine falcon cameras in locations throughout Edmonton—Bell Tower, Genesee Power Plant, and Nutrien—and livestreamed the video on our website. The project also includes three ferruginous hawk nests monitored by trail cameras. The still images were reviewed and posted on our website. Also, three online species at risk contest quizzes were promoted alongside the ferruginous hawk media. Both the peregrine falcon and ferruginous hawk cameras highlight these species at risk, other species at risk initiatives, and resources available from Alberta Environment and Parks. In 2021/22, views of the wildlife camera section of our website accounted for 24% of website traffic, and the species at risk contest quizzes reached 45,326 people and had 974 participants.

Partnerships

AltaLink, Aspen Properties, Capital Power, Nutrien, TeraGo, TransAlta, University of Alberta, Xplornet Enterprise Solutions

WIN Card Reimbursements

In partnership with Hunting for Tomorrow and Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, the WIN Card Reimbursement program supports the recruitment of young people into hunting. The project gives ACA and our member groups a way to connect with new hunters when they purchase their first WIN card. In 2021/22, over 1,370 information packages were sent to youths who had completed the hunter education course. A total of 349 youths returned the reimbursement form.

Partnerships

Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, Hunting for Tomorrow



Project: Alberta Spruce Grouse
Description: Spruce grouse hen
Photo: ACA, Mike Jokinen

Wildlife Program

Wild turkeys are highly sought after as a game bird across North America, and Alberta is no exception with hunter interest far exceeding opportunity. The population of wild turkeys remained consistent from 2021 through 2022, although some areas have seen a decrease in local abundance following years with harsh winters. With a goal of expanding their range and abundance, we reached out to many jurisdictions in 2021 seeking their support by providing wild turkeys to kick-start this process. We are making progress and look toward 2022/23 as the first time in many decades that wild turkeys will be brought in from other areas to strengthen Alberta's numbers.

COVID-19 restrictions pulsed again through 2021; however, we were able to work through these challenges and completed a full field season. We shifted the location of some sites while completing over 95% of the deliverables that were planned. However, the restrictions forced us to cancel the social events normally associated with Taber Pheasant Festival, although the daily hunting program carried on as planned.

We reached out to hunters in 2021 asking for their perspective on gaining access to private lands. The response was far higher than expected with 3,455 people taking the time to undertake the 65-question survey. Roughly 39% said they had seen their success with acquiring permissions drop off in the past few years, although the majority felt their chance of gaining access remained similar. It appears that access is more challenging to obtain in some Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) compared to others. Detailed results will be released in 2022.

Habitat stewardship remains the cornerstone of our long-term conservation efforts. Currently, we work with landowners on more than 600,000 acres helping ranchers and farmers develop and implement long-term conservation action plans for their land base. It's exciting to see these efforts expand annually, with growing support from producer communities.

2021/22 Overview

- We reached out to more than 100 landholders and asked them for counts of wild turkeys that regularly visited their site during winter 2022. The aggregate count was similar to the previous year (2021) when we initiated this approach.
- We initiated a volunteer, online turkey brood survey to better understand annual recruitment over time. We heard back from 17 people who reported 165 sightings including 49 hens, 76 poults, 11 males, and 29 with sex unknown.
- We captured and translocated 23 wild turkeys in winter 2022 from a known viable population in southwestern Alberta and released these birds in another area suitable for a breeding population.
- We surveyed hunters asking for their perspective on gaining access on private land. We had 3,455 respondents, which was higher than anticipated. More than half said their chance of gaining access remained similar over the past 3 years, although 39% said their ability to gain access had diminished.
- We developed a wildlife tracking app tailored for hunters in collaboration with iHunter and University of Alberta. Users access ABHuntLog through the iHunter platform and enter sightings of game species that will be aggregated to develop wildlife metrics (e.g., bull:cow and calf:cow ratios) to better understand population trends of hunted species. User privacy is strictly enforced.
- Our late summer game bird surveys suggest grey partridge numbers were slightly up compared to 2018 through 2020, although numbers are below the long-term average. Pheasant counts did not rebound in 2021 and remained well below the long-term average.
- With 42 sites spread across the province from Medicine Hat to Peace River, the pheasant release program remains very popular. The drought in 2021 was tough on wild pheasants, but hunters still enjoyed access to put-and-take opportunities through this program.
- This was our fourth year working with St. Mary River Irrigation District (SMRID) to develop comprehensive habitat conservation strategies to improve wildlife habitat and water quality across 18 reservoirs and 10,000 acres. In 2021, our efforts focused on Forty Mile Reservoir, Klautdt Reservoir, Sauder Reservoir, Seven Persons Reservoir, and Yellow Lake Reservoir. Many of our recommended actions are being rolled out by SMRID in targeted locations.
- There is anecdotal suggestion that spruce grouse numbers may be trending down over time. We investigated recent harvest data and reached out to trappers to investigate this further. Grouse numbers can vary widely over 3–10 years so one of the challenges is teasing apart normal change from any prolonged declines. Harvest success varied among WMUs, and trappers reported some areas as stable with others in possible decline.
- To improve wildlife movement, and in particular pronghorn, we completed three fencing projects with Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA) replacing 38 km of barbed wire with double-stranded smooth wire. Since the initial year, we have improved roughly 580 km of fencing with an additional 34.5 km of page wire completely removed.
- Stewardship activities through the Species Habitat Assessments and Ranching Partnership (SHARP) Program increased to 18,903 acres spread among five ranch operations.
- In all, 53 4-H members participated in the eighth year of this program, successfully raising approximately 4,200 pheasants (mostly hens) and either releasing them into suitable upland habitat or marketing them for sale. We held two webinars: one on pheasant husbandry, while the second focused on the habitat needs important for pheasants and other game birds.
- Trappers submitted 153 logbooks from the 2021/22 trapping season, down by 26% from the previous year. On average, trappers set 25 traps for about 37 days and harvested eight martens. The average catch-per-unit-effort was 0.79 marten per 100 trap nights, which would be equivalent to setting 18 traps for a week and catching one marten.

ABHuntLog

ABHuntLog is an inexpensive and accessible citizen science app feature for collecting large-scale, long-term harvestable wildlife population data, developed through a partnership among ACA, University of Alberta, and iHunter. Between September 1 and December 31, 2021, 142 voluntary ABHuntLog participants completed 720 surveys in 106 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). The most observational data were submitted for white-tailed deer, followed by upland game birds, mule deer, and moose. Several aggregated summaries by WMU of the 2021 data are available on ACA's website (ABHuntLog.ca), allowing hunters to visualize and understand the value and utility of their ABHuntLog data. Alberta hunters have expressed an interest in providing meaningful data to assist in the management of game species, and a desire for better information to help with planning future hunts. ABHuntLog enables voluntary submission of observational data using the iHunter Alberta app that will help achieve these outcomes, as well as provide a dashboard summary of their harvest information that individual hunters can use for planning future hunts and completing their annual mandatory reporting requirements to Alberta Environment and Parks. We anticipate increased participation in future years with improvements to ABHuntLog in 2022 so that we can expand the number and quality of the data summaries provided on ACA's website.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, iHunter, University of Alberta

Alberta Spruce Grouse

There is concern that spruce grouse (*Falciennis canadensis*) numbers may be trending lower in Alberta, although the information to validate this assumption is lacking. We were asked by Alberta Environment and Parks to develop an approach for gaining a better understanding of trends over space and time. We began in 2021 with three main tasks: first, we summarized spruce grouse harvest data from 2015 to 2020 to better understand hunter success spatially and among years; second, we asked trappers to provide their insight on spruce grouse numbers using a brief survey; and third, we trialed a methodology to detect occupancy based on the presence/absence of spruce grouse pellets.

Since 2015, spruce grouse harvest and hunter numbers have shown a general increasing trend, with lower harvest numbers in 2017 and 2020. The average annual harvest of spruce grouse reported was 6,123 (range 4,888 – 8,856) over six years (2015 through 2020) taken by an average of 2,657 (range 2,216 – 4,301) hunters that were willing to voluntarily report this information. We received and summarized responses from 131 Registered Fur Management Area licence holders, almost half of whom believed the three-year trend (2018–19 to 2020–21) for forest grouse has held stable, while almost a third believed numbers were decreasing. Lastly, we adapted a pellet survey protocol developed in Minnesota, and tested the methodology in April and May of 2021. We surveyed 13 transects and spruce grouse pellets were detected at three of those sites, all from the Northwest Region. A transect takes about 30 minutes to complete and surveyors require some guidance to confidently differentiate between pellets dropped by spruce vs. ruffed grouse. The pellet count survey proved to be simple and effective; however, conducting the surveys over a broad spatial area would be logistically challenging.

Partnerships

Alberta Trappers' Association, Alberta Environment and Parks

Alberta Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program

Volunteers play a crucial role in wildlife conservation efforts through their involvement in biodiversity-related citizen science projects. The Alberta Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program (AVAMP) invites people to engage with nature and to provide unique information on amphibian and reptile distribution and life cycle events. To streamline the way AVAMP participants make and report their observations, we are partnering with Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) and trialing their free NatureLynx mobile application. The NatureLynx app allows AVAMP participants to complete data entry in the field. Data submissions are accessible by ACA and are organized by the app in an AVAMP community group, which was established in 2019. In 2021/22, 67 participants from AVAMP submitted 71 amphibian and 22 reptile observations, including locations of nine snake hibernacula (dens) directly through AVAMP. An additional 16 amphibian records were submitted through the AVAMP group on ABMI's NatureLynx platform, including from the Alberta Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy. Combined, these data represented 70% of the amphibian and 56% of the reptile species native to the province. Setting appropriate conservation measures for amphibians and reptiles requires a good understanding of species distributions and timing of life cycle events, which are often based on relatively few observation records. AVAMP is an example of how ACA can work with a network of enthusiastic volunteers and partners to fill these data gaps and positively impact conservation.

Partnerships

Alberta Amphibian & Reptile Conservancy, Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, Alberta Environment and Parks, volunteer participants

Connectivity Project

The Connectivity Project addresses habitat fragmentation in southern Alberta by working collaboratively with irrigation districts, municipalities, conservation groups, recreationists, and agricultural producers to improve water quality and re-establish and enhance wildlife habitat. Doing so will benefit agriculture, hunters, anglers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. In 2021, we completed the fourth year of the project and the third year of extensive data collection around five St. Mary River Irrigation District (SMRID) reservoirs: Forty Mile Reservoir, Klaudt Reservoir, Sauder Reservoir, Seven Persons Reservoir, and Yellow Lake Reservoir. We completed eight lotic riparian health assessments, 71 lentic riparian health assessments, one visual riparian assessment, 34 range health assessments, two tame pasture health assessments, and 12 visual range assessments for use in the third Habitat Conservation Strategy

for SMRID. We made 692 incidental wildlife observations across the five reservoirs, 18% of which were species at risk. These data provide a baseline assessment of the plant communities around each reservoir and the wildlife species utilizing them. It also identifies priority sites where habitat enhancements and/or grazing management recommendations will improve ecosystem service provision (carbon sequestration, water filtration and nutrient retention, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity). The hydrogeomorphology of these reservoirs pose ecological and physical challenges to these ecosystem service provisions, developing unique data sets and vegetation communities in comparison to natural systems. To help mitigate these challenges, adaptive management plans to enhance and protect these ecosystems were developed and implemented in 2021. Working with the partners of the project, approximately 10 km of exclusion

fencing on three reservoirs were installed, and upland game bird and wildlife habitat was planted along two reservoirs and a SMRID-owned parcel. We also implemented integrated protection plans for sensitive and at-risk wildlife species in select areas. The recommendations from the report are developed to provide data, design, and implement enhancements to improve water quality and wildlife habitat, while cohesively increasing the resilience of the irrigation district operations and grassland ecosystems.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association (Zone 1), Canadian Agricultural Partnership, Lethbridge Fish and Game Association, Pheasants Forever, Southern Alberta Bowhunters Association, St. Mary River Irrigation District, Taber Irrigation District



Project: Connectivity Project
Description: Greater short-horned lizard
Photo: ACA, Samuel Vriend

Enchant Project – Strong Farmlands. Thriving Habitat.

We have a long-term working relationship with a modern farm to evaluate approaches for re-establishing vibrant upland game bird densities while maintaining a profitable farming operation. We also monitor a range of non-target species to assess how these treatments impact biodiversity (amphibians and songbirds). We trial enhancements that focus on improving habitat features important for nesting, brood rearing, and winter survival of pheasants and grey partridge. This includes approaches within the crop, the juxtaposition of crop types and rotation, harvest method, field edge improvements, water management and wetlands, and trialling seed mixes important for chick survival. In 2021, we completed a vegetation inventory of the plant species present at the Enchant farm. We planted Roundup Ready Corn to provide escape and thermal cover but also to help control unwanted weeds. ACA staff and the farm habitat managers planted 2.75 km of additional shrub rows (2,750 shrubs) to increase territorial space for pheasants and grey partridge at the farm. We planted approximately 1,000 willow stakes around three wetlands. The density of partridge pairs decreased from 79 pairs (13.3 pairs/km²) in spring 2020 to 70 pairs (11.8 pairs/km²) in spring 2021. In autumn, partridge totals also decreased from 172 in October 2020 to 135 in 2021. We trialled two different soft-release methods, releasing a total of 298 pheasants at the farm.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Haggins Family, Stamp Farms

Factors Affecting Moose Survivorship and Recruitment

We were part of a planning committee for a moose research-needs workshop. The workshop, which took place virtually in September 2021, was called *Moose Habitat in Forested Landscapes: Current Knowledge – Future Steps*. Thirty-nine participants from government, industry, not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous communities, academia, and consulting companies contributed to discussion on topics related to data sharing, the human dimensions of moose and moose habitat management, and the impact of landscape change on moose. The final recommendations from the workshop prioritized the following list of topics for further consideration:

- Investigate what co-created moose habitat research might look like in Alberta. How might it effectively combine the knowledge, priorities, and concerns of Indigenous, non-Indigenous, government, and industry organizations, while building trust, engagement, and information sharing?
- Get an update on the status of moose habitat in Alberta and the social value placed on moose (and moose habitat) by relevant stakeholders and communities.
- Do reforestation approaches, such as scarification, and chemical treatments, negatively influence moose survival?
- What are the impacts of different timber harvesting designs (size and shape) on moose populations?

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, fRI Research, Fuse Consulting Ltd., University of Saskatchewan, West Fraser, Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.

Furbearer Trends

Alberta Environment and Parks and Alberta Trappers' Association asked ACA to assist with the development of logbooks for trappers to record information about their activities and fur harvesting results. After revisions to the initial logbook and a concerted communication effort with trappers, the number of logbooks submitted increased substantially over a series of years, providing an adequate sample to track trends over time at the province and natural region levels. Since 2017/18, the logbook entries have focused on marten harvest and effort. During the 2021/22 trapping season, despite a continued decline in the export of marten pelts from the province, marten catch for an equivalent amount of effort remained similar to previous years at 0.79 marten per 100 trap nights. The number of logbook submissions dropped 26% in 2020/21 when compared to the previous year. We hope to expand logbook program participation as the information provides valuable insight into patterns of furbearer harvest and population indices.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Trappers' Association, Lethbridge College

Habitat Legacy Partnership

The Habitat Legacy Partnership (HLP) project works with a multitude of stakeholders to improve upland game bird habitat in southern Alberta. The Milk River Ridge Reservoir Water Quality Stewardship Initiative (MRRRWQSI) is part of the HLP and is a multi-year collaborative initiative in the County of Warner. The MRRRWQSI is overseen and managed by a working group consisting of ACA, Alberta Environment and Parks, and the County of Warner, whose actions are guided by terms of reference. The initiative consists of nine segments around the Waterton

– St. Mary headworks inlet canal and along the shorelands of the Milk River Ridge Reservoir. These segments are predominantly focused on provincial Crown land—known as the “provincial land corridor”—surrounding the reservoir. The overall goal of this initiative is to improve water quality through the restoration of the vegetation community along shorelands and riparian areas. This restoration translates into the creation of vital wildlife habitat that also filters nutrients and reduces erosion. Approximately \$2.2 million has been raised and invested to date. Thus far, we have installed 56 km of fencing to protect shoreland and riparian habitat. In all, 25 off-site watering units have been installed in strategic areas surrounding the reservoir to redirect cattle away from fragile riparian zones. We have planted approximately 42,500 shrubs and seeded 456 acres back into perennial wildlife habitat. A large 6.18-acre wetland was developed on the west side of the reservoir, acting as a large filter for nutrients and a magnet for wildlife. Approximately 5 km of new fencing was installed at the east end (East Ridge) of the reservoir during the 2021/22 season, effectively eliminating livestock access to the Crown corridor. In all, 7,000 shrubs were planted and approximately 70 acres of permanent cover were reseeded at this location. Partner meetings are ongoing for potential shrub plantings and permanent cover seeding for the 2022/23 season.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association – Zone 1, County of Warner, David Bissett, Irrican Power, Landowners, Lethbridge Fish & Game Association, Magrath Rod and Gun Club, New Dayton Rod and Gun Club, Pheasants Forever – Calgary Chapter, Raymond Irrigation District, Southern Alberta Bowhunters Association, St. Mary River Irrigation District, Taber Irrigation District

Hunter Perspectives on Obtaining Access to Private Land in Alberta

A voluntary online survey was used to collect information from hunters about their perspectives on acquiring hunting access to private land in Alberta. Just under 3,000 people completed the survey. Data processing and analysis has just begun, but an early look at these results suggests that, on average, the success rate for hunters asking for permission on private land has declined in recent years. Twice as many hunters said that they have become less likely to receive permission over the past five years as those who said that they have become more likely to receive permission. However, nearly half of the hunters indicated that their success rate has not changed. Hunters most frequently requested permission from landowners who they had built a relationship with over time, and landowners who were complete strangers. They were least likely to have asked for permission from family and friends. Given that our previous survey indicated that landowners were most likely to grant permission to family and friends, hunters who do not have these relationships may find obtaining hunting access difficult. Early results suggest that hunters seeking access to private land would do well to work on developing relationships with landowners as a first step. We will continue investigating data in 2022/23.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association – Minister’s Special Licence Program, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, Brad Fenson Outdoors, University of Alberta, University of Waterloo

Landowner Hunting Access Survey

A voluntary online survey was used to collect information from landowners’ perspectives on allowing hunting access on private land. The study design was developed in partnership with social scientists at the universities of Alberta and Waterloo. Agriculture industry groups helped to refine survey questions and promoted the survey through their publications and social media. By the time the survey closed at the end of March 2021, over 2,000 surveys had been completed from across the province. The largest group of survey respondents was agricultural producers (65%), with an even split between livestock and crop production. Most of the landowners (78%) identified providing habitat for plants and animals as an important function of their property. Over half of the landowners who said they provide hunting access have hunters on their property between 1 and 19 days in a year, and they most typically have 1 or 2 hunters at a time. The number one concern for landowners was trespassing issues, and the number one issue that might cause them to provide more hunting access was increased property and feed damage from deer and elk. If a person that they did not know asked to hunt on their land, those who lived nearby were most likely to be given access.

Partnerships

Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Crop Sector Working Group, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association – Minister’s Special Licence Program, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society Wildlife Management Fund, Alberta Wheat & Barley Commissions, Cabela’s | Bass Pro Shops, Creative Motion Publishing, Glacier FarmMedia, Municipal district and county offices across the province, University of Alberta, University of Waterloo, Western Stock Growers’ Association

MULTISAR – Milk River

We focus on multi-species conservation at the landscape level that promotes stewardship through voluntary participation of landholders on both Crown and private lands. In 2021, we worked collaboratively with multiple partners to maintain, increase, and improve habitat for species at risk within the greater sage grouse range of Alberta. This partnership involves habitat assessments, development of voluntary habitat conservation plans, and subsequent implementation and monitoring of on-the-ground enhancements. We focused our efforts reassessing one large property consisting of 42,700 acres and one newly acquired ACA property along Manyberries Creek (166 acres). We completed five detailed range transects, 72 range health assessments, 16 tame pasture health assessments, 11 riparian assessments, and recorded 1,028 wildlife observations. In 2021, we purchased one portable electric fencing unit for habitat management by alleviating cattle pressure on sensitive areas. These portable electric fencing units are being used to prevent the need for further permanent fencing and to provide more options for producers when it comes to managing their cattle distribution. We seeded 120 acres adjacent to greater sage grouse critical habitat back to native grasses. We also installed a bat condo for the endangered little brown myotis.

Partnerships

Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Environment and Parks, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Cows and Fish – Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Environment and Climate Change Canada, HUVAN Construction, landholders, Milk River Watershed Council Canada, Prairie Conservation Forum

MULTISAR – South Saskatchewan

There are numerous species at risk in southern Alberta, often overlapping with agricultural landscapes. Existing

management practices on these lands are what have allowed these species to persist, but there are also many opportunities on these lands and adjoining lands to further enhance habitat quality for these species while also benefitting agricultural operations. We work collaboratively with multiple partners to maintain, increase, and improve habitat for species at risk within the Grassland Natural Region of Alberta. In the 2021/2022 fiscal year, we collaborated with ranchers and completed four new Habitat Conservation Strategies (HCS), three HCS reassessments, and one Habitat Management Plan (HMP) on 21,320 acres of land. We partnered with 23 producers on 32 enhancements including five portable electric fencing units, eight fencing projects (i.e., riparian, wildlife-friendly, fencing out dugouts, and reflector installations), seven portable watering units, seven upland water developments (i.e., dugout enhancements, permanent water troughs, pasture pipeline projects designed to move water throughout the property, etc.), four ferruginous hawk poles, two groupings of riparian tree protections, construction of two bat condos, shrub and native seed plantings, and weed control for three properties.

We identified 167 different species on these eight properties, including two species that are federally considered *Endangered*, six species that are *Threatened*, and four that are *Species of Special Concern*. In all, we had 2,330 observations of species. On these same eight properties, we also conducted 49 detailed range transects, 150 range health assessments, 27 tame pasture assessments, 183 visual assessments, 15 HMP litter/Robel pole measurements, and nine riparian health assessments. Long-term relationships built on mutual respect and trust between conservation groups and landowners have allowed us to collaborate with producers on 30 properties and implement enhancements on more than 200,000 acres since the MULTISAR project expanded in 2016 to include the South Saskatchewan Watershed.

Partnerships

Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Environment and Parks, AltaLink, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Cows and Fish – Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Environment and Climate Change Canada, EQUUS, HUVAN Construction, landholders, Prairie Conservation Forum

MULTISAR – West

The majority of Species at Risk (SAR) are found in the Grasslands Natural Region of southern Alberta. However, the Foothills, Parkland, and Rocky Mountain natural regions of southwestern Alberta boast some of the province's most ecologically diverse landscapes and provide habitat for many SAR including little brown myotis, bull trout, grizzly bear, limber pine, western wood-pewee, and westslope cutthroat trout. Best management practices and habitat enhancements occurring on farmlands within this area have enabled many of these species to persist, but there are also many opportunities to further enhance habitat quality for these species while mutually benefiting agricultural operations.

In 2021, we collaborated with one private landowner to complete a Habitat Conservation Strategy on a ranch totaling approximately 2,670 acres. We identified 80 different wildlife species on this ranch, including 23 that are considered *Endangered*, *Threatened*, or *Species of Special Concern*. In total, we had 384 observations of wildlife species; and conducted 62 range habitat assessments, four flowing water health inventories, and six freshwater assessments.

We partnered with four cattle producers to implement five habitat enhancements, including implementing alternate watering systems for cattle, relocating livestock corrals away from sensitive riparian habitat, and temporarily fencing off a portion of Yarrow Creek that supports populations of bull trout. Building on long-term landowner relationships that ACA has established through previous projects have enabled us to collaborate with producers and implement

enhancements in 2021. Our goal is to continue building on this reciprocated trust and respect so that we can collaborate on future projects that mutually benefit habitat for wildlife, SAR, and ranching operations in southwestern Alberta.

Partnerships

Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association – Minister’s Special Licence Program, Canadian Cattlemen’s Association, Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, landholders in southwestern Alberta, Prairie Conservation Forum, Shell Foothills Legacy Fund

Pheasant Releases to Enhance Hunting Opportunities

Upland game bird hunting is a long-standing tradition in Alberta. Following the introduction of the ring-necked pheasant in the early 1900s, wild populations became established in select areas of southern Alberta. To accommodate the high

demand for hunting opportunities, the Government of Alberta started a hatchery in 1945 and created the Provincial Pheasant Release Program, which saw thousands of hatchery-raised pheasants released onto the landscape each fall. The hatchery was eventually privatized due to government cutbacks and closed in 2013. However, a small group of keen hunters formed Upland Birds of Alberta and agreed to run the release program in 2013. ACA agreed to take over the release program beginning in 2014, with the overall goal to provide greater hunting opportunity for all Albertans. We released 17,080 male pheasants for the fall hunting season in 2014 and have increased this number annually to a total of 28,598 in 2021, including 1,000 melanistic pheasants.

We developed a webpage that shows a map and directions to all the sites to make this hunting opportunity more accessible. We operated 41 release sites in the 2021 season. We worked with five Fish & Game clubs in southern Alberta who played a key role with the weekly release of pheasants (6,040

total) at 22 sites from Medicine Hat to Cardston. We also partnered with local growers from the Peace River area, who collectively raised 583 male pheasants for release on the northwestern sites. We contracted MacFarlane Pheasants to release birds three times per week at 17 sites and once a week at the Peace River sites. MacFarlane housed these birds in a holding facility near Strathmore. Birds were released at more northern sites beginning September 1 for nine weeks, while releases at southern sites corresponded with the later opening day for pheasants beginning on October 15. The program has been well-received with positive feedback from hundreds of hunters annually.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Capital Power, Cardston Fish & Game Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Fort Macleod Fish & Game Association, Lethbridge Fish & Game Association, MacFarlane Pheasants, Medicine Hat Fish & Game Association, Peace River Fish & Game Association, Picture Butte Fish & Game Association



Project: MULTISAR West
Description: Brad Downey executing point-counts on a MULTISAR participant property

Photo: ACA, Julie Landry-DeBoer



Piping Plover Recovery Program

Piping plovers are small, black and white, short-billed *Endangered* shorebirds that nest and feed along gravel beaches. They face a number of threats including high rates of predation and damage to their nesting and feeding habitat. ACA is working with landowners across east-central and southern Alberta to improve habitat and promote awareness of the plight of the piping plover. Each year, we also conduct piping plover counts on key breeding lakes that allow us to monitor population numbers and distribution, and help us guide habitat improvement activities. We surveyed 24 waterbodies, on which we found 73 adults on eight lakes, with ten or more adults on four of these lakes. We worked with our partners to improve over 5 km of shoreline habitat through the implementation of seasonal grazing and chemical control to reduce the encroachment of vegetation that impairs this habitat for piping plovers. Since large-scale recovery efforts began in 2002, we have

improved over 58 km of shoreline habitat, with the majority of “critical” piping plover habitat being protected or improved through fencing.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, landholders, Environment and Climate Change Canada – Habitat Stewardship Program

Pronghorn Fence Crossing Enhancement

A simple and effective method to mitigate the negative impact fences have on pronghorn is to implement wildlife-friendlier fencing techniques. For pre-existing fences, the retrofitting of wires to wildlife-friendlier standards is time consuming and costly. In 2021, we were able to alleviate these burdens on landholders interested in improving fence permeability for pronghorn by replacing the bottom barbed wire of 38 km of fenceline with double-stranded smooth wire raised to 46 cm. Retrofitting was completed by volunteers with the Alberta Fish & Game Association. In addition to modifying fences,

the project funded the purchase of 20 km of double-stranded smooth wire for the construction of a new fence by a private landowner. In total, the Pronghorn Fence Crossing Enhancement project facilitated the establishment of nearly 60 km of wildlife-friendlier fencing throughout the pronghorn migration corridor of southeastern Alberta.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association

Pronghorn Movement Enhancement (Fence Trials)

The proliferation of fencing that followed cattle ranching since the 1880s poses a serious barrier to ungulate movement. We have documented that pronghorn and deer show a propensity to cross under fences. For deer, this propensity to cross under may be an artifact of the top wire height being too high to allow passage over. Between 2018 and 2020, we evaluated fence modifications proposed for ungulates to make crossing under and over a fence easier to determine if the modifications affect pronghorn and deer fence-crossing behaviours. Our results indicated that modifying the top wire did not hinder the ability of pronghorn to cross under the fence. We also demonstrated that deer, even though we lowered the top wire, still preferred to cross under the bottom wire. Our results from this study will be published in 2022. We have also submitted 3 additional papers for consideration to peer-reviewed journals and a revised book chapter on pronghorn to the editors. We will disseminate our results and conclusions to stakeholders, wildlife managers, and conservation groups.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Bushnell Corporation, Cabela’s Canada, Canadian Forces Base Suffield, National Wildlife Federation, Safari Club International – Northern Alberta Chapter, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, The Nature Conservancy

Pronghorn Road Crossing Enhancement (Pronghorn Xing)

Among the diversity of prairie wildlife, the pronghorn is the most specialized and representative large mammal. Within the Northern Sagebrush Steppe of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Montana, 55% of collared pronghorn made seasonal migrations from summer ranges to winter ranges. Along the migration pathway, pronghorn must navigate their way across primary and secondary highways that are often fenced on both sides, resulting in pinch points where animals pile up. These pinch points along the migration pathway are a formidable challenge for migrating pronghorn.

To address this migration challenge, a citizen science project called *Pronghorn Xing* was initiated in the spring of 2017. *Pronghorn Xing* was developed to ground-truth seasonal movement pinch points identified by connectivity modelling across highways in the Northern Sagebrush Steppe and increase public engagement in pronghorn science and conservation. Analysis of the pronghorn data collected between November 2017 and June 2020 via the app was completed and potential mitigation sites were presented to stakeholders in a workshop setting. Initially 16 potential sites were identified along Highway 1 in Alberta and Saskatchewan where road mitigation could improve pronghorn movement. Following a ranking exercise by workshop participants the number of potential mitigation sites was narrowed down to four sites in Alberta and three in Saskatchewan. The prioritized mitigation sites in Alberta and Saskatchewan provide a starting point for assessing the feasibility of implementing a mitigation structure (overpass).

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Transportation, Miistakis Institute, National Wildlife Federation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation,

Nature Conservancy of Canada, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment and Infrastructure, Saskatchewan Government Insurance

Species Habitat Assessments and Ranching Partnership

Maintaining wildlife habitat and sustainable grazing practices go hand in hand. A sustainable grazing system can provide multiple benefits to livestock and wildlife on rangelands and result in positive outcomes for ecosystem structure and function. Landowners have always played a vital role in the management of wildlife and the habitat they require.

Species Habitat Assessments and Ranching Partnership (SHARP) is a voluntary collaborative project designed to work with producers to maintain and develop feasible grazing practices that benefit both wildlife and their ranching operations in central and northwestern Alberta. Our objective is to make wildlife conservation straightforward and cost-effective for producers through education and cost-sharing agreements for habitat enhancements. We develop habitat strategies after first completing in-depth range and riparian health assessments as well as wildlife inventories. We evaluate these results with the needs of target species and the long-term objectives of the landholder. This results in mutually agreed-on solutions that benefit both wildlife and the producer's operations. As enhancements are made, we develop a monitoring plan to assess their progress and effectiveness.

We continued to work on two ranches (total 16,096 acres) within the North Saskatchewan Watershed and enrolled three new ranches (total 2,807 acres) located in the North Saskatchewan Watershed, Red Deer Watershed, or Peace River Watershed. We identified 104 different wildlife species on

these three new properties, including 16 species that are considered Sensitive provincially or higher under Alberta's General Status evaluation process. On these three properties, we also completed four grassland health assessments, six tame pasture health assessments, ten forest health assessments, 54 visual plot assessments, and 19 riparian health assessments.

We partnered with three producers to implement eight habitat enhancements as part of recommendations identified in Habitat Conservation Strategy reports. In collaboration with one producer, we planted wildflowers along the edges of a newly created eco-buffer shelterbelt to attract a greater diversity and abundance of pollinators such as bees, butterflies, moths, and beetles. In partnership with a second producer, we trialed snow fencing around a dugout to increase snow collection and improve subsequent runoff into this dugout. We partnered with a third producer to implement a watering system, construction of new dugouts, and wildlife-friendly fencing around these two dugouts and one existing dugout, all designed to help with cattle distribution on the property to avoid overgrazing and encourage grazing away from sensitive riparian areas. Long-term relationships built on mutual respect and trust between conservation groups and landowners are the key to effective on-the-ground conservation efforts being undertaken through initiatives like the SHARP project.

Partnerships

Alberta Community Bat Program, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association – Minister's Special Licence Program, ALUS Canada, Canadian Agricultural Partnership, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Environment and Climate Change Canada – Habitat Stewardship Program, landholders

Taber Pheasant Festival

Recognizing the potential economic benefits and the importance of pheasant hunting as part of Alberta's hunting heritage, ACA and other core organizations initiated the Taber Pheasant Festival in 2011. This festival sets up hunting opportunities by releasing 5,100 male pheasants on forty pre-selected sites in the Municipal District of Taber.

We normally host a novice hunt training weekend leading up to the festival in collaboration with Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA) although for 2021 this component was cancelled to remain in compliance with Alberta Health Services' COVID-19 restrictions.

The festival helps to make a connection with local landholders to discuss potential habitat projects to enhance wildlife and pheasant habitat. This unique festival offers the opportunity to showcase hunting from a field-to-plate perspective for the non-hunting population. When possible, we provide educational background on pheasants and their habitat requirements. There is no registration fee to hunt in the festival, and it is open to anyone who holds the appropriate licensing to hunt pheasants in Alberta. The Taber area sees economic benefits as the hunters spend money on travel, accommodation, food, hunting gear, and other associated costs. To raise funds for next year's festival, we hosted raffles and had a new online auction. There was a strong showing of 678 hunters participating in the 11th year of the festival with participants travelling from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, and Montana.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, Beretta/Benelli/Tikka/Sako, Can West Legacy Inc., Cycle Works Calgary, Foster Park Brokers, Heritage Inn Taber/Canadian Destinations Group, High Caliber Products, landowners,

MacFarlane Pheasants Inc., McKay Roughrider Resources Ltd., Municipal District of Taber, Royal Hotel, Taber & District Chamber of Commerce, Taber Economic Development, Taber Irrigation District, Town of Taber, Taber organizing committee, Vortex Optics

Turkey Distribution and Trends

In Alberta, the demand for hunting wild turkeys is very high, with 6,062 applicants pursuing 200 tags in 2021 (3.3% draw success awarded to only those with 12+ years priority), while an additional 17,696 hunters applied to boost their priority level. With 23,500+ hunters seeking a turkey tag, it has become a once-in-life-time opportunity for most hunters, and many will never be drawn at the current allocation rate.

Wild turkeys were first introduced into Alberta in 1962 when 21 turkeys from South Dakota were translocated to the Cypress Hills in southeastern Alberta. At the same time, three turkeys were sent to the Brooks Pheasant Hatchery for breeding purposes and future introductions. Since then, several translocations have established populations of varying size, scattered throughout southwestern Alberta. Although, there is concern that numbers have decreased in some locations in recent years, particularly within the Porcupine Hills.

In 2020-2021, we initiated a citizen science approach to monitor turkeys with private landholders across their range in southwestern Alberta. We divided the anticipated range of wild turkey into five zones from south to north and contacted at least ten landholders from each. Direct sightings from landholders enabled us to identify the winter location of local populations in winter 2021 along with their associated habitat features (e.g., roosts, feeding sites). We gathered input from 118 landholders who observed roughly 839 turkeys observed across the five zones. Annual survey results are intended to establish an index of population trend over time that will assist with the allocation of tags.

Our online volunteer summer brood survey had 17 replies with 165 wild turkeys sighted including 49 hens, 76 poults, 11 males, and 29 with sex unknown. In addition, we had replies from 29 landholders over summer who sighted 431 wild turkeys including 110 hens, 184 poults, 51 males, and 86 with sex unknown.

We captured 22 wild turkeys from a known viable population located on private lands near Beaver Mines and released the birds on a privately owned ranch in the Porcupine Hills in efforts to reestablish a population in an area previously inhabited by turkeys. In 2022/23, we anticipate translocating wild turkeys from southeastern British Columbia (and possibly other jurisdictions) into southern and central Alberta to supplement the current wild turkey population and increase hunting opportunity.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association – Minister's Special Licence Program, private landholders in southwestern Alberta

Upland Game Bird 4-H Initiative

Pheasants were first introduced into Alberta in 1908 by a group of recreational enthusiasts to provide enhanced upland hunting opportunities. Now, more than 100 years later, the tradition continues as we partner with stakeholders to improve the future of upland hunting in Alberta. Changes in agricultural practices and the conversion of native prairie into cropland have dramatically modified the landscape to the point where native game birds are nearly eliminated from areas dedicated to cropland. Pheasants can adapt to areas predominately used for cropland, provided that a suite of habitat features are also available.

In 2014, we initiated a new partnership with 4-H Alberta, offering them the opportunity to raise day-old chicks to adults birds. This year, we had 53 4-H members who successfully raised approximately 4,200 pheasants



Project: Working with Alberta's Trappers to Monitor Furbearer Population Trends
Description: ACA staff Mike Jokinen discussing martin trapping with a local trapper
Photo: ACA, Robert Anderson

(mostly hens) and either released them into suitable upland habitat or marketed them for sale.

In addition to the 4-H members, other interest groups including private landowners, Alberta Fish & Game Associations, and Scout groups also received the opportunity to purchase day-old chicks to raise. We did not record how many birds were successfully raised and released or marketed for sale as they are free to do what they want with their birds.

Partnerships

4-H Alberta, Alberta Environment and Parks, ConocoPhillips Canada, MacFarlane Pheasants, private donations

Upland Game Bird Fall Forecast

As we did in 2020, we reached out to the hunting dog community in 2021 to ask for their assistance with conducting annual upland game bird productivity surveys throughout Alberta. The survey information collected by these volunteers enabled us to expand the geographic areas covered as well as the overall survey effort, particularly for grey partridge. We anticipate this will provide a broader representation of the annual

survey results for pheasant and grey partridge recruitment leading up to the annual hunting season. Flush rates for both partridge and pheasants are still below the long-term moving average, although they have increased moderately off the lows seen in 2019 and 2020. The information acquired from these surveys helps us understand population trends, brood success, as well as heighten the excitement for the upcoming hunting season as we release the survey results on our website and various social media outlets each fall.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, landowners, Pheasants Forever – Calgary Chapter, volunteer survey participants – dog handlers

Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program

The intention of the Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program is to assist agricultural producers in reducing damage to crops caused by waterfowl during fall migration. Eight years ago, we began offering scare cannons free of charge to counties and municipal districts, enabling them to incorporate this equipment into their

existing equipment rental programs. This has greatly improved efficiency by placing cannons much closer to end users. In 2021/22, we continued to work with producers as well as counties and municipal districts to ensure that scare cannons were available where needed for waterfowl crop damage prevention. We provided locations where scare cannons were available for loan as well as provided strategies for avoiding crop damage on our website.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Athabasca County, Big Lakes County, Camrose County, Clearhills County, County of Grande Prairie, County of Minburn, County of Northern Lights, County of Paintearth, County of St. Paul, County of Stettler, County of Two Hills, County of Vermilion River, Flagstaff County, Lac La Biche County, Lacombe County, Mackenzie County, Municipal District of Bonnyville, Municipal District of Fairview, Municipal District of Greenview, Municipal District of Peace, Municipal District of Provost, Municipal District of Smoky River, Municipal District of Spirit River, Northern Sunrise County, Ponoka County, Saddle Hills County, Smoky Lake County



Project: Fish Barrier Assessments in the Bow River Drainage
Description: Preparing to measure velocity in a chute barrier
Photo: ACA, Jason Blackburn

Fisheries Program

Fishing is one of Alberta's favourite pastimes, so ACA has an entire team of biologists dedicated to keeping its lakes, rivers, and their fish populations healthy. Projects we engage in reflect our emphasis on the enhancement and development of recreational fishing opportunities across the province, and native fish conservation. Our fish stocking and lake aeration projects provide Albertans with recreational angling in areas of the province where such fishing opportunities would not otherwise exist.

Stocked fish populations are an important component of Alberta's recreational angling experience. Along with partners, we stocked 65 ponds with four trout species and aerated 22 lakes to improve water quality and ensure year-round survival of stocked fish. This year, we added one new waterbody (Boulder Lake) to expand our fish stocking project, and for the first time, we stocked tiger trout to further diversify fishing experience at our stocked ponds. Similarly, we added Peanut Lake to expand our aeration project and screened three additional lakes as potential candidates for future aeration. We also provided technical and material support to the County of Two Hills to develop and implement winter aeration of Jackfish Lake. At the request of Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), we developed a proposal to stock sterile hybrid channel catfish into ponds where summer water conditions may be limiting for stocked trout species to create put-and-take fisheries. Channel catfish do not occur naturally in Alberta, so the cultural, social, and ecological implications of their introduction are being carefully assessed.

We conducted angler surveys on four lakes to evaluate effects of various harvest manipulations and fishing regulation changes at select walleye and northern pike

fisheries, generating information that feed directly into AEP fisheries management plans.

Other projects generated information required for provincial fish conservation and species recovery initiatives. Projects in the McLeod, Ram, Bow, Crowsnest, Oldman, Livingston, Narraway, and Muskeg river systems variously generated data on distribution, abundance, spawning, habitat, and range expansion of native trout species that are used to assess and prioritize species recovery efforts in these watersheds. The Owl River project assessed in-stream habitat quality to aid riparian and fish habitat restoration.

Overall, the success of our Fisheries Program activities in 2021/22 involved the support of 38 partners consisting of provincial and federal governments, industry, watershed groups, non-governmental organizations, counties/municipalities, and other interested groups.

2021/22 Overview

- 122,803 twenty-cm long trout (111,993 rainbow, 6,640 brook, 2,300 brown, and 1,870 tiger trout) were stocked into 65 ponds in regions of the province where trout angling opportunities are limited.
- We stocked Boulder Lake for the first time to expand the fish stocking project.
- We stocked tiger trout for first time into our ponds to further diversify fishing experience.
- 3 ponds were screened as potential candidates for future trout stocking.
- We provided supplemental information and subject matter expertise in support of AEP's review of ACA's proposal to stock sterile hybrid channel catfish into ponds for put-and-take recreational fisheries.
- Five trout ponds were evaluated as candidates for yellow perch stocking, but the project was deferred pending development of a provincial perch transfer protocol by AEP.
- 22 aerated lakes successfully overwintered stocked trout with no reported winterkills.
- We added one new lake to expand the aeration project: Peanut Lake.
- 2 lakes were screened as potential candidates for future aeration.
- 8 new financial partnerships were established in support of fish stocking and aeration projects.
- We provided technical and material support to the County of Two Hills to develop winter aeration of Jackfish Lake.
- 89 rivers/creeks and nine ponds were surveyed, generating information on fish population status, distribution, fishing effort, spawning and rearing habitat, and water quality.
- Over 5,500 km of river were surveyed, including 263 km of electrofishing and 4 km of redd surveys.
- We conducted angler surveys on four lakes to evaluate effects of harvest manipulations and fishing regulation changes on walleye and northern pike fisheries.
- We designed and successfully operated a solar-powered underwater video to monitor bull trout spawning migration in Fall Creek.
- We assessed 119 fish passage barriers in the Bow, Muskeg, and Narraway river watersheds for their potential to protect native trout populations from invasive species.
- We are developing a list of the most suitable habitats for westslope cutthroat trout reintroductions and range expansions above fish barriers.
- We participated in the Native Trout Conservation Collaborative, a multi-stakeholder group led by AEP that implements conservation programming for recovery of native trout in Alberta. The collaborative is funded through a grant from the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk

Conservation Potential of Fish Passage Barriers for Native Trout

To effectively safeguard against extirpation of native fish species in Alberta, it is essential to protect native fish populations from hybridization and competition with invasive species. In Alberta, several subpopulations of native fish remain protected from invasive species primarily because of waterfalls that impede upstream fish movement. Maintaining and isolating these populations from invasion is critical to the protection and persistence of native fish. Cataloguing waterfalls is a necessary first step in determining where invasion can be managed. To determine where native fish refuge might still exist in the Narraway River and Muskeg River watersheds, we used Google Earth, Bing Maps, and aerial reconnaissance to identify 110 and 14 potential fish barrier locations in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Fieldwork was postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. We ground-truthed 99 potential barriers and completed full field assessments at 20 of the 99 potential barriers in the Narraway River watershed. We identified six barriers on four tributaries (Dinosaur, Stetson, Stinking, and Sulphur creeks) in the Narraway River watershed, with high conservation potential for native fish. We ground-truthed all 14 potential barriers and completed full assessments at two of the 14 potential barriers in the Muskeg River watershed. We identified one barrier with high conservation potential for native trout along the mainstem of the Muskeg River.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Canada Nature Fund, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Habitat Stewardship Program Fund

East Slopes Fisheries Inventory

Athabasca rainbow trout and bull trout have seen their populations and distributions decrease from historical levels. These species are now listed under the *Species at Risk Act*, which has identified many anthropogenic threats to these species. The Native Trout Recovery Program is a collaboration of government and non-government organizations tasked with monitoring the populations and, through remediation activities, recovering the populations to a more sustainable level. The Upper McLeod River watershed was identified as a priority watershed for inventory work to assess the abundance status and distribution of Athabasca rainbow trout and bull trout. In the summer of 2021, we used backpack electrofishing gear to sample 38 sites randomly distributed throughout four Hydrological Unit Code 10 (HUC 10) watersheds. We captured a total of 620 fish with rainbow trout being the most abundant and widely distributed species. Bull trout were only captured at a single site in the Gregg River HUC 10 watershed. This is the first year of a 2-year project with the remaining four HUC 10 watersheds to be completed in 2022. A final data report will be completed at that time. Results of our project will provide up-to-date information on population status of native Athabasca rainbow trout and bull trout in the Upper McLeod River watershed.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Canada Nature Fund

Effectiveness of Walleye-Pike Fishing Regulations

High fishing pressure, coupled with slow-growing and late-maturing populations have previously resulted in the over-harvest of many of Alberta's sport fish populations highlighting the need to regularly monitor fishing pressure and populations. To aid in achieving

management objectives, angler surveys provide fisheries managers with information about fishing pressure on waterbodies. Between May 15 and August 31, 2021, we performed angler surveys on Lac Ste. Anne, Gull, Buck, and Pigeon lakes. These angler surveys followed an instantaneous count methodology completed using boats or from shore during inclement weather conditions. During summer months, estimated angler effort was 23,888.17 hours (4.22 h/ha) at Lac Ste. Anne, 38,551.75 hours (4.70 h/ha) at Gull Lake, 47,057.37 hours (18.53 h/ha) at Buck Lake, and 32,323.76 hours (3.32 h/ha) at Pigeon Lake.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Government of Canada: Service Canada, Canada Summer Jobs

Fish Barrier Assessments in the Bow River Drainage

The historical range of westslope cutthroat trout (WSCT) in Alberta lies entirely within the Oldman and Bow River watersheds. In recent decades, genetically pure populations have declined to approximately 5% of the historical distribution. Invasive species are among the biggest contributors to the WSCT declines through hybridization and competition, and the subsequent population fragmentation. Natural waterfall barriers that impede upstream fish movements are known to protect headwater populations of WSCT from non-native rainbow trout and brook trout invasions. Consequently, ACA has undertaken broadscale inventory and assessments of these barriers as a conservation measure to identify barriers protecting crucial populations currently sustaining the species, and for recognizing opportunities to expand the WSCT range into secure unoccupied habitat reaches above barriers. Since 2017, we have developed standard methods to identify, measure, classify, and rank a complex range of fish barriers in the context of invasion risk and conservation potential; and we have completed assessments in much of the Oldman

River watershed. In 2020, we finalized assessment methods into a field manual that assesses four main mechanisms that impede fish passage over barriers: 1) length obstructions to leaping, 2) water velocity obstructions to swimming, 3) water depth obstructions to swimming, and 4) turbulence obstructions to swimming. We also broadened surveys into the Bow River watershed, visiting a total of 125 locations between 2017 and 2021.

Once completed, we will assemble final scoring of barriers into a central document ranking them by efficacy to prevent fish passage, enabling ranking of suitable habitat reaches to inform reintroduction efforts for WSCT.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – through the Canada Nature Fund

Fish Pond Rehabilitation

Fishing pressure at ACA stocked ponds can exceed 2,000 h/ha in the summer months, indicating these ponds can be popular among anglers. However, some of these ponds may not be capable of supporting trout survival beyond mid-summer due to low dissolved oxygen (DO). Five ponds, sampled for baseline water quality data over the past two years, had high total phosphorus concentrations, with four of five ponds being hypereutrophic: Daysland Pond ($233 \pm 67 \mu\text{g/L}$), Heritage Lake ($315 \pm 158 \mu\text{g/L}$), Innisfree Trout Pond ($112 \pm 24 \mu\text{g/L}$), and Lamont Pond ($134 \pm 52 \mu\text{g/L}$); Rainbow Park Pond was eutrophic ($81 \pm 28 \mu\text{g/L}$). Alum treatment will reduce bioavailable phosphorus,

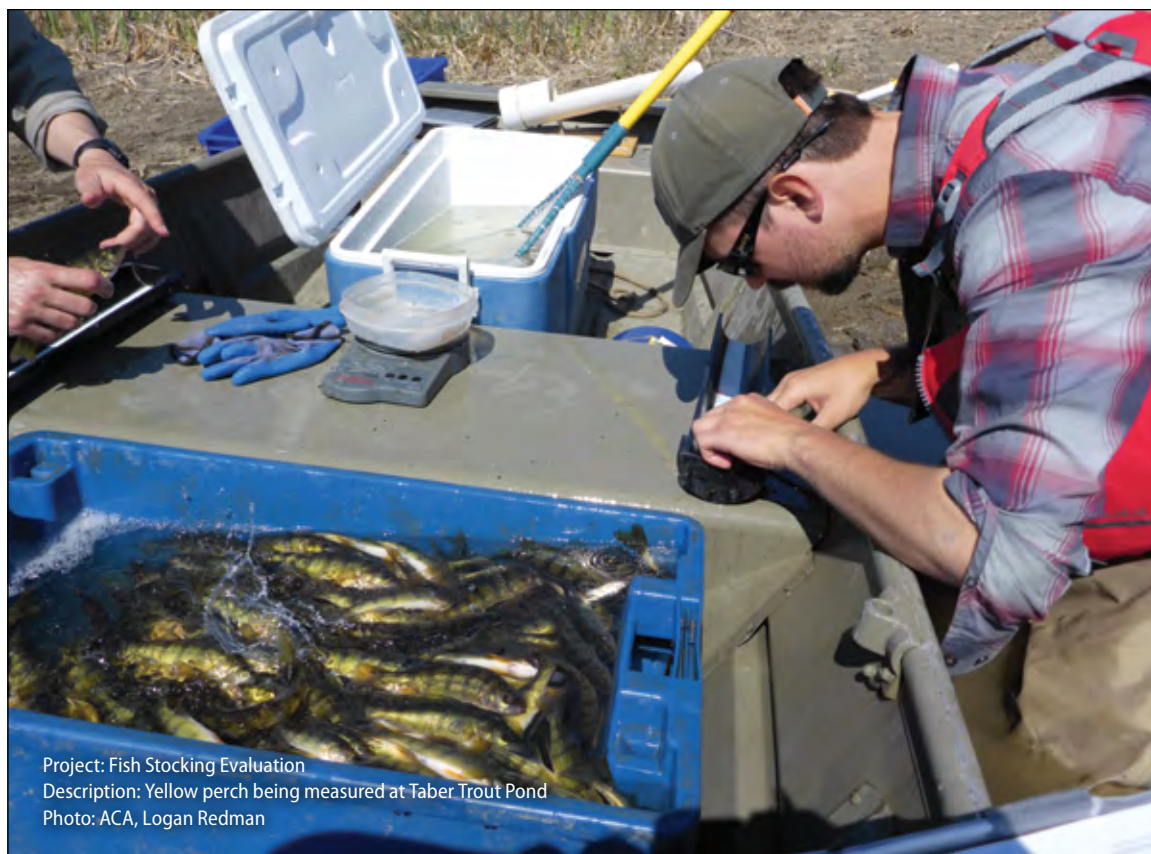
thereby improving water quality and DO concentration. We used Rainbow Park Pond as an alum pilot case. Through alum dosing jar tests, we determined that a total of 25 mL (59.5g Al/ litre solution) of alum per litre of pond water, split over two treatments of 12.5 mL of alum, maintained favourable water quality for fish and invertebrate survival (pH of 7.5; alkalinity of 72 mg/L) while significantly reducing total phosphorus concentration (85% reduction). We are using the five ponds to conduct a before-after-control-impact experiment to determine if alum treatment can improve overall water quality and DO concentrations.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks



Project: East Slopes Fisheries Inventory
Description: ACA staff Andrew Clough electrofishing a high alpine stream
Photo: ACA, Zach Spence



Fish Stocking

The Fish Stocking Project provides anglers with increased opportunities to catch and harvest rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout and, tiger trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities are limited. Recipient waterbodies are prone to winterkill and require annual stocking of fish to maintain angling opportunities. We stocked 65 waterbodies with 111,993 rainbow trout, 2,300 brown trout, 6,640 brook trout, and 1,870 tiger trout for a total of 122,803 trout. We stocked tiger trout, for first time, to further diversify the fishing experience at our ponds and expanded the project with the addition of one new waterbody (Boulder Lake). Overall, we stocked 39 ponds with single species and 26 ponds with multiple species. We stocked one waterbody, Boulder Lake, for the first time. We acquired three new corporate partners.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Aquality Environmental Consulting, Canadian Tire – Cochrane, CCI Inc., City of Beaumont, City of Fort Saskatchewan, County of Grande Prairie, City of Lacombe, City of Medicine Hat, Lethbridge County, Nutrien, Saddle Hills County, Shell Canada Energy, SysGen Solutions Group Ltd., Town of Cochrane, Town of High River, Town of Morinville

Fish Stocking Evaluation

Evaluation of our Fish Stocking Project suggests that poor water quality (high temperatures and low dissolved oxygen) at some of our ponds may limit their ability to support stocked trout throughout the summer months. In 2021/22, we evaluated if stocking created a fishery for anglers at Anderson Dam, Stirling Children's Pond, and McQuillan and Foremost reservoirs; assessed the small-bodied fish

and invertebrate forage base for trout at McQuillan and Foremost reservoirs (two waterbodies identified as potential locations for stocking alternate sport species); and described the size and abundance of yellow perch in Heritage Lake, Beaumont Pond, and Taber Trout Pond (waterbodies with anecdotal reports of perch presence). We found that trout stocking at McQuillan Reservoir has created a robust population of rainbow trout with evidence of multiple size/years of survival and some very large trout are present. Taber Trout Pond supports a significant population of yellow perch with evidence of multiple size/ year classes and overwintering success. McQuillan and Foremost reservoirs have a substantial forage base as assessed by minnow trapping and invertebrate collections.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks

Fish Stocking Expansion – Channel Catfish Ponds

Roughly one quarter of all fishing efforts in Alberta is sustained by trout stocking, and demand for recreational angling opportunities in the province is high. To help meet demand, millions of hatchery-reared trout are stocked annually into 300 Alberta lakes, reservoirs, and ponds. The stocked trout are cold-water species and require cool, oxygen-rich environments to thrive. High summer water temperature and low dissolved oxygen stresses trout and increases mortality such that some of Alberta's stocked waterbodies are incapable of supporting trout survival beyond mid-summer. For stocking to be successful at these waterbodies, an alternative to trout is required. Following detailed evaluation of the suitability and availability of commonly stocked sport fish in 2020/21, a channel catfish x blue catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus* x *I. furcatus*) hybrid was selected as the most promising alternative. Catfish of the genus *Ictalurus* do not currently occur within Alberta so their stocking to provincial waterbodies requires careful consideration. To assist managers in their evaluation, we completed a detailed review of the biology, ecology, management, and culture of catfish in North America in 2020/21; and we contracted subject matter experts at the University of Mississippi to assess pathogen transmission risk. We continued to gather information in support of the evaluation as requested by provincial managers in 2021/22. In addition to assessing ecological risk, the evaluation includes consideration of the management and social implications of stocking catfish as well. If approved, we anticipate importing sterile (i.e., non-reproductive) catfish fry, which would then be reared in a quarantine facility for several months prior to experimental evaluation of fish performance in a more natural setting.

Fish Stocking Expansion – New Lakes

Stocked trout fisheries are popular in Alberta, with rainbow trout being the third most sought after fish by anglers in Alberta. Given the popularity of trout-stocked fisheries in Alberta, this project seeks to expand the number of stocked ponds through identification and screening of ponds with potential to support a stocked trout fishery. We identified and evaluated Rotary Park Pond (in the Town of Westlock) during the 2021 field season and determined that it has fisheries potential. Chestermere Pond (near Chestermere) and a borrow pit (BP1 near Fort McMurray) remain possibilities for future fisheries, and we are working with AEP to determine public access for these ponds. We also stocked Boulder Lake for the first time in 2021 and it is now part of the Fish Stocking Project.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Alberta Transportation, County of Grande Prairie, Evelyn and Leslie Wadey, Lacombe Fish and Game Association, Saddle Hills County, Taber Irrigation District, Town of Taber

Fish Stocking Expansion – Yellow Perch Ponds

ACA annually stocks over 100,000 catchable-sized (i.e., 20 cm) trout into approximately 65 ponds to create put-and-take fisheries. Most of the ponds that we stock are located close to, or in urban centres, making them popular family destinations. In 2015, we evaluated the survival of trout in our stocked ponds and found that several waterbodies are not capable of supporting trout species beyond mid-summer due to poor water quality, particularly low dissolved oxygen and high temperature. Consequently, we began exploring alternate species that may be more tolerant of lower water quality

than trout. In 2021, we proposed yellow perch as a species that meets these criteria and identified five ACA-stocked trout ponds as candidates for perch transfers from nearby waterbodies. However, the project was deferred pending the development of a provincial perch transfer protocol by AEP. Subsequently, we restocked all five ponds with trout.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks

Lake Aeration

We use lake aeration as a fisheries management technique to provide Albertans with diverse recreational angling opportunities in areas of the province where such opportunities would be otherwise limited. Aerated waterbodies are typically shallow, eutrophic, experience prolonged ice cover, and are prone to summer and winter fish kills. Using aeration, we maintained dissolved oxygen levels above 3 mg/L to promote year-round survival and availability of larger fish to anglers. In 2021/22, we aerated 22 waterbodies across the province, all of which successfully overwintered stocked trout without any reported fish kills. This year, we expanded the aeration project by the addition of Peanut Lake, upgraded electrical infrastructure at Muir Lake and Coleman Fish and Game Pond, and installed additional subsurface diffusers at Kerbes Pond.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Clear Hills County, County of Northern Lights, Edmonton Trout Fishing Club, Mercer Peace River Pulp Ltd., Mountain View County, Municipal District of Greenview No. 16, Northern Lights Fly Fishers - Trout Unlimited Canada, Northern Sunrise County, Parkland County, Saddle Hills County, Thorhild County, West Fraser – Edson Forest Products

New Lake Aeration Development

ACA's Lake Aeration Project promotes angling opportunities in stocked waterbodies across Alberta where such fishing opportunities are otherwise limited. Waterbodies aerated in the project are prone to fish kills during winter and summer months due to low dissolved oxygen (DO), but with aeration, DO levels are maintained to promote year-round survival of stocked trout. Each year, we receive several requests from stakeholder groups to aerate waterbodies throughout the province. Given the substantial cost associated with aeration operations, we carefully screen candidate waterbodies to ensure that we address top AEP provincial-level priorities. In 2021/22, we screened two lakes, Little Bear and Sauer lakes by monitoring DO and temperature profiles during winter months. This is the third year collecting DO and temperature data at Sauer Lake, and we continue to monitor and investigate developing an aeration system at Little Bear Lake. In 2021/22, we added Peanut Lake to the lake aeration project and developed the site in the fall with support from the County of Barrhead. We provided technical support to the County of Two Hills to develop and operate their new winter aeration system at Jackfish Lake.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, County of Barrhead

Owl River Fish Habitat Protection

In partnership with Syncrude, ACA is monitoring instream habitat on the Owl River from 2020 to 2045 to aid riparian and fish habitat restoration. In general, 2021 was considered a drought year, and water quality was likely impacted by low water levels but remained similar to 2011 baseline conditions. Dissolved oxygen levels were within optimal ranges for walleye and the

fish community, but temperatures approached tolerance limits in July. Total phosphorus, total nitrogen, and total coliform counts were high across all sites. There was no clear pattern of macroinvertebrate distribution, and the total number of macroinvertebrate families in 2021 was similar to those in previous years. Overall water quality in the Owl River was classified as marginal in 2021. Due to low water levels in 2021, the fish community and aquatic habitat assessments were deferred to 2022.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, County of Lac La Biche, Syncrude Canada Ltd.

Ram River Bull Trout Assessment

Bull trout is a native sport fish species classed as *Threatened* in Alberta and is particularly sensitive to habitat change. A government-led initiative, the Native Trout Recovery Program, was implemented in 2017 to recover native trout throughout the Eastern Slopes of Alberta. The program involves implementation of recovery actions (e.g., trail remediation/closure, implementing industry best-management practices, suppression of non-native species) in an adaptive management framework. Success of this program will be measured using AEP's Fish Sustainability Index (FSI). The FSI is a standardized process of assessment that provides a landscape-level overview of fish sustainability within the province and enables broad-scale evaluation of management actions and land-use planning. In the summer and fall of 2021, we used a combination of backpack electrofishing and redd surveys to assess the bull trout population in the lower Ram River watershed. Our sample frame for backpack electrofishing included 12 selected sites, where we detected fish at five of the 12 sites, catching five different species. We captured 14 bull trout

electrofishing, all at a single site. Fall Creek remains an important spawning tributary in the Ram River watershed. We counted 42 bull trout redds on a survey of a 3.5 km reach of Fall Creek. We continued to use our solar-powered underwater video recording system to count adult bull trout exiting the Fall Creek spawning area. We obtained over 40 days of footage during the bull trout spawning migration and counted 54 bull trout moving downstream past the camera; this equated to 1.3 spawners per redd, an index that can be used to estimate bull trout abundance in future redd surveys. Our study provides managers with information on fish species distribution and abundance that can be used to evaluate land-use impacts on fish and bull trout response to recovery actions.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – through the Canada Nature Fund, Sundre Forest Products – A Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.

Westslope Cutthroat Trout Population and Habitat Monitoring

In 2018, the *Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint Plan* was introduced by the Government of Alberta to reduce cumulative impacts on the landscape by changing land-use patterns to allow existing land footprints to recover. The resulting Livingstone Public Land Use Zone (PLUZ) encompasses the largest remaining westslope cutthroat trout (WSCT) core area in Alberta. Current land-use restrictions and habitat recovery activities in these critical habitats are anticipated to benefit fish populations and aid in species recovery. ACA is conducting a multi-year WSCT population monitoring study in four watersheds at the hydrologic unit code 10 scale in the upper Oldman (UOM) River watershed. The objective of the study is to

collect fish data at index sites for five years to determine natural WSCT population variations within the PLUZ. These data will be used to detect population response to the new PLUZ restrictions. In 2021, study year four of five, we completed fish surveys at 39 electrofishing sites in the UOM core area. In comparison to previous years, WSCT catch per unit effort (CPUE) in 2021 were highest in all watersheds except at Hidden Creek. Similar to previous years, 2021 WSCT catches were highest in the Livingstone River (n = 885) and UOM River (n = 509) watersheds and lowest in the Dutch Creek (n = 76) and Hidden Creek (n = 16) watersheds. We will continue monitoring these four watersheds in 2022 to examine the ongoing effects of the recent changes to land use in the Livingstone PLUZ.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada through the Canada Nature Fund, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Habitat Stewardship Program Fund

Westslope Cutthroat Trout Range Expansion

Recovery of westslope cutthroat trout (WSCT) in Alberta requires recolonization and expansion of their range, which is currently 5% of the historical distribution. Recovery of the species requires strong protections for existing populations, as well as recolonization and expansion of their current range. Invasive species are among the biggest contributors to WSCT declines through hybridization and competition, and the subsequent population fragmentation incurred when neighbouring watersheds become dominated by hybridized and invasive species. Since 2018, we have been adapting a framework originally developed by researchers for bull trout into a framework for WSCT range expansion feasibility in Alberta, into habitat reaches that are secure from invasion, above barriers. We are nearing the completion of compiling information to score habitats and develop candidate lists best suited for WSCT range expansion, as well as investigating watersheds adjacent to WSCT

core areas to determine expansion potential and limitations. To date, we have established summer stream temperatures as a strong predictor of WSCT abundance and a measure of candidate habitat quality. In 2021, we completed stream temperature monitoring in the Oldman River, Bow River, and Crowsnest River watersheds and calculated respective summer growing degree days (SGDD) to aid in the final rankings of candidate habitats. In-stream temperature in core areas spanned a range of 921 SGDD, from coolest conditions and lower productivity in Lyall Creek (384 SGDD) (Upper Oldman River watershed) to warmer conditions with higher productivity in Sullivan Creek (1,305 SGDD). Average daily temperatures also reached, and briefly exceeded WSCT tolerances in core areas during 2021 summer temperature extremes. We continue to pursue opportunities for collaborative WSCT range expansion projects at candidate locations across the WSCT range.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada through the Canada Nature Fund



Project: Westslope Cutthroat Trout Population and Habitat Monitoring
Description: Westslope cutthroat trout caught in the Upper Oldman River watershed
Photo: ACA, Brad Hurrett



Project: Conservation Site Management
Description: Wire removal at North Fawcett 6 Conservation Site
Photo: ACA, Meagan Butler

Land Management Program

ACA's Land Management Program is all about conserving, enhancing, and restoring wildlife and fish habitat across Alberta. Our *Alberta Discover Guide* highlights ACA and partner-owned conservation sites, which span hundreds of thousands of acres across our province. Each site has its own unique characteristics that provide an array of opportunities to hunt, fish, forage, or view wildlife. Our goal is to conserve key habitat, benefiting our precious wildlife and fish resources, and in the process, providing an added value for outdoor enthusiasts.

Each year we add acres (ac) to the inventory of land assets by securing habitat through purchase or donation. Thanks to our partners and conservation-minded landowners, we secured five new land acquisitions. Three acquisitions were new conservation sites, and two acquisitions were conservation site expansions, which conserved a total of 878.2 ac (355.4 hectares [ha]) of habitat. These lands have an estimated value of \$1,239,225. In addition, AFGA, DUC, and NCC shared the title with ACA on 34 conservation sites, conserving 7,683 ac (3,109.2 ha). We manage 24 fisheries access sites that add value by providing quality angling opportunities for Albertans on several stocked lakes and on several rivers where access is considered challenging.

We collaborate with landowners on other habitat-based programs such as our Landowner Habitat and Riparian Conservation programs, which focus on enhancing and conserving wildlife and fish habitat while improving recreational access on deeded lands. Currently, we manage 37 Landowner Habitat Agreements and 42 Riparian Conservation Agreements conserving a total of 15,511.7 ac of wildlife and fish habitat.

Our Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Program is aimed at easing access to privately owned lands by facilitating access management through a hunter/angler sign-in

system. We also focus other project initiatives on providing access to rivers, wetlands, and lakes to improve hunting and/or angling opportunities in areas where access may be limited.

The success of our Land Management Program is a testament to the support and effort of over 50 partnerships, including government, industry, non-governmental organizations, counties/municipalities, leaseholders, private landowners, corporate partners, and other interested groups. These collaborative partnerships are vital to our success. Moreover, they help us maximize each levy dollar we receive, allowing us to achieve the many conservation goals within ACA's Land Management Program.

2021/22 Overview

- We added three new conservation sites and expanded two existing conservation sites, totalling 878.2 ac (355.4 ha) with a land value of approximately \$1,237,175.
- We continued collaborating with corporate partners like Suncor Energy and Thor Resources Inc. to secure financial partnerships to conserve key habitat.
- Titles were shared with AFGA, DUC, and NCC on 34 conservation sites, conserving 7,683 ac (3,109.2 ha).
- We are currently managing 37 Landowner Habitat Program Agreements, conserving 6,715 ac (2,717.4 ha) of wildlife and fish habitat.
- We renewed three Landowner Habitat Agreements that expired in 2020/21, conserving 637 ac (257.8 ha).
- We signed one new Landowner Habitat Agreement, conserving 220 ac (89.0 ha).
- We continued discussions with AEP on management of Crown conservation sites (disposition process ongoing).
- We enhanced habitat on 49 conservation sites, including planting 160,900 trees and shrubs, restoring 34.5 ac to native and tame grass species, planting 22 ac of food plots for upland game birds, removing 3,200 m of barbed wire fence, and modifying/installing 4,465 m of new wildlife-friendly fencing.

- We inspected 177 conservation sites, with routine maintenance completed on 72 sites.
- We completed baseline inventories and other assessments on 22 conservation sites.
- We improved facilities for public foot access to eight conservation sites, including parking areas, foot-access gates, and trails.
- We installed project signs on six conservation sites and continued installing boundary and "Foot Access Only" signs on conservation sites.
- We provided recommendations on 157 land-use referrals and public inquiries.
- We provided angler access at 24 fisheries access sites, of which four received site upgrades and enhancements that included adding gravel and grading access areas; removing hazardous trees near parking lots; repairing vehicle barrier fence; and installing a wildlife-proof garbage bin, a floating dock, and four shoreline casting platforms.
- We completed 14 conservation site management plans.
- We delivered 13 riparian enhancement projects: three fencing projects, five off-site livestock watering initiatives, three bioengineering projects, one erosion control project, and one livestock crossing.
- We conserved 184.6 ac (74.7 ha) through new riparian habitat lease agreements and installed 10.2 km of new wildlife-friendly fencing.
- We monitored 42 existing agreements that conserves 8,796.7 ac (3,559.9 ha) of riparian and adjacent upland habitat lands throughout the province.
- We planted 500 willow stakes on Five Mile Creek.
- We monitored eight locations on the Owl River for water quality.
- We provided 14 participating landowners with recreational user sign-in access services for existing properties, totalling approximately 203,740.8 ac (82,454 ha) of accessible land.
- One landowner who previously opted out of the sign-in access system to try an app-based sign-in system for their access management requested ACA continue to help facilitate public access to their lands going forward.

Conservation Site Management

ACA's Conservation Site Management (CSM) Project currently manages 387 conservation sites and 11 conservation easements, which include over 220,000 acres (approximately 89,000 ha) of titled and Crown land in Alberta. The CSM Project is responsible for ongoing management and enhancement of these sites; activities are guided by site-specific management plans. In 2021/22, our field activities and contracted work were impacted again this year by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, our field staff completed inspections and maintenance tasks on 177 sites. Our team also completed habitat enhancement projects on 49 conservation sites, including restoration by seeding 34.5 acres to native and tame grass species, planting 160,900 trees and shrubs, planting 22 acres of food plots for upland game birds, installing and modifying fencing to facilitate wildlife movement on nine sites, and removing garbage and anthropogenic structures on five sites. Recreational access enhancements were completed at eight sites, including construction of foot access gates and bridges, development of a new parking area, and clearing new foot trails. We installed new project signs on six conservation sites and replaced project signs on three sites. Staff provided recommendations on 32 land use referrals and 125 public inquiries. We also managed public access on one high-use conservation site through a reservation system. Further, we continued discussions with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) representatives to determine long-term partnership roles and responsibilities at conservation sites on Crown land that ACA manages. Our success in managing and enhancing conservation sites is achieved through a collaborative effort with a growing number of partners and volunteers throughout Alberta.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, AFGA Minister's Special Licence Program, Bow River Irrigation District, Clearwater County, County

of Newell, County of Warner, Cows and Fish – Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Eastern Irrigation District, Environment and Climate Change Canada, HUVAN Construction, Grey Wooded Forage Association, landowners, Lethbridge County, Municipal District of Greenview, MULTISAR, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Pheasants Forever – Calgary and Chinook Chapters, Project Forest, Red Deer County, Shell Foothills Legacy Fund, Tree Canada, Trout Unlimited Canada, volunteer stewards

Corporate Partners Program

Our Corporate Partners Program was initiated in 2002/03 and is a collaboration between ACA and key industry and other partners to secure ecologically sensitive lands in Alberta. The cumulative effect of habitat loss and fragmentation of our natural ecosystems is a major concern in Alberta. As industrial and municipal activities continue to expand and grow, greater emphasis is being placed on loss and alteration of habitat. Our securement efforts are guided by focus areas and ranking criteria that are developed collaboratively between ACA and our corporate partners. Corporate partnerships and collaboration with other conservation organizations allow us to maximize our conservation impact and the overall effectiveness of our securement efforts. Partnerships may consist of short- or long-term agreements. Despite an economic downturn in the past few years caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we partnered with Thor Resources Inc. this year and purchased a new conservation site in partnership with Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). These acquisitions represent 318 acres (128.7 ha) of wildlife habitat with an estimated land value of approximately \$548,375. Our goal is to continue conserving key habitats using a collaborative approach and work towards expanding these opportunities by maintaining our current corporate partnerships and developing new partnerships.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Suncor Energy, Thor Resources Inc.

Fisheries Access Site Management

ACA's Land Management Program encompasses activities intended to conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife and fish habitat and to increase sustainable recreational opportunities including angling and hunting. One of the activities of the program is the delivery of the Fisheries Access Site Management Program, which provides angling access to key streams, rivers, and lakes throughout the province. We inspected and maintained 24 fisheries access sites and commissioned ten contracts to maintain 19 sites in 2021/22. We upgraded four sites with improvements to day-use facilities and access areas including installing a floating dock, casting platforms, and a wildlife-proof garbage bin; constructing a temporary parking area; removing hazardous trees; repairing vehicle barriers; graveling a parking area; and painting infrastructure. We worked to secure partners to assist with the completion of access and day-use infrastructure developments planned for the Boulder Lake site and continued to investigate two additional waterbodies on Crown land in the Central Region. We recognized 25 partners in 2021/22 who generously contributed financially or with in-kind assistance. We continued to strive to ensure anglers have high-quality experiences at ACA fisheries access sites across the province.

Partnerships

Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Alberta Transportation, Alternate Land Use Services Canada, Camrose County, Clearwater County, County of Newell, County Northern Lights, Cows and Fish – Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Devon Canada Corporation, Haul-All Equipment Ltd., Lacombe

County, Lacombe Fish and Game Association, Legacy Land Trust Society, Lethbridge County, Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District, Municipal District of Greenview, North Raven River Working Group, Rocky View County, Saddle Hills County, Stettler County, Trout Unlimited Canada – Central Chapter, Waldron Grazing Co-Op Ltd., Wetaskiwin County

Landowner Habitat Program

Privately owned lands in Alberta support a variety of natural habitats for wildlife including forest, wetlands, and native grasslands. These important habitats for wildlife continue to disappear as the need for more agricultural and municipal growth increases. Additionally, oil and gas development often lead to habitat loss or fragmentation. The Landowner Habitat Program (LHP) was initiated to help conserve key habitats and reduce habitat loss and fragmentation on privately owned land. The program provides incentives for landowners who are willing to sign a legally binding agreement to retain habitat for a term of five to 20 years; a condition

of the agreement is for landowners to provide reasonable public foot access. Participants in this program are acknowledged with a project sign and provided with *Use Respect – Ask First* signage to display along the perimeter of their property. ACA staff complete annual inspections to ensure landowners are complying with the requirements of their agreement. We currently manage 37 LHP agreements across the province, which conserves approximately 6,715 acres (2,717.4 ha) of important wildlife and fish habitat.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, landowners

Management Plan Development

ACA currently manages 411 sites, 387 conservation sites, and 24 fisheries access sites in Alberta. Of these, 38 new conservation sites were added in 2021/22 by completing three purchases, one eco-gift donation, and 34 title-sharing agreements with Alberta Fish & Game Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Nature Conservancy of Canada. To manage our conservation assets effectively,

ACA develops management plans for all of our sites. We place emphasis on developing detailed habitat management objectives that maintain the ecological integrity of each site while also providing recreational opportunities to the public. ACA works with our partners to develop management plans that are used as guiding documents for overall site management. These plans provide specific details regarding site features, objectives regarding enhancement or restoration, recreational and facility enhancements, guidelines, and other planned activities for the site. Management plans are reviewed by ACA and our partners as required, or on a term basis (e.g., after five or ten years), to ensure we are meeting our intended goals and objectives. In 2021/22, we developed 14 management plans.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Pheasants Forever – Calgary and Chinook Chapters



Project: Fisheries Access Site Management
Description: Stocking trout into Dollar Lakes
Photo: ACA, Dave Jackson

Project: Provincial Habitat Securement Program
Description: ACA staff evaluating shrub cover at Manyberries Creek Conservation Site
Photo: ACA, Tyler Johns



Provincial Habitat Securement Program

Alberta's population continues to grow but at a much slower pace than in 2020. It may be contributed to such factors as the COVID-19 pandemic and a slow but recovering economy. Despite these factors, habitat loss continues to be a threat to native habitat with steady demands for urban sprawl, agricultural conversion, and industrial activities. ACA's Provincial Habitat Securement Program conserves important wildlife and fish habitat through land purchases, land donations, and leases on Crown land. Securing habitat ensures these lands will be conserved in perpetuity to benefit our valued wildlife and fish resources, and to provide Alberta's outdoor enthusiasts with year-round, sustainable recreational opportunities. Twenty-eight priority focus areas help guide securement efforts and opportunities. Collaborative partnerships with conservation groups, industry, various companies, and conservation-minded private individuals allow us to maximize our conservation impact and the efficiency of our securement efforts. Together in 2021/22, we

completed three land acquisitions, including two purchases and one eco-gift donation, which conserved 807.5 acres (326.8 ha). These lands have an estimated land value of \$1,557,850. Management plans will be prepared in 2021/22 to collaboratively address roles and responsibilities between managing partners. Habitat Securement Funds were used for two additional acquisitions (Milk River Badlands and South Plain Lake – Expansion) in collaboration with two of our Corporate Partners in Conservation (Thor Resources Inc. and Suncor Energy).

AFGA shared title with ACA on 22 of their conservation sites. Additionally, AFGA, DUC, and NCC shared title with ACA on 12 conservation sites. The total acres involved in the title sharing among ACA, AFGA, DUC, and NCC is approximately 7,683 acres (3,109.2 ha).

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Side family

Recreational Opportunity Enhancement

ACA established the Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Project to improve opportunities for fishing and hunting, as well as other non-consumptive activities such as hiking, canoeing, or photography. The major focus of this project is to improve waterfowl hunter access to Crown waterbodies and improve upland and big game hunter access to private lands. In addition, the project will focus on initiatives that enhance access to major rivers and waterbodies such as the Bow and North Saskatchewan rivers for angling and other water-related recreational activities. Working with individual landowners has allowed us to improve hunter access to approximately 203,740 acres (82,454 ha) of private land across southern Alberta through a sign-in access system. Increasing access opportunities for hunters may provide Alberta Environment and Parks additional options to use hunters as a management tool when managing game species. Not only will increased opportunities encourage hunter and angler recruitment, but it will also help maintain quality outdoor experiences by distributing hunters and anglers across the landscape.

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, landowners, Lethbridge Fish & Game Association

Riparian Conservation Program

The ecological integrity and health of Alberta's rivers, streams, and surrounding landscapes are often negatively affected by ongoing human development. Riparian areas are complex ecosystems that provide important ecological functions and are critical to maintaining watershed health. Proper management of this sensitive habitat is essential to maintain water quality and habitat integrity. The primary goal of ACA's Riparian Conservation Program

is to protect and restore riparian habitat in priority watersheds through on-the-ground habitat restoration projects by engaging landowners, the public, and other stakeholders through community outreach and education activities. Our collaborative partnerships with landowners, industry, government, watershed groups, and other stakeholders are an integral component of project delivery. In 2021/22, we focused conservation efforts in the following priority watersheds: Beaverlodge, Heart, Raven, Owl and North Raven rivers; and Beaver, Clear, Dogpound, Todd, Sharples, and Five Mile creeks (including their associated tributaries). We delivered 14 enhancement projects using a variety of management tools, including implementing agreements

to conserve 184.6 acres (74.7 ha) of riparian and associated upland habitat: five off-site watering systems, four landowner agreements, three bioengineering projects, one erosion control project; and installing 10.2 km of wildlife-friendly fencing to protect important riparian habitat as part of new and existing agreements. We also monitored water quality and riparian health on three systems to help evaluate the effectiveness of riparian enhancements, supported landowners with riparian enhancement activities, and communicated our Riparian Conservation Program to various communities. Our efforts have contributed to improvements in riparian habitat health and have positively influenced the stewardship approach of many landowners and leaseholders.

Partnerships

Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Cenovus Energy Inc., County of Grande Prairie, Cows and Fish – Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Critical Mass, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Foothills Forage and Grazing Association, Give Back Contracting Ltd., Grey Wooded Forage Association, HUVAN Construction, landowners, Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance, Milk River Watershed Council Canada, Mountain View County, Oldman Watershed Council, Ovitiv Inc., Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, Sinopec Canada, Syncrude Canada Ltd., TC Energy Corporation, Tree Time Services Inc., Trout Unlimited Canada, West County Watershed Society, Wood PLC

Corporate Partners Program and Provincial Habitat Securement Program Transactions in 2021/22

Project Name	Securement Tool & Partners	Size (ac)	Special Features
Northeast			
Holden SW-27-050-16-W4M	A land purchase by ACA and AFGA.	183.0	This site is approximately 50 km northeast of Camrose and 70 km east of Edmonton in the central parkland. It is approximately 1.5 km from two DUC conservation sites (Macahonic and Casavant). It consists of grassland, shrubland, mixedwood forest, and several seasonal wetlands throughout the site. It also has approximately 20 ac of hayland. This site will provide excellent deer and waterfowl hunting opportunities. Wildlife in the area include moose, white-tailed and mule deer, coyote, upland game birds, and waterfowl.
South Plain Lake (Expansion) NW-18-053-11-W4M	A land purchase among ACA, AFGA, and Suncor Energy.	159.0	This site is located 120 km east of Sherwood Park. Habitat is dry mixedwood, shrubland, and ephemeral wetlands. This parcel of land expands an existing conservation site to 477 ac (193.0 ha), which is a designated pheasant release site. Wildlife found in the area include moose, white-tailed and mule deer, ruffed grouse, pheasant, and a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds.
Northwest			
East Reno SW-36-080-19-W5M, Pt. SE-36-080-19-W5M	A land purchase between ACA and AFGA.	240.2	This site is approximately 50 km southeast of Peace River and 20 km east of Nampa in the dry-central mixedwood. It is 9 km from Frank Lake Conservation Site and 12 km from Harmon Valley Conservation Site. It consists of regenerating mixedwood forest that was logged over 20 years ago. Wildlife in the area include moose, white-tailed and mule deer, elk, black bear, wolf, ruffed grouse, and barred and great grey owl.
East Reno (Expansion) NW-25-080-19-W5M	A land purchase between ACA and AFGA.	160.0	This site is approximately 50 km southeast of Peace River and 20 km east of Nampa in the dry-central mixedwood. It is adjacent to the East Reno Conservation Site, 9 km from Frank Lake Conservation Site and 12 km from Harmon Valley Conservation Site. It consists of mature mixedwood forest with a creek running through the site. There is a small 18-ac pasture adjacent to the county road. Wildlife in the area include moose, white-tailed and mule deer, elk, black bear, wolf, ruffed grouse, and barred and great grey owl.
South			
Milk River Badlands SE-03-002-06-W4M	A land purchase among ACA, AFGA, Thor Resources Inc., and Environment and Climate Change Canada.	159.0	This site is located 118 km south of the city of Medicine Hat and 6 km southeast of Escape Coulee Conservation Site. The Milk River Natural Area borders two sides of this property. Habitat is dry mixed grassland, shrubland, and badlands along the slopes of the Milk River. There are 17 "at risk" species of wildlife documented in the area that include greater sage grouse, ferruginous hawk, loggerhead shrike, Sprague's pipit, and short-horned lizard. Other species include elk, white-tailed and mule deer, and pronghorn.
TOTAL		878.2	



ACA Conservation Reports

The following is a list of final project reports published in 2021/22. These reports are available on our website. Annual Summary reports for all ongoing projects can also be found on our website.

Fisheries

Dowbush, L., G. McKen, and M. Ranger. 2022. Owl River riparian restoration and enhancement project: 2021 monitoring report. Technical Report produced by Alberta Conservation Association, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada. 21 pp + App.

Lebedynski, N. 2022. Walleye (*Sander vitreus*) and northern pike (*Esox lucius*) angler surveys on four central Alberta lakes, 2021. Data Report, produced by Alberta Conservation Association, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada. 6 pp + App.

Seward, S., and J. Blackburn. 2022. Conservation potential of fish passage barriers for native fish in the Narraway and Muskeg river watersheds. Data Report, produced by Alberta Conservation Association, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada. 6 pp + App.

Project: Conservation Site Management
Description: Collecting fence coordinates at Wood Lake Conservation Site
Photo: ACA, Diana Rung

Project: ACA Research Grants: Evaluating Bull Elk
Reproductive Success Using a Wild Pedigree Model
Description: PhD student Connor Meyer collecting
samples from a newly collared cow elk at Ya Ha Tinda
Photo: Mark Hebblewhite



Grants Program

Alberta's hunters and anglers contribute directly to conservation through levies on their hunting and fishing licences. The levy funds come to ACA, and one of the many things we do with that money is to support community and research efforts via our Grants Program.

ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants

This fund supports conservation activities that contribute to wildlife and fish population health and the health of their environments; and to the understanding, appreciation, and use of those environments. Projects that increase participation in, and awareness of, outdoor opportunities, while developing knowledge and respect for conservation, are also funded through this grant. The projects range from youth hunter, angler, and archery programs to local festivals to restoration and stewardship projects.

2021/22 Overview

- We received 112 applications, requesting just over \$1.46 million.
- We supported 79 projects with \$969,727 of funding.
- We leveraged an estimated \$3 for every \$1 spent by ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants.

ACA Research Grants

The ACA Research Grants fund high-quality research projects on wildlife, fish, and habitat that inform the effective management of wildlife and fish populations and habitat in Alberta. Topics range from developing environmental DNA assays for native westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout to testing the effects of recreational trails on rare and invasive plants.

2021/22 Overview

- We received 27 applications requesting \$712,460.
- We funded 14 research projects with a total of \$329,918.
- We leveraged an estimated \$3.5 for every \$1 spent by ACA Research Grants.

ACA Grants in Biodiversity

The ACA Grants in Biodiversity Program supports projects by master's and doctorate students from around the world who are studying the flora, fauna, and habitat of Alberta. Grants are given for two-year terms. The program is funded by ACA with a sponsorship from Syncrude Canada Ltd. (a \$250,000 commitment over five fiscal years [2019/20 to 2023/24]).

2021/22 Overview

- A total of \$211,000 of grants were distributed with individual grants ranging from \$2,140 to \$17,160.
- In all, 19 student projects were funded: 14 master's and five PhD candidates from the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, Université Laval, and McGill University.
- Invasion was a common theme amongst some of the projects funded. From parasites that do not quite kill to invasive sport fish to the Chinese mystery snail. Other funded projects include the effects of municipal wastewater on rainbow trout, aversive conditioning of urban coyotes, and the impact of wildfire on forest biodiversity.

ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Alberta

The ACA Chair was established through an endowment to the University of Alberta, providing educational initiatives to wildlife professionals. By addressing issues and problems relevant to Alberta's biological resources, the Chair, Dr. Mark Boyce, supports ACA's goals for long-term, sustainable wildlife and fish resources. A contribution to teaching is also an essential duty of the position. The ACA Chair is expected to contribute to the activities of the Department of Biological Sciences and to the university as a whole. Dr. Boyce's expertise is internationally recognized, and he has significantly enhanced ACA's efforts to conserve Alberta's wildlife and fish resources. For more information and for a list of publications, visit: apps.ualberta.ca/directory/person/boyce.

2021/22 Overview

- In 2021/22, Dr. Boyce and his students published 11 research papers in peer-reviewed journals. The research ranged from impacts of various grazing practices on carbon sequestration and carbon emissions, to the impact of predators on migratory prey species. In addition, Dr. Boyce continues to supervise students working on bighorn sheep, wolves, sandhill cranes, and martin.

ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants

Recipient	Project	Funding
Adaptable Outdoor Recreation Society (AdaptAble Outdoors)	Southern Alberta Adaptive Fishing - Fishing for All	\$2,880.00
Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society	Alberta Wildlife Corridors - A Guide to Maintaining, Developing, and Understanding Wildlife Moving Through Alberta's Landscape	\$15,000.00
Alberta Fish & Game Association	Increasing and Improving Habitat for Species at Risk in Alberta's Grassland Region through Promotion and Implementation of Best Management Practices	\$38,500.00
Alberta Fish & Game Association	Pronghorn Antelope Migration Corridor Enhancement	\$39,619.92
Alberta Fish & Game Association	Baird Conservation Site Wildlife-Friendly Fencing	\$9,089.32
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	Alberta Hunter Education Scholarship Program	\$25,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	Rewrite Hunter Education Manual	\$25,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	Outdoor Bound Mentored Hunt Program	\$7,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	AHEIA's Mentorship Workshop - Cloven-Hoofed Game	\$3,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	National Archery in the Schools Program	\$40,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	AHEIA's Mentorship Workshop - Waterfowl and Upland Game Birds	\$3,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	AHEIA's Outdoor Youth Seminar	\$6,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	AHEIA's Provincial Hunting Day Initiatives	\$20,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	Rifle Sight-In & Field Prep Seminar	\$3,000.00
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	AHEIA Teachers' Workshop	\$6,000.00
Alberta Invasive Species Council	Development and Promotion of EDDMapS Canada, a Nationally Available Tool for Enhanced Reporting of Invasive Species through an Integrated Smartphone App and Website	\$20,000.00
Alberta Invasive Species Council	Training to Use Biocontrol to Stop the Spread of Leafy Spurge in River Bottoms	\$10,126.24
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society - Cows and Fish	Implementing Responsible Recreation and Riparian Habitat Improvements for Westslope Cutthroat Trout	\$15,450.00
Alberta Watercourse Crossing Collaborative (AWC3)	Alberta Watercourse Crossing Collaborative (AWC3) Spring 2021 Roadway Watercourse Crossing Webinar Series and Capstone Technical Seminar	\$3,000.00
Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area	Wildlife-Friendly Fencing to Protect Pine Creek	\$10,000.00
Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area	Elk Trap Removal for Habitat Recovery	\$8,000.00
Athabasca Watershed Council	CABIN Upper Athabasca Collaborative	\$3,000.00

Recipient	Project	Funding
Beaverhill Bird Observatory	Wildlife Monitoring, Conservation and Public Engagement at Beaverhill Lake	\$21,250.00
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks No. 360 (Coronation Elks)	Kids Can Catch Coronation	\$700.00
Boreal Nature Network	Citizen Science Bat Monitoring Program & Community Maternal Roost Installation	\$4,625.00
Brooks and District Fish & Game Association	Tree Plant	\$4,000.00
Calgary Chapter Pheasants Forever Canada Society	Post-Secondary First Pheasant Mentor Hunt	\$5,000.00
Calgary Chapter Pheasants Forever Canada Society	Milk River Ridge Reservoir - Eastridge Uplands Reclamation	\$18,450.00
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Southern Alberta Chapter	Outdoor Education for Everyone: Getting Albertans outside to enjoy, value and use Alberta wilderness	\$20,000.00
Chinook Pheasants Forever	Ross Creek Conservation Site Food Plots Planting	\$4,950.00
Chinook Pheasants Forever	Sauder Reservoir Habitat Project	\$17,040.00
County of Grande Prairie	Kids Can Catch Event and School Fishing Opportunities	\$1,500.00
County of Two Hills No. 21	Jackfish Lake Restoration	\$21,800.00
County of Warner	Mitigation of Agricultural Effect on the Milk River, and the Milk River Ridge Reservoir	\$3,000.00
County of Wetaskiwin	Wetaskiwin/Leduc Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)	\$15,000.00
Ecole Francophone d'Airdrie	NASP Archery Education	\$5,000.00
Edmonton and Area Land Trust	Improving Native Habitat in the Beaverhills Biosphere Reserve	\$7,025.00
Ghost Watershed Alliance Society	Watershed Education, Literacy and Restoration Project	\$20,195.00
Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation	Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation Nature Camp 2021	\$6,750.00
H.A. Kostash School	H.A. Kostash Youth Mentorship Program	\$6,550.00
Hinton Family Centre	Kids Can Catch in Hinton	\$3,000.00
Innisfail Fish & Game Association	Kids Can Catch	\$1,500.00
Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Society	Enhancement of Fishing Opportunities and Activities at Klondike Park	\$4,850.00
Lacombe Fish & Game Association	Boulder Lake - Floating Dock and Casting Platforms	\$21,603.82

Recipient	Project	Funding
Lacombe Fish & Game Association	East Storm Water Pond Improvement Project	\$39,797.26
Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory Society	Avian Monitoring and Outreach Education Programs at Lesser Slave Lake	\$17,500.00
Métis Crossing Experience Company	Traditional Métis Smoked Tanned Animal Skin	\$3,000.00
Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance Society	Smoky Headwaters Initiative	\$6,719.95
Milk River Watershed Council Canada	From the Field - Virtual Field Trip Educational Series	\$10,000.00
Mountain View County	Riparian and Ecological Enhancement Program	\$25,000.00
Muriel Lake Basin Management Society	Surface Water Studies Phase 2	\$12,000.00
Narrow Lake Conservation Centre, Zone 4 and Zone 5 Fish & Game Associations	Narrow Lake Conservation Camps (NLYCC) - Sleeping Accommodations and Personal Protective Equipment	\$5,237.50
Narrow Lake Conservation Centre, Zone 4 and Zone 5 Fish & Game Associations	Narrow Lake Conservation Camps (NLYCC) - Training and Certification	\$5,950.00
Narrow Lake Conservation Centre, Zone 4 and Zone 5 Fish & Game Associations	Narrow Lake Conservation Camps (NLYCC) - Archery and Wildness Survival Training Equipment	\$1,050.00
Nature Alberta	Nature Kids Family Nature Nights and Nature Network	\$12,000.00
Nature Conservancy of Canada	Integrated Weed Management Across Alberta	\$10,000.00
NE Alberta Fish & Game Association	Fish Habitat Restoration in NE and Central Alberta Lakes	\$20,000.00
Northern Lights Fly Fishers/ Trout Unlimited Canada Edmonton Chapter	Dogpound Riparian Protection - Birchall Property	\$25,488.00
Northern Lights Fly Fishers/ Trout Unlimited Canada Edmonton Chapter	Education - Trout Food and Related Angling Techniques	\$4,725.00
Northern Lights Fly Fishers/ Trout Unlimited Canada Edmonton Chapter	Conserving and Restoring Arctic Grayling in the Upper Pembina River Watershed - Habitat Restoration Planning	\$17,429.00
Northern Lights Fly Fishers/ Trout Unlimited Canada Edmonton Chapter	Assess Walleye Population Stability (Vulnerable by Size-Class)	\$13,894.00
Oldman River Chapter/ Trout Unlimited Canada	Crowsnest River Whirling Disease Containment Effort	\$3,000.00
Partners in Habitat Development c/o Eastern Irrigation District	Partners in Habitat Development	\$10,000.00
Peace Wapiti Academy	PWA Wildlife Education	\$2,000.00
Red Deer County	Wildlife and Native Habitat Enhancement in Red Deer County via ALUS (2021)	\$40,000.00
Red Deer Fish & Game Association	Youth Pheasant Building Upgrades	\$3,500.00

Recipient	Project	Funding
Safe Drinking Water Foundation	Water Testing Kits for Aurora Middle School and Our Lady of Grace School to be Used on Field Trips	\$1,190.00
Sherwood Park Fish & Game Association	Purple Martin House Replacement Project	\$1,400.00
Sherwood Park Fish & Game Association	Ketchamoot Creek Facility Fenceline Update Project	\$2,813.00
Smoky Lake County	Pond Leveler Upgrades	\$2,376.80
Southern Alberta Sustainable Community Initiative (SASCI)	Recovery Strategies for Industrial Development on Native Grasslands in the Mixedgrass Natural Subregion - 2nd Approximation	\$9,460.00
Spruce Grove Fish & Game Association	Bird/Bat Box Project 2021-22	\$2,000.00
Strix Ecological Consulting	American Kestrels - Using Nestbox Technology to Increase Awareness and Promote Conservation	\$15,150.00
Town of Gibbons	Echo Glen Pond Enhancement	\$38,727.50
Trout Unlimited Canada	Tay River Bull Trout	\$12,665.00
Trout Unlimited Canada	Stream Signage Partnership Project	\$9,000.00
Western Ranchlands Corporation	Management of Overgrown Woodlots to Improve Wildlife Habitat	\$38,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Society Canada (WCS)	Alberta Bat Conservation Project	\$20,500.00
Yellowhead County	Kids Can Catch	\$1,700.00
TOTAL FUNDING: ACA CONSERVATION, COMMUNITY, AND EDUCATION GRANTS		\$969,727.31

ACA Research Grants

Recipient	Project	Funding
Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council	Development and Validation of Environmental DNA Assays for Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout and Non-Native Rainbow Trout and Brook Trout within the Blackfoot Territory for Citizen Science and Community-Based Monitoring	\$32,400.00
Concordia University of Edmonton	Comparison of Three Biological Solutions for Enhancing Perennial Grass Productivity and Soil Carbon Sequestration	\$18,135.00
University of Alberta	Evaluating Recall and Selection Bias in Activity Survey Apps Versus Traditional Surveys for Conservation and Economic Valuation from Recreation	\$36,000.00
University of Alberta	Sustaining Access and Social License for Hunting in a Mixed-Use Conservation Site: A Case Study in the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot PRA - Year 2	\$23,565.60
University of Alberta - Augustana	Post-Harvesting Biodiversity Recovery Curves for Boreal Forests	\$21,600.00
University of Calgary	Evaluating the Impact and Uptake Pathways of Municipal Wastewater Effluent on Benthic Macroinvertebrates in the Bow River Basin	\$30,555.00
University of Calgary	Indigenous Co-Led Reclamation Project	\$14,850.00
University of Lethbridge	Predicting Hazard from Chemical Pollutants Associated with Coal Mining to Threatened Alberta Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout	\$22,050.00
University of Lethbridge	Ecological Epidemiology of Emerging Ambystoma tigrinum Virus (ATV) in a Population of Tiger Salamanders in Southwestern Alberta	\$9,000.00
University of Lethbridge	Genomic Data to Inform Long-Toed Salamander Reintroduction	\$19,800.00
University of Lethbridge	Causes and Consequences of Eutrophication in the Twin Valley Reservoir	\$24,669.00
University of Lethbridge	Testing the Effects of Recreational Trails on Plant Communities, Rare Plants, and the Spread of Invasive Plant Species	\$20,317.50
University of Manitoba	Effects of Unpredictable Industrial Noise on Species at Risk and Nest Predators in Alberta	\$23,400.00
University of Montana	Evaluating Bull Elk Reproductive Success using a Wild Pedigree Model	\$33,576.30
TOTAL FUNDING: ACA RESEARCH GRANTS		\$329,918.40

2022 ACA Grants in Biodiversity Recipients

Syncrude Canada Ltd. continued to support the ACA Grants in Biodiversity Program with a \$250,000 commitment over five fiscal years (2019/20 to 2023/24).

Recipient	Institution	Supervisor(s)	Project Title
Carmen Allen (PhD)	University of Alberta	Toby Spribille	The rise and fall of jelly fungi: exploring a microecosystem of aspen branches in boreal Alberta
Erin Casper (M.Sc.)	University of Calgary	Mathieu Pruvot	Development of dynamic indicators of resilience in wild rodent <i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>
Jéssica Chaves Cardoso (PhD)	University of Alberta	Charles Nock	Boreal mixedwood resilience to drought across a gradient in moisture availability
Taylor Hart (M.Sc.)	University of Alberta	Erin Bayne	A critical evaluation of Black-throated Green Warbler (<i>Setophaga virens</i>) response to human disturbance in space and time
Tanisha Henry (M.Sc.)	University of Calgary	Kathreen Ruckstuhl	Is there an association between male Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (<i>Ovis canadensis</i>) horn morphology and their reproductive success?
Liam Horne (M.Sc.)	University of Alberta	Stan Boutin	Using "bear's-eye view" video data to estimate black bear (<i>Ursus americanus</i>) kill rates of boreal caribou calves (<i>Rangifer tarandus caribou</i>) and the resulting effect on caribou population dynamics
Chantelle Klaczek (M.Sc.)	University of Alberta	Greg Goss & Chris Glover	Assessing the effects of coal mine effluent contaminants on native fish and invertebrate species of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed, Alberta, Canada
Natalie LaForest (M.Sc.)	University of Alberta	Boyd Mori	Identifying weed seed predation by ground beetles (Coleoptera: Carabidae) in central Alberta agroecosystems
Connor Meyer (PhD)	University of Montana	Mark Hebblewhite	Using remote cameras to estimate wolf density and predation risk in Western Alberta
Olivia Meyers (M.Sc.)	University of Calgary	Mathieu Pruvot	Giant liver fluke spatio-temporal distribution in Elk Island National Park
Tobyn Neame (M.Sc.)	University of Calgary	Paul Galpern	Determining the effects of herbicide application on feeding guilds of ground beetles (Coleoptera: Carabidae) for conservation biological control in Alberta
Rosanise Odell (M.Sc.)	University of Alberta	Charles Nock	Assessment of tree mortality in forest island remnants and reference stands following wildfire and forest harvest using dendrochronological methods
Olivia Rahn (M.Sc.)	McGill University	Anna Hargreaves	Does habitat availability decline towards the range edge of <i>Rhinanthus minor</i> ?
Aldo Rios Martinez (PhD)	University of Alberta	Boyd Mori	Characterization of the arthropod community and ground beetle diet in canola agroecosystems in central Alberta

Report A Poacher and Livestock Compensation Program

Report A Poacher

The Report A Poacher (RAP) Program encourages all Albertans—not just hunters and anglers—to help protect our wildlife, fish, and natural habitats. In addition to providing education about poaching, perhaps the most important RAP program tool is the toll-free phone number: 1-800-642-3800. It allows people to report suspected illegal activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Alberta Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers often rely on information from these calls; individuals and communities are RAP’s eyes and ears, and the important information they provide regularly leads to investigations and convictions.

RAP is delivered jointly by ACA and Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. ACA is responsible for program promotion and education activities to enhance public awareness and understanding of poaching, and for the administration of program funds. Alberta Justice and Solicitor General retains sole responsibility for liaising with informants, investigating reports, and enforcing laws.

2021/22 Overview

- 15,302 total calls were received from the public to the RAP toll-free hotline.
- 3,413 calls about were made regarding suspected illegal activity—reporting fish and wildlife resource crimes.
- 350 charges were laid.
- \$57,800 in rewards were paid to individuals whose call and information led to charges.

Livestock Compensation Program

For producers whose livestock may have been killed or injured because of predators (i.e., eagles, cougars, bears, and wolves) or careless discharge of a firearm, ACA provides relief through the Wildlife Predator Compensation and Shot Livestock Compensation programs. Like RAP, we are responsible for program promotion and compensation fund management, while Alberta Justice and Solicitor General is responsible for incident investigations and determining payouts.

Predator Compensation 2021/22

Wildlife Predator	Claims	Compensation (\$)
Bear & Black Bear	43	38,233
Cougar	31	17,162
Eagle	3	1,358
Grizzly Bear	115	159,559
Wolf	114	138,415
TOTAL	306	354,727

Shot Livestock Compensation 2021/22

Wildlife Predator	Claims	Compensation (\$)
TOTAL	11	26,776

Project: MULTISAR South Saskatchewan
Description: ACA staff Brad Downey assessing a fish barrier
Photo: ACA, Mike Verhage

Auditor's Report



June 11, 2022
Edmonton, Alberta

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Alberta Conservation Association

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summarized statement of financial position as at March 31, 2022, and the summary statement of operations are derived from the audited financial statements of Alberta Conservation Association for the year ended March 31, 2022. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated June 11, 2022.

In our opinion, the accompanying summarized financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements, on the basis described in Note 1. However, the summary financial statements are subject to conditions equivalent to those of the audited financial statements of the Alberta Conservation Association for the year ended March 31, 2022, upon which we issued a qualified audit opinion.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by *Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations*. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditors report thereon, therefore is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditors report thereon.

The Audited Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon

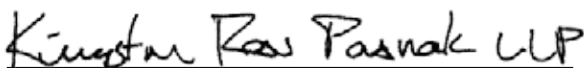
We expressed a qualified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated June 11, 2022. The basis for our qualified opinion was that, in common with many charitable organizations, the Association derives some of its revenue from donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these revenues was limited to the amount recorded in the records of the Association and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to contributions, excess of revenue over expenses, current assets and net assets.

Responsibilities of Management for the Summary Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the summary financial statements on the basis described in Note 1.

Auditor's Responsibilities

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standards (CAS 810), *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.



Kingston Ross Parnak LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants

ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
Summarized Statement of Operations
Year Ended March 31, 2022

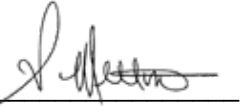
	2022	2021
REVENUE		
Levy, fees and assessments	\$ 14,440,401	\$ 15,025,013
Partner contributions	2,557,709	1,588,976
Miscellaneous	398,683	323,632
Donations	37,264	15,484
Interest income	-	572
	17,434,057	16,953,677
EXPENDITURES		
Salaries and benefits	7,720,635	6,993,200
Materials and supplies	1,904,085	2,029,984
Contracted services	1,696,039	1,257,399
Grants	1,635,018	1,547,053
Rentals	554,087	439,413
Landowner agreements	389,240	319,097
Repairs and maintenance	350,967	288,433
Amortization	292,115	245,294
Office	251,397	318,941
Insurance	227,432	184,880
Fuel and lubricants	212,412	142,959
Advertising	202,607	257,582
Telephone and communications	160,784	153,749
Travel	129,932	40,295
Utilities	110,247	93,168
Freight and postage	76,604	65,983
Fees, licenses and permits	76,087	26,175
Bank charges and interest	53,411	41,893
Training and membership	39,496	24,808
Hosting and conferences	7,973	5,092
Bad debts	-	21,633
Interest on loans	-	520
	16,090,568	14,497,551
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES FROM OPERATIONS	1,343,489	2,456,126
OTHER REVENUES (EXPENDITURES)		
Investment income	415,083	300,007
Gain on sale of investments	107,038	16,914
Unrealized (loss) gain on marketable securities	(21,296)	912,391
Gain (loss) on disposal of property and equipment	(69,417)	33,358
Large grant expense	(551,237)	(279,000)
	(119,829)	983,670
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	\$ 1,223,660	\$ 3,439,796

ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
Summarized Statement of Financial Position
March 31, 2022

	2022	2021
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 3,604,137	\$ 3,348,313
Short term investments	8,314	8,821
Accounts receivable	309,543	474,353
Inventory	-	632
Goods and Services Tax recoverable	73,878	55,413
Prepaid expenses	89,604	116,508
	4,085,476	4,004,040
LONG TERM INVESTMENTS	7,115,204	6,601,268
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	41,421,965	34,931,472
FILM COLLECTION	1,549,577	1,549,577
	\$ 54,172,222	\$ 47,086,357
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,892,009	\$ 1,893,133
Source deductions payable	33,962	85,310
Deferred contributions	3,538,260	3,635,030
Deposits	6,659	37,888
	5,470,890	5,651,361
NET ASSETS		
Invested in property and equipment	42,971,542	36,481,049
Internally restricted	603,993	582,675
Unrestricted	5,125,797	4,371,272
	48,701,332	41,434,996
	\$ 54,172,222	\$ 47,086,357

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

 Director

 Director

BASIS OF PRESENTATION

The summary financial statements are derived from the audited financial statements, prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, as at March 31, 2022 and for the year then ended. The preparation of these summary financial statements requires management to determine the information that needs to be reflected in them so that they are consistent in all material respects with, or represent a fair summary of, the audited financial statements. Management prepared these summary financial statements using the following criteria:

- the summary financial statements include a statement for each statement included in the audited financial statements;
- information in the summary financial statements agrees with the related information in the audited financial statements;
- major subtotals, totals and comparative information from the audited financial statements are included; and
- the summary financial statements contain the information from the audited financial statements dealing with matters having a pervasive or otherwise significant effect on the summarized financial statements.

The audited financial statements of Alberta Conservation Association are available upon request by contacting the Association.

Financial Highlights

Summarized Financial Statements

In 2021/22, ACA received \$14,440,401 in levy revenue from hunting and angling licences, representing a decrease of \$584,612 from the previous year. Residential fishing licences decreased over the previous year by approximately 45,000, decreasing levy revenue by approximately \$830,000. Non-resident licences in hunting and angling increased over the previous year by approximately \$300,000. Although levy revenue was lower compared to the 2020/21 fiscal, levies were about \$1.1 million higher than in years prior to 2020/21.

Despite the continued challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021/22, our staff were able to complete a wide range of projects and provide substantial leverage to the levy funds we received. Together, our Wildlife, Fisheries, Land Management, Communications, Grants, Predator Compensation, Shot Livestock, and RAP Programs had expenditures totalling \$13,175,116, plus an additional \$6,042,676 in land purchases using partner funds and donations (for accounting purposes, these funds are recorded as assets, not direct operational expenditures). The \$6,042,676 in land purchases/donations includes \$5,636,820 related to a portion of lands transferred to ACA from AFGA. Total expenditures for the year (including land purchases and donations) were \$19,217,792, resulting in approximately 133.1% of the levy value collected being directly invested back into conserving Alberta's resources.

ACA received approximately \$9,036,332 in non-levy revenue (including \$6,042,676 in land donations and funds for land purchase), representing 38.5% of total revenue. These funds came from various donors, including individuals, corporations, granting foundations, the federal

government, and other conservation organizations. The total revenue was \$23,476,733, which means ACA was able to leverage levy dollars an additional 62.6% for conservation activities. This does not include increased dollar leveraging that has occurred because of grants provided to third-party conservation organizations.

Expenditures by Program

Often stakeholders want to determine what funds are being directed toward their passion. When examining the Expenditures by Program, the numbers shown are somewhat arbitrary and do not necessarily represent all projects that may relate to a particular program area. For instance, fisheries access sites, which are directly related to increasing angling opportunities, are administered, and budgeted for under our Land Management Program instead of the Fisheries Program. Granting is shown separately even though it relates to all four resource areas.

Administration costs (5.2% of expenditures) continue to be well below the federal guideline for charitable organizations and includes areas such as regional building operations and corporate administration.

2021/22 ended in an unbudgeted operational surplus of \$1,343,489 (revenues minus expenses). ACA had capital expenditures totalling \$1,392,021 in the fiscal, these capital expenditures used the cash from the operational surplus and included \$828,682 of funds used for land purchases through the Habitat Securement Fund (HSF) and \$563,339 of funds used to purchase vehicles, boats, and other capital equipment. An additional \$103,993 has been restricted for the Habitat Securement Fund for future securement activities in the upcoming fiscal year, as well as \$500,000 has been internally restricted in support of the CWD Vaccine Research Fund approved by

the Board of Directors. The addition of realized and unrealized losses and gain from investments, investment income, transfer of land assets to a partner and exchange loss resulted in an accounting surplus of \$1,223,660.

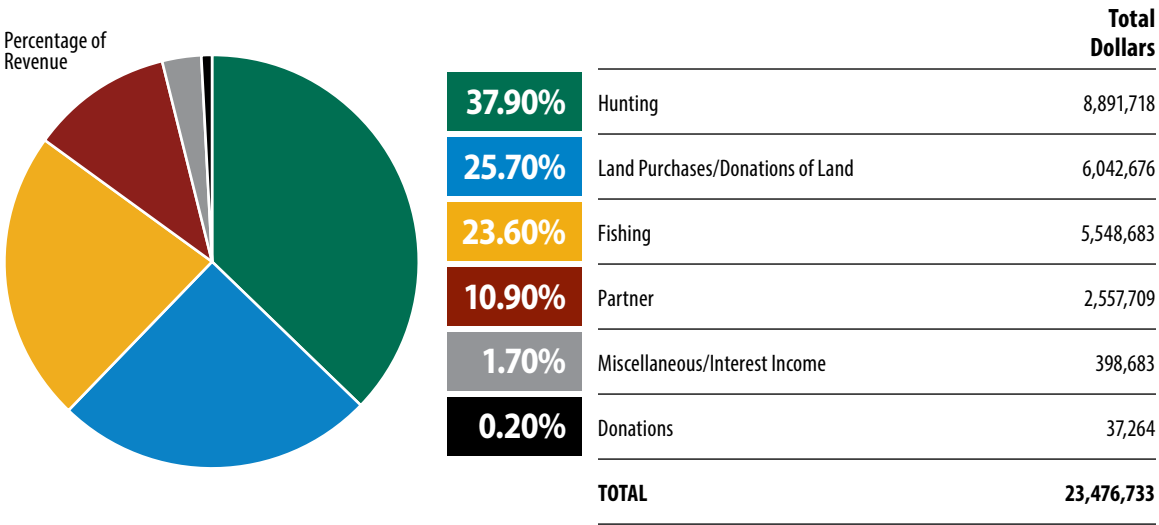
Revenue by Source

Approximately 38.5% of ACA's total revenue was generated from non-levy sources (\$9,036,332). The increase from the previous year is due to higher land donations and land purchases with partner funds. Miscellaneous and interest income are made up of a variety of revenue sources; these include reimbursement by AEP for Predator Compensation, raffle ticket sales for various ACA events, and registration for Waterfowl Warmup and Taber Pheasant Festival. Interest income is a result of the bank balances and is directly available for operating activities. Land donations and purchases added approximately 8,642 acres to ACA's conserved lands, for future generations to use, value, and enjoy.

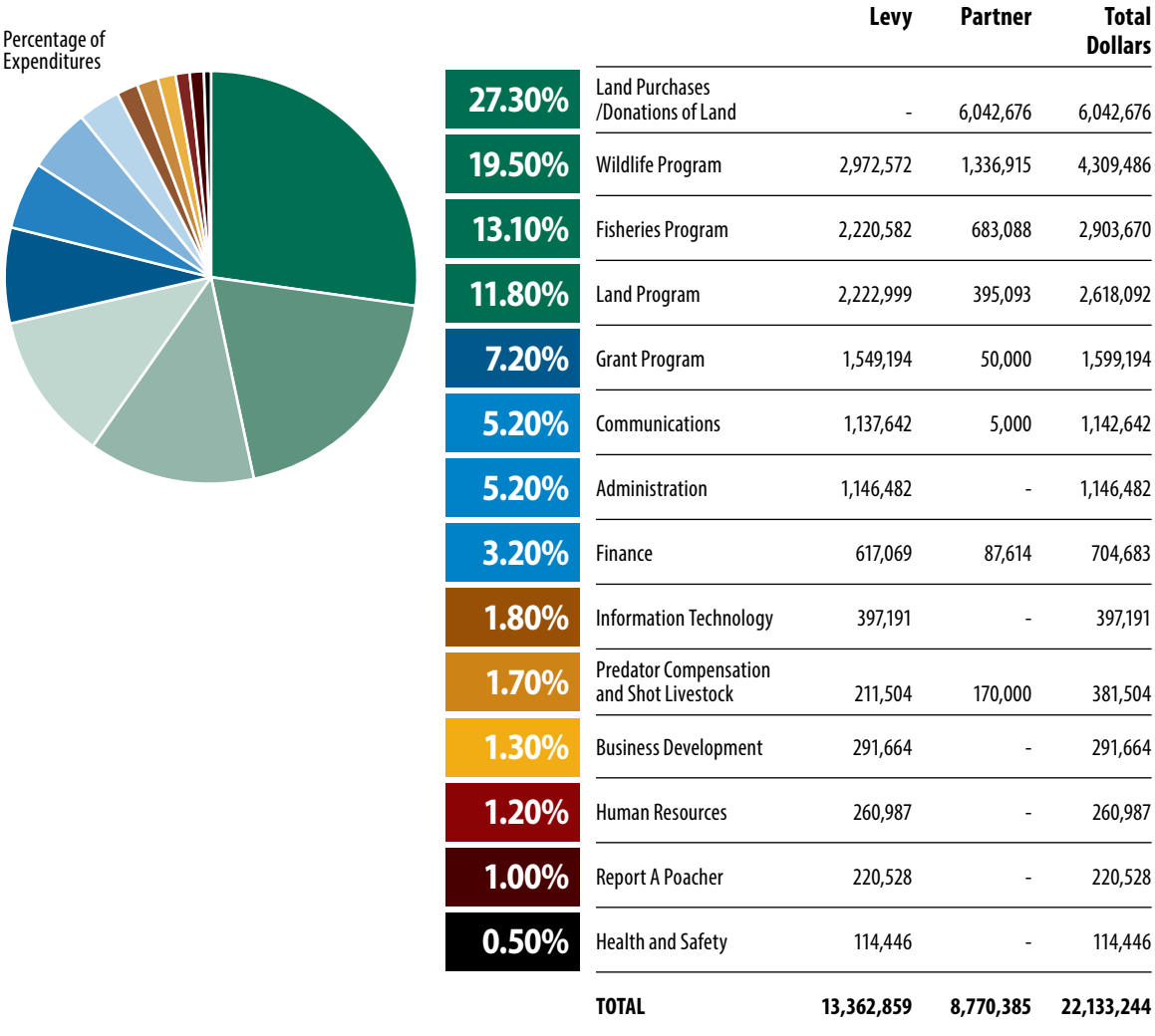
2021/22 Overview

- Total revenue was \$23,476,733.
- We received \$14,440,401 from levies on hunting and angling licences.
- We received \$9,036,332 in non-levy revenue; \$5,636,820 is related to the land transfer completed between AFGA and ACA in the fiscal for a portion of the Wildlife Trust Fund Conservation Lands.
- We applied 133.1% of levy value directly toward the conservation of Alberta's wildlife, fish, and habitats.
- Administration costs consisted of 5.2% of total expenditures.
- The current year's operational surplus is \$1,343,489, which reflects increases in partner revenues and continued expenditure management. The operational surplus was used to purchase land in the fiscal in the amount of \$828,682 (HSF) as well as other capital expenditures totalling \$563,339.

Revenue by Source



Expenditures by Program



Corporate Partners in Conservation



Alberta Conservation Association wishes to thank our Corporate Partners in Conservation who have provided multi-year financial contributions in support of our conservation programs and projects. Together we are conserving Alberta's natural heritage for generations to come.

Abacus Datagraphics Ltd.	Lethbridge County
AltaLink	MacFarlane Pheasants Inc.
Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd.	Martin Motor Sports
Backroad Mapbooks	Matrix Solutions Inc.
Beretta/Benelli/Tikka/Sako	McKay Roughrider Resources
Black Box Customs	Mercer Peace River Pulp Ltd.
Cabela's Canada	Mountain View County
Can West Legacy Inc.	Municipal District of Greenview
Canadian Cattlemen's Association	Northern Sunrise County
Canadian Natural Resources Limited	Nutrien
Canadian Tire – Cochrane	Ovintiv
Capital Power	Parkland County
CCI Inc.	Saddle Hills County
City of Beaumont	Shell Canada Limited
City of Fort Saskatchewan	Southern Alberta Bowhunters Association
City of Lacombe	St. Mary River Irrigation District
City of Medicine Hat	Suncor Energy
Clear Hills County	Syncrude Canada Ltd.
CN Rail	SysGen Solutions Group Ltd.
ConocoPhillips Canada Resources Corp.	Taber Irrigation District
Cool As A Moose / Big Bear Trading Company	TeraGo Networks
County of Cardston	Thompson-Pallister Bait Company Ltd.
County of Grande Prairie No. 1	Thor Resources Inc.
County of Northern Lights	Thorhild County
County of Warner	Town of Cochrane
Cycle Works Motorsports	Town of High River
Dentons Canada LLP	Town of Morinville
Dow Chemical Canada	Town of Taber
Edmonton Trout Fishing Club	Toyota on the Trail
EQUUS	TransAlta
Foster Park Brokers Inc.	Tree Time Services
Give Back Contracting	Vortex Canada
Haul-All Equipment Ltd.	West Fraser Mills Ltd.
Heritage Inn Hotel & Convention Centre (Taber)	Wolf Midstream
High Caliber Products	Xplornet Enterprise Solutions
Holiday Inn Calgary MacLeod Trail South	Yeti Roughrider Rentals Ltd.
HUVAN Construction	
Inter Pipeline Ltd.	
Korth Group	



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