

**Alberta Conservation Association  
2023/24 Project Summary Report**

**Project Name:** Conservation Site Management

**Land Management Program Manager:** Robert Anderson

**Project Leader:** Mandy Couve

**Project Coordinators:** Tyler Johns, Dan Sturgess, Taylor Dickson, and Erin VanderMarel

**Primary ACA Staff on Project:** Meagan Butler, Mandy Couve, Taylor Dickson, Stefanie Fenson, Marco Fontana, Jeff Forsyth, John Hallett, Dave Jackson, Tyler Johns, Ed Kolodychuk, Garret McKen, Stephen Nadworny, Terri Perron, Diana Rung, Roy Schmelzeisen, Dan Sturgess, Clayton Temple, Mike Uchikura, and Erin VanderMarel

**Partnerships**

Alberta Fish & Game Association

Alberta Fish & Game Association Minister's  
Special Licence Program

Bow River Irrigation District

Brooks and District Fish & Game  
Association

County of Newell

County of Warner

Cows and Fish

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Eastern Irrigation District

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Government of Alberta

Lethbridge County

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Neighbouring landowners

Pheasants Forever – Calgary and Chinook  
Chapters

Project Forest

Red Deer County

Tree Canada

Trout Unlimited Canada

Volunteer stewards

## **Key Findings**

- Completed annual inspections on 218 conservation sites and 11 conservation easements.
- Completed routine maintenance activities on 44 sites. This included managing beaver activities, habitat and invasive vegetation, and maintaining nesting structures, fences, and signs.
- Installed new project signs on 15 conservation sites.
- Enhanced habitat on 63 conservation sites, including planting 185,930 trees and shrubs, restoring 78.5 acres to native grass species, planting 16 acres of food plots for upland game birds, removing 6,545 m of barbed wire fence, and installing 14,460 m of wildlife-friendly fencing.
- Completed baseline inventories, surveys, and other assessments on 18 conservation sites.
- Improved facilities for public foot access on 16 conservation sites by installing pedestrian gates, maintaining trails, footbridges and parking areas, and restricting vehicle trespass with barriers.
- Received funding from the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program for administrative expenses and endowments for three conservation sites; received funding from the Alberta Fish & Game Association's Minister's Special Licence Program for wildlife habitat enhancement on four sites.

## **Details**

Alberta Conservation Association's (ACA) Conservation Site Management (CSM) Project manages and maintains over 218,900 acres of titled and Crown land in Alberta, in collaboration with the Government of Alberta and other conservation partners. CSM Project activities are guided by site-specific management plans and an annual project description to complete inspections, maintenance, habitat enhancement, restoration activities, and provide sustainable recreational opportunities, specifically for anglers and hunters. ACA staff and volunteer stewards complete field inspections on conservation sites throughout the province, assessing habitat condition and contractor compliance, identifying maintenance issues, enhancement

opportunities, and other information regarding site use. ACA offers livestock grazing and haying opportunities to producers on certain conservation sites to simulate natural disturbance and promote healthy forage growth.

In 2023/24, we completed inspections on 218 conservation sites and 11 conservation easements and completed routine maintenance on 44 sites, including control of invasive vegetation and repairing fences. Recreational enhancement activities were completed at 16 sites, including constructing pedestrian gates and installing barriers to restrict vehicle trespass. We installed new project signs on 15 conservation sites and replaced project signs on six sites.

We completed habitat enhancement activities on 63 conservation sites. ACA partnered with Project Forest to restore natural biodiversity to former cropland on three sites, planting 106,560 native trees and reseeded 22.5 acres to native grass. We also received funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund to reseed 56 acres of former cropland to native grass. ACA partnered with Tree Canada, planting 69,300 white spruce into a former pasture and planting an ecobuffer with support from the Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA) Minister's Special Licence (MSL) Grant. Volunteers from the Chinook Chapter of Pheasants Forever and Brooks Fish & Game Club planted 8,700 shrubs on two sites. Wildlife movement was enhanced through removal of 6,545 m of barbed wire fencing on eight sites and installation of wildlife friendly fences on seven sites. This was supported by funding received from the AFGA MSL Grant. Volunteers from AFGA installed 11,800 m of wildlife friendly fencing on Manyberries Creek Conservation Site. We managed licence agreements for haying on 26 sites (3,023 acres) and grazing on seven sites (3,839 acres). Other habitat enhancement activities included removal of buildings, structures, and debris from 14 sites.

Our success in managing and enhancing conservation sites is achieved through a collaborative effort with a growing number of partners and volunteers throughout Alberta.

## Photos



Photo 1. Brooks Aqueduct Conservation Site tree planting. Photo: M. Jokinen



Photo 2. Manyberries Creek Conservation Site wildlife friendly fencing. Photo: T. Johns





Photo 3. Leavitt Conservation Site songbird surveys. Photo: E. VanderMarel



Photo 4. Leavitt Conservation Site ecobuffer tree planting. Photo: M. Couve





Photo 5. North Raven River at Stainbrook Springs Conservation Site. Photo: H. Strydhorst



Photo 6. Packer Conservation Site project sign. Photo: G. McKen





Photo 7. Sunset at Bruce Conservation Site. Photo: G. McKen



Photo 8. Flatbush 5 Conservation Site barrier to ATV access. Photo: D. Sturgess





Photo 9. Cutline on East South Heart Conservation Site. Photo: A. Gamble



Photo 10. Tiny mushrooms on East South Heart Conservation Site. Photo: A. Gamble





Photo 11. Swan Lake Conservation Site. Photo: T. Dickson



Photo 12. Wildfire recovery at East Reno Conservation Site. Photo: A. Gamble