

The Landowner Habitat Program (LHP)

Project Evaluation 2000

By

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Executive Summary

In response to a continued loss of wildlife habitat through agricultural intensification, oil and gas exploration and development and urbanization the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division introduced a habitat retention initiative on private land in the County of Red Deer. The three-year pilot project began in 1978 and was eventually extended until 1983. Following the County of Red Deer program a three-year Landowner Habitat Program (LHP) was initiated in 1986 for the Eastern Irrigation District, Bow River Irrigation District, County of Red Deer and the County of Minburn. The LHP had a goal of maintaining or improving 77,050 acres of wildlife habitat in the targeted areas of Alberta. Habitat maintenance and improvement was achieved through short-term lease agreements of five to twenty-five years, where participating landowners were paid an annual incentive or a five-year payment. The LHP program was evaluated in 1990 and 1994 with regards to the effectiveness of short-term leases for long-term or perpetual habitat retention.

In 1997, the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO) took over administration of the LHP program. In 2000, the ACA completed an evaluation of LHP agreements with respect to agreement compliance and overall objectives of the LHP. A total of 278 agreements were inspected for compliance and success in meeting objectives. Landowners participating in the LHP program and other similar ACA habitat retention initiatives were mailed a questionnaire regarding attitudes concerning wildlife habitat, their LHP agreements and conservation easements. Ninety-nine landowners responded to the questionnaire.

With information from the 2000 evaluation and previous evaluations completed on the LHP, recommendations on the effectiveness of short-term leases for habitat retention are made. Short-term leases do not provide significant long-term habitat retention benefits and should not be used as a long-term habitat retention tool.

Acknowledgements

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The majority of agricultural land exists within the settled area (White Area) of Alberta. Intensive agricultural development, oil and gas exploration and extraction, and urbanization have all contributed to the loss of native habitat and alteration of natural ecosystems within the White Area. The cumulative effects of this development on the landscape have led to serious concerns regarding the viability of many of Alberta's wildlife species. In response to these concerns, the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division initiated a habitat retention project in 1978 (Lees 1980). This first program, the Red Deer County Program, was initially to run until 1981; however, the program was extended until 1983. The Red Deer County Program was structured to use and evaluate various habitat retention tools and methods, including payments for land-use agreements, recognition payments, tax incentives and capital expenditures for fencing and habitat enhancement projects.

Following the implementation of the Red Deer County Program in 1983, Ewaschuk and Westworth (1983) completed a detailed evaluation of the program. From the evaluation, the strengths and limitations of the initial program were identified and recommendations were made for future habitat retention programs in Alberta. In 1986, the Alberta Fish and Wildlife initiated the Landowner Habitat Program (LHP) in the County of Red Deer, the County of Minburn, and the Eastern and Bow River Irrigation Districts (Figure 1). These areas were chosen due to the large amount of native habitat already altered, and the continued threat of habitat loss through development. The LHP ran from 1986 to 1989; however, due to the length of the initial agreements, many currently remain in effect.

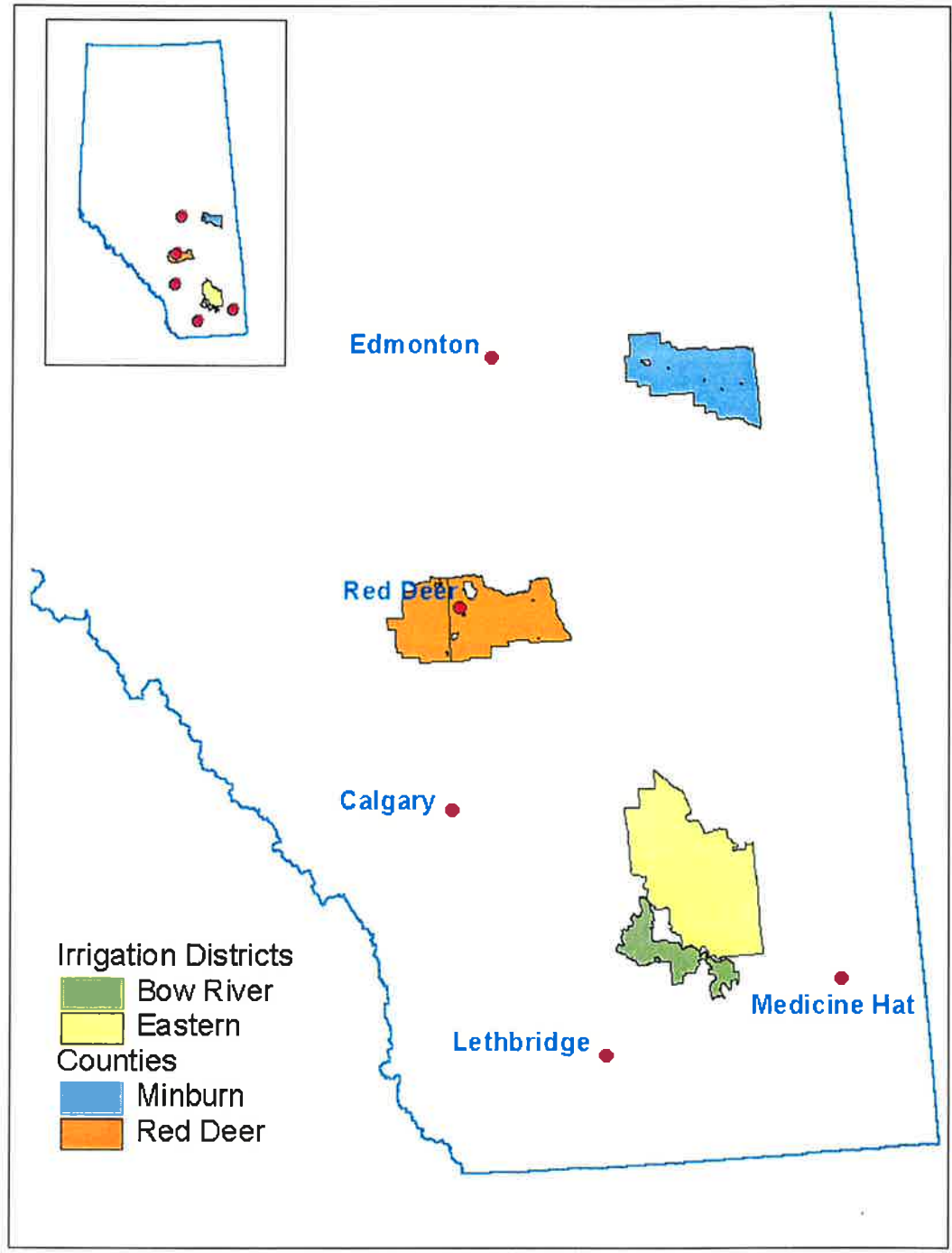


Figure 1. Landowner Habitat Project study area; 1986-2000.

In 1987, Alberta Fish and Wildlife identified specific objectives and goals for LHP. They were:

- a) to encourage landowners to retain and enhance habitat on privately held lands in the white area of the province
- b) to test various landowner incentive mechanisms for habitat enhancement and conservation on private lands in Alberta
- c) to encourage a cooperative working relationship with landowners and promote land use practices that benefit both agriculture and wildlife
- d) to enhance wildlife production and provide for increased recreational opportunity in the settled area for the benefit of all Albertans.

The goals for the LHP listed the following number of acres to be improved or maintained in each region were:

a)	County of Minburn (Northeast)	28,500
b)	County of Red Deer (Parkland)	23,500
c)	Eastern and Bow River ID (South)	<u>25,000</u>
	Total	77,050

The rationale for number acres to be improved or maintained through the LHP can be found in Appendix I, Alberta Fish and Wildlife (1987).

To meet the goals and objectives of the LHP, many of the previous recommendations (Ewaschuk and Westworth 1983) were implemented as guidelines for the development of a variety of retention agreements. Financial incentives were made available for field coordinators to offer interested landowners. These included habitat rental, development/enhancement, management, restoration and payments for program recognition/promotion, all of which were intended to promote habitat retention. Habitat retention payments were based on current agricultural land rental rates as listed annually by Alberta Agriculture, Custom Rate Survey. Retention payments were set to a maximum of 80% of the annual Custom Rental Rate, so that the LHP would not influence

the agricultural lease rates for an area. Agreements signed between the private landowner and the Crown, included land-use restrictions, enhancements and allowable use. Early termination penalties and repayment amounts were outlined in each agreement, in the event terms of the agreements were not honored.

The ongoing LHP incentives were paid annually from the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund, Buck for Wildlife program, and were managed by Alberta Fish and Wildlife employees in each region. Following the completion of the initial three-year LHP implementation, Brusnyk et al. (1990) completed another evaluation. In 1994, Rostron (1994) completed an evaluation of five different private habitat retention programs in Alberta, including the LHP. These three evaluations, Ewaschuk and Westworth (1983), Brusnyk et al.(1990) and Rostron (1994), provide detailed evaluations of the LHP with regards to the program structure, agreement type and summaries of signed agreements. However, these three evaluations did not address whether the agreements were meeting the individual objectives that were outlined in each agreement or the overall objectives of the LHP.

In 1997, the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund was privatized and the administration and program delivery of the Trust Fund became the responsibility of the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO). Since April 1997, the ACA has administered the LHP and continued the payments for ongoing agreements. The ACA allocated funding in 2000/01 to evaluate the effectiveness of LHP program in meeting the objectives of individual agreements and the program as a whole. The information obtained from this project was used in conjunction with the three previous evaluations to determine the effectiveness of short-term habitat leases for ACA habitat retention programs.

2.0 METHODS

To assess whether the objectives for each agreement was met, site inspections were conducted from May 15 to October 1, 2000 on all properties included in the original LHP. The site inspections identified the degree of compliance and whether the objectives and land-use activities identified in each agreement were met or not. Land locations where agreements had expired or been terminated were also inspected. Although landowners were under no obligation to continue with the agreed upon land-use activities, expired and terminated agreements were also inspected for compliance with pre-existing LHP conditions. A copy of the inspection form used for the LHP evaluation is found in Appendix I. When possible, data were analyzed statistically using Chi-square tests.

Conservation easements became legislated in Alberta in 1996, as an amendment in the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that can be used to protect and preserve the natural features of land. As a component of the 2000 LHP Program Evaluation, landowners that are presently involved or with expired habitat retention agreements were contacted regarding conservation easements. Contact with the landowners was made through a mail out survey, which also included a fact sheet on conservation easements. A copy of the survey documents is found in Appendix II. The survey questionnaire in Appendix II also contains the tabulated results for each relevant question. If landowners indicated they had an interest in conservation easements, additional contact was made through a personal visit, phone call or letter. Landowners that expressed sincere interest in conservation easements were supplied with a copy of the Conservation Easement Guide for Alberta, by Arlene Kwasniak (1997). Landowner survey questionnaires were sent to landowners in December 2000, and those landowners that responded were offered a copy of The Federation of Alberta Naturalists Field Guide to Alberta Birds, (McGillivray and Semenchuk 1998).

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Site Inspections

Site inspections were conducted for land covered by 278 different agreements in the three LHP areas (Table 1). The numbers differ from the summaries provided by both Brusnyk et al. (1990) and Rostron (1994) because the total number of agreements and acres involved in the LHP is different for each evaluation. In this report, the agreement numbers and acreage reflects only agreements for lands that were visited for site inspections. Therefore summary information differs from that produced by Brusnyk et al. (1990) and Rostron (1994).

Table 1. Total number of LHP agreements and acres involved in each program area; 1986-1989.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Agree.</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Avg. Size Acres</u>	<u>Size Low</u>	<u>Size High</u>
EID/BRID	58	4,602	79.34	5	420
Red Deer	140	21,635	136.93	9	1012
Minburn	80	12,437	153.54	21	626
Overall	278	38,674	139.12	5	1012

3.1.1 Compliance

Compliance among ongoing agreements was highest in the Southern Region, where 100% of ongoing agreements were in compliance with the LHP conditions (Table 2). Compliance in the Parkland Region and Northeast Region was 86% and 87%, respectively. Provincially, compliance was at 88% for ongoing LHP agreements. It should be noted that many of the ongoing agreements have agricultural restrictions that could not be evaluated for compliance through a single site inspection. Stocking rates

and on/off dates were not determined through the site visits and monitoring compliance of stocking rates and dates would require a more detailed reporting system.

Table 2. Compliance with LHP agreement conditions for ongoing, expired and terminated agreements.

Location	Ongoing		Status				Sold to Crown
	Total	%	Expired		Terminated		
North East							
Compliance-Yes	40	87	10	83	5	31	6
Compliance- No	6	13	2	17	11	69	0
Parkland							
Compliance-Yes	80	86	19	73	5	28	3
Compliance- No	13	14	7	27	13	72	0
South							
Compliance-Yes	17	100	23	85	12	86	0
Compliance- No	0	0	4	15	2	14	0
Provincially							
Compliance-Yes	137	88	52	80	22	46	9
Compliance- No	19	12	13	20	26	54	0

Provincially, 80% of the landowners, that had expired agreements continued to manage their land in a manner that was compatible with their LHP agreement. In contrast, only 45% of landowners with agreements that were terminated managed their land according to the previous LHP agreement. A comparison of ongoing, expired and terminated agreements indicated that the compliance rate for terminated agreements was significantly lower than those for ongoing and expired agreements ($P=0.016$). This indicates that habitat retention is not usually achieved through terminated agreements. Nine LHP agreements were terminated early due to the land being purchased by the Crown or another Non-governmental Organization (NGO) specifically for wildlife habitat.

3.1.2 Evaluation Relative to LHP Agreement Objectives

Each LHP agreement has a number of clearly stated objectives that depend on the type of agreement and region involved. Agreements can include a number of different habitat types as part of the overall agreement. Habitat types include woodland/wetland, upland habitat, improved pasture, native pasture, recognition and critical wildlife habitat (CWH). Ewaschuk and Westworth (1983) found that the original Red Deer County Program lacked a clear focus on the type of land, the habitat quality and size requirements of land that was initially enrolled in the program. As a result of recommendations made by Ewaschuk and Westworth (1983), the LHP was developed to incorporate size requirements and criteria for particular habitat classifications. The objectives and criteria for each habitat and agreement type can be found in Alberta Fish and Wildlife (1987). Each agreement that received a site inspection was evaluated as to whether the original objectives as outlined in each agreement were successfully met. Many agreements contained more than one habitat classification and therefore have more than one objective. A summary of each regions objectives and the ratio of compliance can be found in Appendix III.

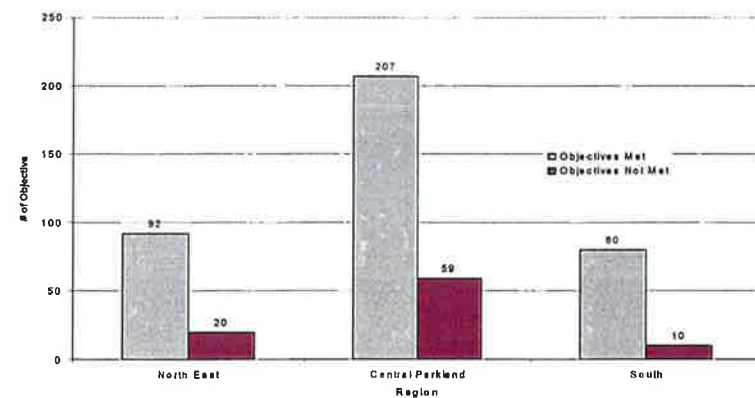


Figure 2. Success of meeting LHP objectives by regions 1986-2000.

Provincially, 379 LHP objectives were met out of 468 (81%) as outlined in each individual agreement. In the South Region, 80 out of 90 (89%), objectives were successfully met in each agreement, in the Parkland Region 207 out of 266 (78%),

individual agreement objectives were met and in the Northeast Region 92 out of 112 (82%) agreement objectives were met (Figure 2). Figures 3, 4, and 5 illustrate the regional breakdown of success relative to regional objectives. The frequency which objectives were met regionally did not differ significantly ($P=0.605$).

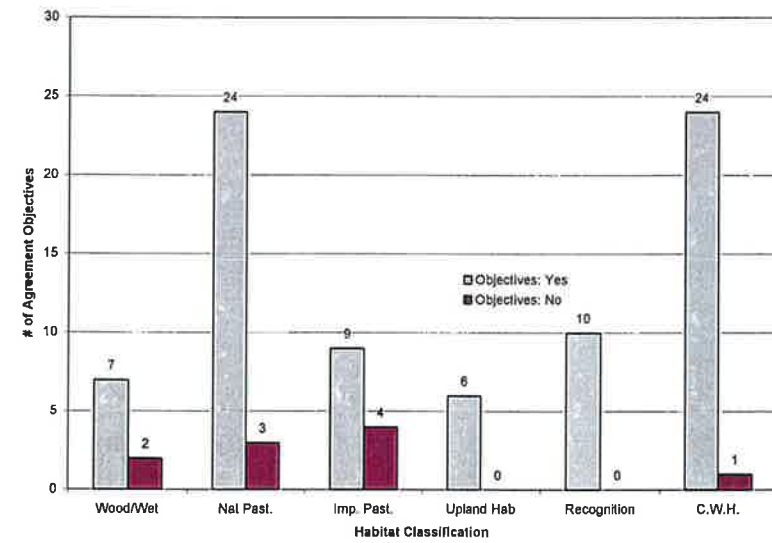


Figure 3. Southern Region LHP habitat retention agreement objectives 1986-2000. (CWH= Critical Wildlife Habitat)

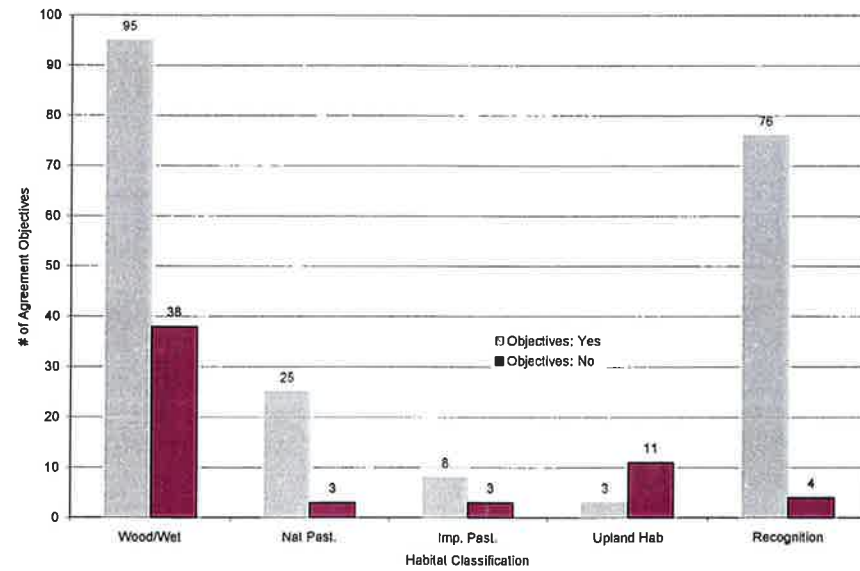


Figure 4. Parkland Region LHP agreement objectives 1986-2000.

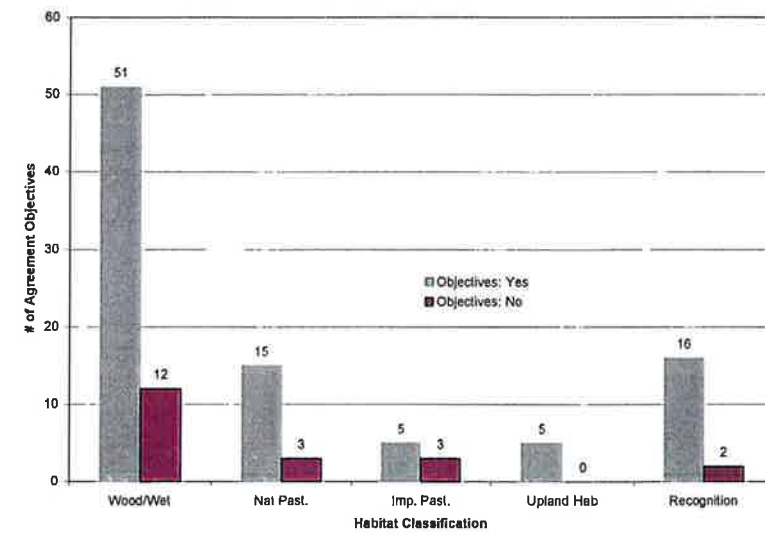


Figure 5. Northeast Region LHP agreement objectives 1986-2000.

The total provincial proportion of LHP agreement objectives that were met and not met, by habitat classification, is shown in Figure 6. Although the success rate for meeting objectives ranged from 56% in upland habitat to 96% in areas designated as critical wildlife habitat, differences among habitat types were not statistically significant ($P=0.225$).

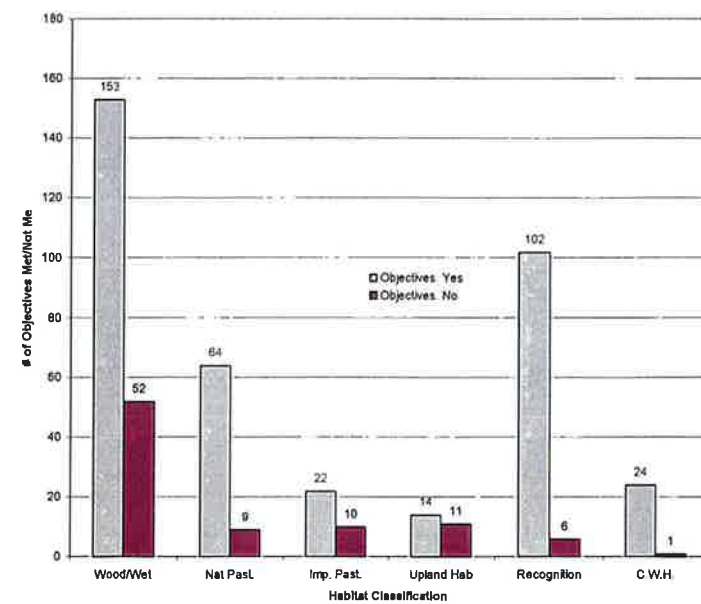


Figure 6. Number of LHP objectives met/not met provincially, 1986-2000.

3.2 Survey Results

A total of 294 landowners were mailed the survey questionnaire (Appendix II). Twenty questionnaires were returned due to incorrect addresses and ninety-nine survey questionnaires were completed and returned. The total number of individuals sent questionnaires is greater than the total number involved in the original LHP, as questionnaires were also sent to individuals that are currently involved in other ACA habitat programs, which use similar retention agreements as the LHP. Detailed results of the returned questionnaires can be found in Appendix II. Not all of the surveys had every question answered and some respondents provided multiple answers for a single question.

3.2.1 Survey Results-LHP Agreement

The questionnaire was designed to determine landowner attitudes prior to signing LHP agreements and after participating in the LHP program. Concern for wildlife and nature were clearly the most important factors in the retention of wildlife habitat by participating landowners (Figure 7). Concern for wildlife was also the most important factor for landowners continuing to retain habitat and entering into LHP agreements (Figures 8 and 9).

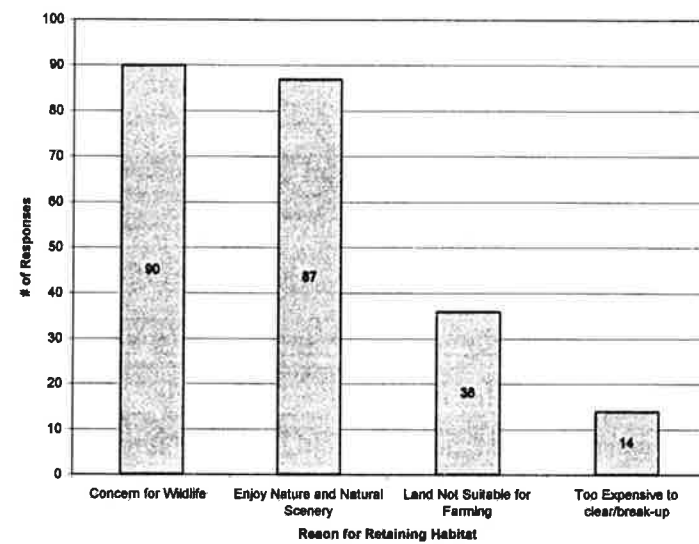


Figure 7. Reasons for retaining wildlife habitat prior to signing an LHP agreement.

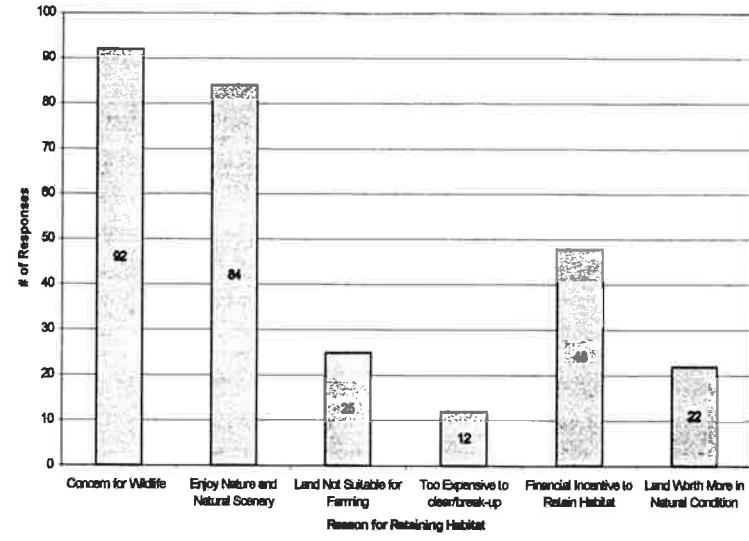


Figure 8. Reasons for continuing to retain wildlife habitat since signing an LHP agreement.

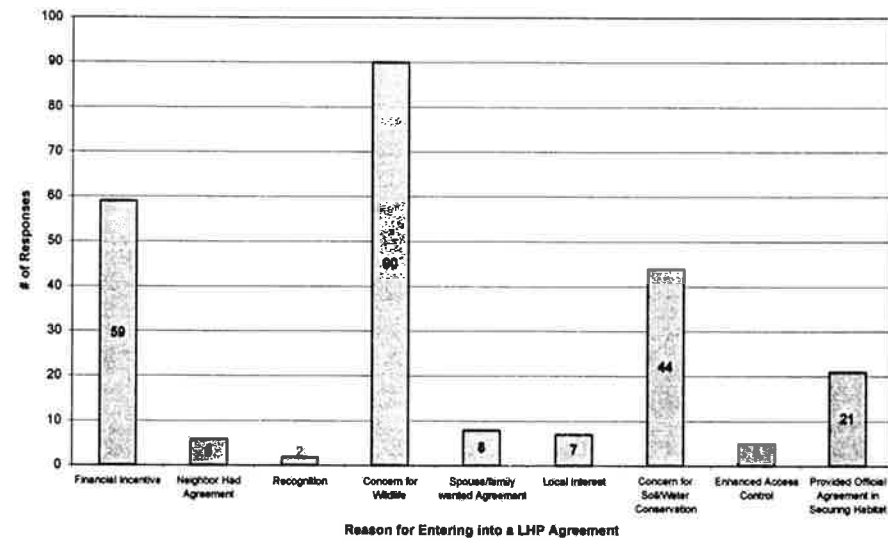


Figure 9. Reasons for initially entering into an LHP agreement.

When asked their intentions upon expiration of the LHP agreement, 62% of respondents indicated that they wanted to enter into another type of habitat retention agreement (n=64). The next most frequent response (29%) was that landowners were planning to manage and maintain their land in a similar manner without financial incentive (n=30). The third most frequent response (10%) was that landowners planned on altering their habitat lands once their current LHP agreement expires (n=10).

As a component of the mail-out questionnaire, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any questions or comments regarding the LHP. The most frequent comment was that annual incentive payments do not reflect actual increases in expenses (Appendix II). Despite the LHP not increasing with agricultural lease rates, the compliance rate for ongoing and expired agreements remained high at 88% and 80% respectively. However, for agreements that have been terminated, the compliance rate with LHP management guidelines is only 45%. Ongoing and expired agreements have had significantly higher rates of compliance and success in meeting objectives than terminated agreements.

Landowners were given a Conservation Easement Fact Sheet (Appendix II) to read prior to answering questions regarding conservation easements. Landowners were asked what features of a conservation easement they considered positive and negative. The most frequently mentioned positive response was that ownership of the land was retained (Figure 10), whereas the most frequent negative response was concerned with restrictions on development (Figure 11). The questionnaire also asked if landowners would be interested in receiving more information regarding conservation easements. Forty-six of the individuals that responded to the question indicated that they would like more information regarding conservation easements.

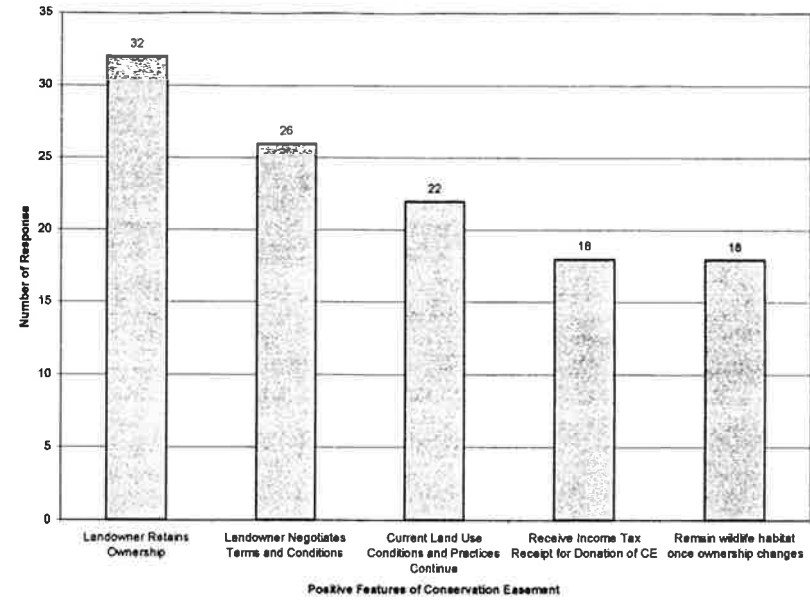


Figure 10. Features of a conservation easement considered positive.

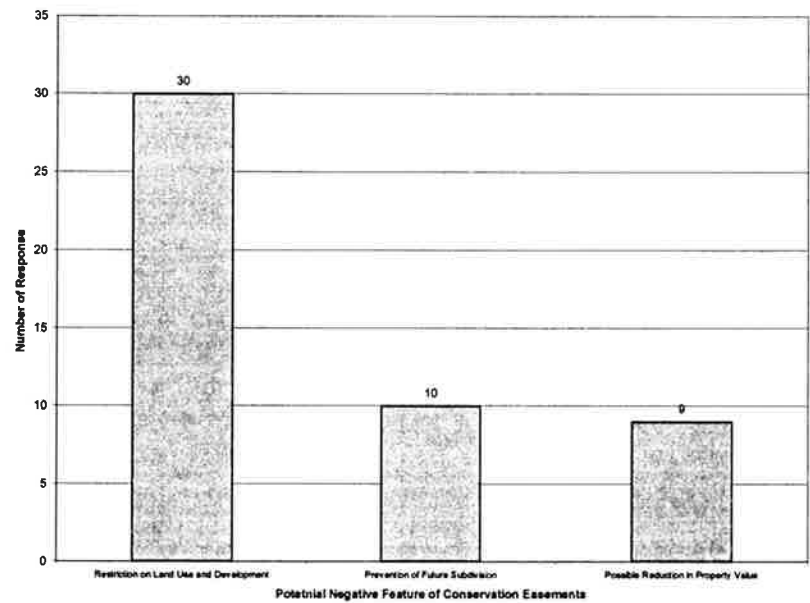


Figure 11. Features of a conservation easement considered negative.

4.0 DISCUSSION

Brusnyk et al. (1990) indicated that a deficiency of the original Red Deer County Program was the inability to respond to changes to agricultural lease rates. Although the LHP was originally designed to respond to changing agricultural rates with flexible lease payments, agricultural lease rates have fluctuated upward during the duration of the LHP, whereas regional LHP payment rates have remained static (Figure 12). In 1996, comparative lease rates were not available based on AUM's; however, the average rental rate for three lease agreements in the County of Red Deer was \$30.30 / acre. Although the LHP was designed to incorporate changes to agricultural lease rates, this has not been the case. This indicates that the financial incentives offered by the LHP are not the primary reason for the majority of individuals continuing to retain habitat.

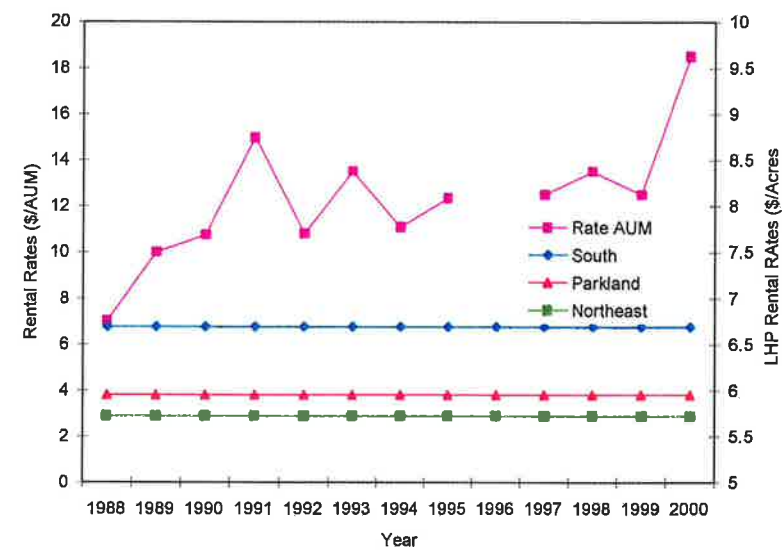


Figure 12. Agriculture rental rates for livestock grazing in the County of Red Deer, and LHP rental rates; 1988-2000. Agricultural rental rates were obtained from the Alberta Agriculture Farm Operations Cost Guides, and these rental agreements are based on \$/Animal Unit Months (AUM's).

Brusnyk et al. (1990) found that 79% of LHP participants would have maintained the land enrolled in the LHP even if they were not involved in the LHP program, which suggests that individuals participating in the LHP already had a commitment to wildlife habitat. Landowners who enrolled in the LHP had a strong sense of the importance of wildlife and wildlife habitat prior to enrolling in the LHP and that has continued throughout their involvement. The most frequent response (91%) from landowners for retaining wildlife habitat before and during involvement with the LHP was a concern for wildlife, although 60% of respondents also listed financial incentives as one of the reasons for initially entering into the LHP program. Landowners involved in the LHP had a strong commitment and concern to wildlife habitat before entering into agreements, but how effective was the LHP in retaining wildlife habitat that was at risk of being altered or lost? This current evaluation supports the previous evaluations in suggesting that the LHP targeted land that was not at great risk of being developed. Therefore the LHP was not effective in retaining wildlife habitat that was at risk of being altered or lost.

When the LHP was developed, the original goal for total acreage to be retained under the program was 77,050 acres (Alberta Fish and Wildlife 1987). Between 1986-1989, 38,674 acres were enrolled in the LHP, which represented 50% of the initial goal of the program. The County of Red Deer study area, reached 85% of its established goal, the County of Minburn study area achieved 44% of its established goal and the EID/BRID study area achieved 18% of the established goal for the area. Agreements initially signed under the LHP between 1986-1989 cost \$2,351,133. This figure does not include administrative costs of the program or capital costs incurred for enhancement work (Rostron 1994). However, the overall cost of the program will differ from the above figure, because agreements have been terminated and payments have also been adjusted to reflect management changes that have occurred on LHP lands. Consideration of cumulative costs, increasing agricultural rates and the inability to meet specified project goals all need to be considered in evaluating the LHP.

Three previous evaluations completed on the Red Deer County program (Ewaschuk and Westworth 1983), the LHP program (Brusnyk et al.1990) and (Rostron 1994) all found that short-term habitat leases are not effective for long-term habitat retention. Ewaschuk and Westworth (1983) stated that :

“The habitat recognition payments made during the pilot project fall well short of the \$25.00 to \$50.00 per acre return that could be expected from arable land if it were cleared and broken. For this reason we do not feel that a habitat retention program based on tax incentives or recognition payments will enable the Division to achieve long-term habitat security on lands that are potentially arable.”

The initial Red Deer County program and subsequent evaluation found that the majority of landowners involved in the program had no intention of altering lands that were entered into the program. Incentives offered to landowners were not sufficient to change management of their land or offer any long-term security to land that was potentially at risk. The LHP was designed to provide incentives that reflected agricultural lease rates; however, LHP payments have not increased in response to changing agricultural lease rates. Thus, they have not provided much incentive for taking or keeping land out of agricultural production to enhance or retain wildlife habitat. For this reason, LHP financial incentives should be viewed as enhanced recognition payments and not as agriculturally based incentives. Recognition payments were made in 108 of the original LHP agreements and provincially, objectives were met in 94% of these agreements. These payments were a standard \$2.00/acre/year payment and do not offer a financially viable alternative to converting arable land from wildlife habitat into agricultural production. This further suggests that much of the land involved in the LHP program is not suitable for agriculture and was not at a risk from agricultural conversion.

Brusnyk et al. (1990) also examined the effectiveness of short-term habitat leases as a means for long-term habitat retention and provided evidence from studies throughout North America that short-term habitat leases are not effective for long-term habitat retention. The present LHP evaluation demonstrated that in the case of agreements that

were terminated, only 45% of the relevant lands were still managed in a manner that was compatible for wildlife as outlined in the pre-existing LHP agreement.

In March 1999, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), evaluated the effectiveness of short-term habitat leases as a tool for meeting their long-term habitat needs. This review found that habitat leasing over the long-term is not cost-effective and is not a sustainable method of securing habitat. DUC therefore recommended that the negotiation of habitat leases be accompanied by some means of perpetual protection. Currently, existing LHP agreements do not offer any perpetual protection and once agreements expire the landowner is under no obligation to continue to retain and manage the lands as wildlife habitat. Ewaschuk and Westworth (1983), Brusnyk et al. (1990), Rostron (1994) and DUC (1999) all recognized that short-term agreements do not offer long-term or perpetual retention of habitat.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Many recommendations have been made with regards to the original Red Deer County program and the LHP in previous evaluations. Some of these recommendations have been implemented and others have not. Based on previous evaluations and the 2000 LHP evaluation the following recommendations are made to increase the effectiveness of current LHP agreements and long-term habitat retention programs for the ACA.

5.1 Current LHP Agreements

Issue:

Currently, ACA-administered LHP agreements are between the Crown and the landowner. The ACA is responsible for ensuring payments are made as outlined in each agreement but lack the authority to properly enforce active agreements. There are examples where terms and conditions of LHP agreements are being broken and the

landowner is unwilling to return payment as outlined in the agreements. Due to the nature of the agreements and the cost of pursuing compensation, the Crown has refused to seek compensation. Although the ACA continues to pay for these agreements, they do not have the legal authority to seek compensation if landowners break the agreements and refuse to voluntarily pay back the amount owed.

Action:

Current agreements should be transferred from the Crown to the ACA, thus enabling the ACA to better manage and ensure compliance with existing agreements. Many landowners may choose not to convert existing agreements from the Crown to the ACA and these landowners should be allowed out of the existing agreements without an early termination penalty. Although the ACA would likely lose some landowner involvement with the LHP program, they would gain full management and administrative authority over existing agreements. However, transferring all LHP agreements is not likely to be cost effective. Consequently, decisions regarding the transfer of agreements should be dependent upon length of time and cost remaining with agreements.

5.2 Short-term Leases vs Perpetual Agreements

Issue

Once current LHP agreements expire, the landowner is under no obligation to retain existing habitat. Currently in Alberta, conservation easements and land purchases are the two most common tools for long-term habitat retention. For a habitat retention program to be effective, long-term retention mechanisms should be utilized over short-term lease agreements which no offer assurance that the land will be retained as wildlife habitat once the agreement expires.

Action

The ACA should offer existing LHP participant's perpetual agreements (e.g. conservation easements) once their current agreement expires. Not all land under LHP agreements would be suitable for conservation easements. Criteria would have to be developed to

ensure land being considered meets the ACA's regional and provincial habitat priorities. Existing LHP agreements should not be renewed, but only converted to agreements with the ability to retain the habitat in perpetuity. However, based on responses obtained in this survey, overall interest among landowners in conservation easements appears to be quite low.

The Crown or an NGO have purchased nine properties as wildlife habitat that were once under LHP agreements. These properties are now being perpetually managed for wildlife. Land purchase is expensive and should be utilized only for extremely valuable or important habitat parcels. Partnerships with the Crown, other NGOs and the private sector need to be strengthened. This would enable land to be purchased more efficiently. By implementing a Right of First Refusal or Lease to Own clause in ACA lease agreements, short-term involvement may lead to perpetual habitat retention.

5.3 Education and Awareness

Issue

The LHP has been somewhat effective in raising awareness regarding the value of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Brusnyk et al. (1990) found that 54% of participating landowners felt the LHP had positively affected the household attitudes regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat. There are numerous voluntary programs that use education and awareness to promote the value of wildlife, wildlife habitat and conservation farming/ranching principles. Programs such as the Cows and Fish program, the ACA's Native Prairie Stewardship Program and Riparian Management Program, and the Alberta Fish and Game Association's (AFGA) Parkland Stewardship Program use education and agricultural management as tools to retain and enhance native habitat. No financial incentives are paid for lease agreements and involvement in these programs is voluntary.

Action

A comparison between voluntary educational programs and short-term habitat leases should be completed to determine the effectiveness of an educationally-based program versus a short-term incentive based program. If education and awareness are effective in

retaining habitat, the ACA should continue to develop such programs. An educationally-based program would provide the ability to influence a greater number of participating landowners without paying incentives.

5.4 Data collection, tracking and reporting

Issue

Rostron (1994) found that “generally poor, uncoordinated, and usually non-computerized record keeping make post-project evaluation difficult.” Centralized computerized record keeping and agreement-tracking remains a concern regarding the administration of the LHP program. The issue of uncoordinated and non-computerized record keeping continues to make LHP project evaluation difficult. Information concerning location, status and compliance of agreements, and the ACA’s ongoing financial commitment is not stored in one centralized place.

Action

A concentrated effort is needed to centralize and computerize relevant information and data regarding the LHP program. This would support future reviews and assist in planning and implementing habitat conservation strategies for the ACA. If the information was stored in a centralized place, long-term planning and programming with regards to habitat retention would be simplified and streamlined. Information should be stored in a manner that is GIS compatible.

All the above action items require dedicated staff time to implement and complete. The LHP has had successes and the opportunity to build on these successes requires resources. A decision regarding whether the ACA will continue to administer the LHP program on behalf of the Crown or whether they will make changes to the program and gain greater control over the direction and management of the LHP needs to be made.

6.0 Literature Cited

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Appendix I

LHP Site Inspection Forms- 2000



LHP Site Inspection 2000

Landowner Name:

Agreement Number:

Legal Land Description:

Status of Agreement (ongoing, expired, terminated, transferred):

<u>Habitat Type</u>	<u>Land Use*</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Woodland/Wetland	_____	_____
Native Pasture	_____	_____
Improved Pasture	_____	_____
Upland Habitat	_____	_____
Recognition	_____	_____

**Land Use: no-use, modified, compatible use*

Land Use Requirements Met: _____ Yes

_____ No

<u>Habitat Criteria</u>	<u>Objectives Met</u>	<u>Objectives Not Met</u>
Woodland/Wetland	_____	_____
Native Pasture	_____	_____
Improved Pasture	_____	_____
Upland Habitat	_____	_____
Recognition	_____	_____

Habitat Quality (Circle one)

Woodland/Wetland	1	2	3
Native Pasture	1	2	3
Improved Pasture	1	2	3
Upland Habitat	1	2	3
Recognition	1	2	3

Comments/Observations: _____

Inspected By: _____

Date: _____

Appendix II

Mail Out Questionnaire, Fact Sheet and Letter



Alberta Conservation
Association
P.O. Box 40027
Baker Centre Postal Outlet
Edmonton, AB
T5J 4M9

December 8, 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are currently conducting a review of some aspects of our Landowner Habitat Retention programs, with the intention of being better able to serve wildlife habitat in Alberta and you, the stewards of this vital resource. Some of you may no longer be involved with a current habitat retention agreement; however your feedback is still very important. Without individuals such as you, the conservation of wildlife habitat on private land in Alberta would not be possible. It is our intention that through the attached questionnaire we will gain a deeper understanding of why you find the conservation of wildlife habitat important and that will aid in developing the most efficient means by which habitat can be retained.

I have also included a Fact Sheet on Conservation Easements; a relatively new tool in conserving privately owned land for wildlife and compatible agricultural practices. I would ask that you please read the attached Fact Sheet before answering the questionnaire. In appreciation for taking the time in filling out the questionnaire and returning it to us, we will send you a copy of The Federation of Alberta Naturalist's Field Guide to Alberta Birds. In order to receive this book we must receive the completed questionnaire by January 31, 2001. The questionnaires are to be returned to the following address:

**Alberta Conservation Association
Attn: Rob Corrigan
P.O. Box 40027
Baker Centre Postal Outlet
Edmonton, AB
T5K 4M9**

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire please feel free to contact me at, (780) 415-1334. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the conservation of wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

Rob Corrigan



Alberta Conservation Association

Landowner Habitat Survey

1. How long have you or your family owned the land:

2. Is farming/ranching your primary source of income:

Yes	56
No	41

3. Is or was the designated wildlife lands part of your farming/ranching operation?

Yes	68
No	35

4. If no, please explain why wildlife lands are not part of farming/ranching operation:

- To close to home, not suitable for wildlife
- Fenced to keep cattle out
- Not suitable for farming
- Construction is primary income
- Want to leave in a natural state
- Recreation property
- Left small amount of land appx. 16 acres specifically for wildlife
- Not suitable for farming

5. Prior to signing a wildlife retention agreement, what are some of the reasons that you retained wildlife habitat on your property? (Please circle):

a) Concern for wildlife	90
b) Enjoy nature and natural scenery	87
c) Land not suitable for farming	36
d) Too expensive to clear/break-up	14

Others:

- trees and sloughs are for livestock
- already existed on title
- was not used because area was not formed

6. Since signing your habitat retention agreement why have you continued to retain wildlife habitat on your land? (Please circle):

- | | |
|---|----|
| a) Concern for wildlife | 92 |
| b) Enjoy nature and natural scenery | 84 |
| c) Land not suitable for farming | 25 |
| d) Too expensive to clear/break-up | 12 |
| e) Financial incentive for retaining habitat | 48 |
| f) Land worth more in natural condition | 22 |
| g) Others: | |
| • Because of a 20 year agreement | |
| • Have been unable to fence off area due to health concerns | |
| • It would cost too much money to get out of agreement | |
| • Trees and sloughs are for livestock | |

7. What motivated you to enter into a habitat retention agreement? (Please circle):

- | | |
|--|----|
| a) financial incentive | 59 |
| b) neighbor had agreement | 6 |
| c) recognition | 2 |
| d) concern for wildlife | 90 |
| e) spouse/family wanted agreement | 8 |
| f) local interest | 7 |
| g) concern for soil/water conservation | 44 |
| h) enhanced access control | 5 |
| i) provided official agreement in securing habitat | 21 |

8. Have you altered or diminished the wildlife habitat on your land since signing your

habitat retention agreement?	Yes	13
	No	83

If yes why?

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) retention agreement expired | 1 |
| b) farm operation changed, needed to convert into farm land | 1 |
| c) financially beneficial to convert to farm land | 1 |
| d) Other, please specify: | |
| • sold some land and added a dugout | |
| • built a home and fence line | |
| • enlarged existing gravel pit | |
| • added another dugout | |
| • cut trails through bush | |
| • EID expansion | |
| • 4 oil wells | |
| • cleared diseased trees | |

9. What are your intentions once your current habitat retention agreement expires, regarding the habitat lands that are under agreement?

- | | |
|---|----|
| a) Maintain/ manage habitat lands in similar manner without financial incentive | 30 |
| b) alter the habitat lands | 10 |
| c) enter into another type of habitat retention agreement | 64 |
| d) undecided | 6 |

10. After reading the attached fact sheet on Conservation Easements, would you be interested in receiving more information about Conservation Easements?

Yes	40	No	38
-----	----	----	----

11. If yes, which of the following features of a Conservation Easement is the most attractive
- | | |
|---|----|
| a) landowner retains ownership of land | 32 |
| b) landowner negotiates terms and conditions of easement on land | 26 |
| c) current land use conditions and practices continue | 22 |
| d) receive income tax receipt for donation of Conservation Easement | 18 |
| e) knowledge that land will remain critical wildlife habitat after ownership is passed on | 18 |
| f) other; | |
12. If no, what would be the concerns regarding a Conservation Easement;
- | | |
|---|----|
| a) restrictions on future land use and future development | 30 |
| b) prevented from selling land for subdivision development | 10 |
| c) possible reduction in property market value | 9 |
| d) other; | |
| • Change in government policy | |
| • Plan on breaking up land | |
| • Decision is up to family to decide | |
| • If government/minister can discharge/change easement then landowner should be able to as well | |
| • May hinder selling land in the future | |
| • To difficult to anticipate future needs of landowner | |
13. Would you be interested in receiving more information and/or discuss Conservation Easements personally with a representative from the Alberta Conservation Association?
- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 40 |
| No | 27 |

14. Do you have any comments or questions regarding Conservation Easements, this questionnaire or your habitat retention agreement?

- Increase payments
- Increase payments
- Financial benefit not enough to continue once agreement expires, land could be more financially productive brushed and seeded to grass
- We are happy with current agreement
- Disappointed that financial incentive has not reflected inflation index
- Financial benefits have not been kept current
- Very important program to retain property in original state for future generations



Conservation Easement Fact Sheet

What are Conservation Easements?

A Conservation Easement is a legal agreement between a landowner who grants the easement on his property, and a conservation organization, municipality, or government agency who holds the easement. The agency who holds the easement is responsible for monitoring the compliance of the condition of the easement.

Why grant a conservation easement?

Landowners grant easements to protect their land from future development that the landowner feels is inappropriate. The landowner retains private ownership of the land and ensures that the natural values of the land will remain in the future, no matter who the future owners may be.

What kind of property can be protected by an easement?

Any property that has significant fish and/or wildlife habitat, a valuable natural area or a sensitive environmental area can be protected by an easement.

Is land protected under an easement excluded from agricultural production?

No. Agriculture is permitted on land when it is compatible with the conservation of natural features of the land and is negotiated under the terms of the original easement.

Who can grant easement?

Private citizens, corporations, municipalities and the government can grant easements on their land.

2000 LHP Evaluation Site Inspections- Parkland

Agreement #	Landowner	Status	Land Use Requirement Met	Objectives Met	Woodland/Wetland Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Native Pasture Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Improved Pasture Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Upland Habitat Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Recognition Land Use	Acreage
HR 122	Gilchrist	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	NU	161
HR 123	Allan	Expired	Yes	Yes	NU	43										Yes	NU	106
HR 126	Quance	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	25										Yes	Compatible	380
HR 127	Ingles	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	NU	42.5
HR 128	McGee	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	74										Yes	NU	122
HR 129	Bergstrom	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	52.5	Yes	NU	17.5							Yes	NU	8
HR 131	Cameron	Ongoing	No	No	NU	29	Yes	NU	49.5							Yes	Mod	2.5
				No	Mod	9												
HR 132	Grant	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	NU	59.4
HR 133	Knorr	Ongoing	Yes	No*	Com	13	Yes	Compatible	90.5							Yes	Compatible	908
HR 134	Elkerman	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	157												
HR 135	Cole/Lundberg	Terminated	No	No	NU	35.3												
				No	Mod	51.5												
HR 136	Meyer	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	60												
HR 138	Irving/Cazes	Terminated	No	Yes	NU	88												
HR 139	Rodwell	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	104										Yes	NU	2
HR 141	Jones	Expired	Yes	Yes	NU	47	Yes	NU	21							Yes	NU	3
HR 142	Fabris	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	Mod	158												
HR 143	Johnson	Terminated	No	Yes	NU	120												
HR 145	Roen	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	32				Yes	NU	59				Yes	NU	100

2000 LHP Evaluation Site Inspections- North East

Agreement #	Landowner	Status	Land Use Requirement Met	Objectives Met	Woodland/Wetland Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Native Pasture Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Improved Pasture Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Upland Habitat Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Recognition Land Use	Acreage
ARC 87-04	Archibald	Ongoing	No	Yes	NU	126	Yes	NU	10							Yes	NU	43
ARC 87-03	Archibald	Ongoing	Yes	No*	NU	61				No*	NU	8				Yes	NU	15
AUS 89-59	Austin	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	82												
AUS 89-58	Austin	Ongoing	Yes	No*	NU	53	Yes	NU	4									
BER 90-92	Berg	Expired	Yes	No*	NU	78							No*	NU	38			
BIL 90-76	Billyk	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	136				Yes	NU	18						
BRY 88-28	Bryden	Expired	Yes	Yes	NU	132							Yes	NU	121			
BRY 88-20(a)	Bryden	Expired	No							No			No	NU	49			
BRY 88-19	Bryden	Expired	Yes													Yes	Comp.	264
CRO 89-41	Crooker	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	252	Yes	NU	63									
DEK 90-94	Dekker	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	70	Yes	NU	90									
DIX 90-71	Dixon	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	611	Yes	NU	15									
DIX 90-73	Dixon	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	142												
DRU 88-17	Drury	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Comp.	244				Yes	Comp.	50				Yes	Comp.	115
HOH 90-74	Hohol	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	160												
JON 89-51	Jones	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Comp.	370												
MAK 90-79	Mackowecki	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	342										Yes	NU	10
POL 87-06	Poliakowski	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	151												
RAE 86-01	Rae	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Mod.	320												
SAI 88-13	Saik	Terminated	No										No	NU	134			
SAI 88-14	Saik	Terminated	No	No	NU	119				No	NU	51						
SAN 89-52	Sangster	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	105	Yes	NU	23									
SAN 89-50	Sangster	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	70												
SEE 89-47	Seewalt	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	110	Yes	NU	18									
SHE 89-39	Shewchuk	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	48												
SHE 89-42	Shewchuk	Expired	Yes										No	NU	15			
VAN 88-32	Vandenberg	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	65	Yes	NU	100									
VAN 88-31	Vandenberg	Expired	Yes										Yes	NU	90			
VAR 90-97	Varga	Terminated*	No	No	NU	60	Yes	NU	60									
ZWA 86-02	Zwarich	Terminated	No	No	NU	134												
ZWA 87-05	Zwarich	Terminated	No				No	NU					No	NU	30			
SCO 90-99	Scott	Expired	Yes	No*	NU	4.5	Yes	NU	6.5				Yes	NU	10			
WAS 89-61	Wasleyko	Ongoing	No				No	Comp.	3				No	NU	52			
WAS 89-60	Wasleyko	Ongoing	No	Yes	Comp.	180												
SHO 92-124	Shore	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	72												
STE 88-09	Stevens	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	Comp.	122
HUN 89-56	Hunka	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU													
MAK 89-65	Mackowecki	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	200												
LAT 89-54	Latham	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	128												
WEL 89-57	Welsh	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	150												
WEL 89-55	Welsh	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	141												
KAL 89-B04	Kallal	Ongoing	No	No	NU	319				No	Comp.	30				No	NU	82
				No	Comp.	106												
DRU 88-18	Drury	Terminated	No				No	NU	14				No	NU	33			
WIT 90-67	Withers	Ongoing	No	No	NU	80	Yes	Mod	107				No	NU	34			

Agreement #	Landowner	Status	Land Use Requirement Met	Objectives Met	Woodland/Wetland Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Native Pasture Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Improved Pasture Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Upland Habitat Land Use	Acreage	Objectives Met	Recognition Land Use	Acreage
KRY 90-93	Krys	Terminated	No										No	NU	59			
ZAP 89-45	Zaparniuk	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	97												
AND 88-23	Anderson	Ongoing	No	Yes	NU	88										No	Comp.	78
APP 90-B06	Appleby	Expired	Yes													Yes	NU	73
ARN 88-16	Arnold	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	Comp.	148
BER 89-44	Berg	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	156												
BRO 89-B02	Brown	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	Comp.	56
GIL 88-07	Gilmour	Terminated	Yes	Yes	NU	143	Yes	NU	23	Yes	Comp.	12						
GOR 88-34	Gorda	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Comp.	134										No		
GOR 88-33	Gordias	Terminated	No															
HAN 89-37	Handel	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	164												
HIN 88-25	Hinecker	Terminated	Yes													Yes	Comp.	190
HUZ 89-43	Huzar	Expired	No	No	NU	259												
JAC 88-24	Jackson	Terminated	No	Yes	NU	132												
KLE 88-30	Klesken	Terminated	No	Yes	NU	316												
KOO 89-B08	Koop	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	Comp.	51
KUL 88-35	Kully	Terminated	Yes	Yes	NU	75												
				Yes	Comp.	203												
LUC 88-11	Luchkow	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	231												
LUC 88-12	Luchkow	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	60												
MCD 89-36	McDonald	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	69	Yes	Comp.	8									
MCL 89-63	McLaughlin	Expired	Yes	Yes	NU	76	Yes	NU	76							Yes	NU	48
MCL 89-62	McLaughlin	Terminated	No	No	NU	45							Yes	NU	35			
MCL 89-63	McLaughlin	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	124												
PEN 89-B03	Penner	Ongoing	Yes													Yes	NU	36
ROY 88-8	Roy	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	21	Yes	Comp.	78									
SEL 89-40	Sellers	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Comp.	279										Yes	Comp.	44
SOL 94-82a	Soloway	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	229												
STE 89-49	Stec	Expired	Yes	Yes	NU	160							Yes	NU	10			
STE 89-46	Stelmaschuk	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	38										Yes	NU	21
STO 88-29	Stockal	Expired	Yes													Yes	NU	94
STO 88-27	Stockal	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	242												
SYW 89-38	Sywenky	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	51												
TIL 88-10	Tillotson	Terminated*	Yes	Yes	NU	207				Yes	NU	9						
ZEN 88-15	Zeniuk	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	NU	156												
ZOR 89-64	Zorniak	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Mod.	128				Yes	Mod.	30						