

Fisheries Program Agreement

Between:

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
(ESRD)

-and-

Alberta Conservation Association
(ACA)

This agreement is made pursuant to the Wildlife Regulation, AR 143/97 and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ESRD and ACA dated May 20, 2014.

Program Description

The department of Environment and Sustainable Resources Development (ESRD) has the responsibility to manage all aspects of Alberta's fish and wildlife resources on behalf of the Government of Alberta. In carrying out this responsibility, ESRD requires both internal and external resources to support management decisions and programs. The Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), as a delegated administrative organization (DAO) established under the Alberta *Wildlife Act* and *Wildlife Regulation*, undertakes projects and programs to address ESRD priorities with respect to fish and wildlife resources.

This Fisheries Program Agreement defines the scope of services delegated to the ACA, the roles and responsibilities of the parties, the expected outcomes from this effort and other obligations related to operational conditions and performance measures.

The delegated Fisheries Program comprises a suite of activities that help to support ESRD priorities related to maintaining the diversity and abundance of Alberta's fisheries resources and the biological communities that support them. These activities include the inventory, assessment and monitoring of fish and fish habitat; the securement and enhancement of fish habitat, where needed, and the facilitation of applied research projects. Additional activities are designed to enhance recreational angling opportunities through the stocking and aeration of certain water bodies, and through the provision of information on angler demographics, effort and harvest, on priority water bodies.

ESRD values an adaptive process in managing Alberta's fish and wildlife resource. To ensure the delegated Fisheries Program continues to provide mutually beneficial outcomes to both parties, this program agreement will be managed under the auspices of the ESRD/ACA Joint Program Committee (JPC). Through this committee, ongoing

evaluation and adaptation will occur through a collaborative process, defined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the parties.

Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected by ESRD through the implementation of the delegated Fisheries Program. These outcomes play a vital role in supporting adaptive management of Alberta's fisheries resource and offer metrics to help ensure ongoing program success.

- Communications between ESRD and ACA are effective in ensuring priority fisheries management projects are delegated to the ACA.
- Enhanced fish stocking, aeration and evaluation is conducted at specified sites.
- Angler surveys are completed annually on priority water bodies.
- Priority research needs are addressed.
- Specified actions from approved fish management and recovery plans are successfully implemented.
- Information and data is submitted to ESRD in agreed upon format and within agreed upon timelines.

Specific Program Activities

The following defines the specific roles and responsibilities of each party in carrying out activities under this Program Agreement. Strategic planning will occur through a collaborative process through the JPC, defined in the MOU between the parties. ESRD protocols and standards, required to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of some activities, will also be provided to the ACA through the JPC.

- 1. Development and Implementation of Aeration and Enhanced Fish Stocking Plans** (ESRD requires fish stocking plans and aeration to effectively maintain the water bodies where stocking and aeration responsibility have been delegated to ACA).

ESRD

- Provides high level, long term (3-5 years) aeration and stocking priorities (ie. number of locations to be stocked, locations of stocking, species to be stocked, this does not refer to number and size of fish or timing of stocking), criteria and standards to JPC;
- through the JPC reviews stocking plan (proposed water bodies, stocking rates and schedule) and provides feedback as required;

- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work; and
- maintains Fish Culture Information System (FCIS) and Fish and Wildlife Management Information System (FWMIS).

ACA

- develops stocking plans (e.g. suggested water bodies, species, stocking rates and stocking schedule, all in accordance with Provincial policy);
 - develops aeration plans including identification of new sites, in accordance with Provincial policy;
 - communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
 - implements stocking plans (e.g. plans logistics and ensures delivery of fish to identified water bodies (appendix A);
 - leads annual review of implementation and identifies opportunities to refine
 - conducts research with respect to effectiveness of stockings and satisfaction of anglers with stocking program;
 - provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
 - ensures stakeholders are aware of the stocking program.
2. **Assessment of Angler Demographics, Effort, Catch, and Harvest** (ESRD requires accurate information from resource users to help inform fisheries management decisions.)

ESRD

- provides priorities for angler surveys to JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC;
- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work; and
- maintains FWMIS

ACA

- develops work plan to address priorities;
 - communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
 - provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
 - ensures stakeholders are aware of the results of the projects.
3. **Applied Research** (A necessary component of the adaptive management process, ESRD requires science-based research, designed to answer specific questions relevant to policy and management decisions.)

ESRD

- provides long term (3-5 years) priority research needs for the JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC;

- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work; and
- Interprets research results to inform development of management and/or policy actions.

ACA

- provides suggested research priorities to the JPC;
- develops work plan to address priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- facilitates research projects to address priorities, through both direct projects and provision of grant monies;
- informs on progress and identifies opportunities to refine;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures stakeholders are aware of project results.

4. Implementation of Approved Fish Species Recovery and Management plans
(Recovery and Management plans include a suite of recommended actions to re-establish healthy populations of certain fish species. ESRD requires external capacity to assist in implementing these actions.)

ESRD

- provides long term (3-5 years) priority needs to the JPC;
- provides approved plans and identifies implementation priorities to JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC; and
- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work.

ACA

- develops work plan to address priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- implements agreed upon actions identified in plans;
- informs on implementation progress and identifies opportunities to refine;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- Ensures stakeholders are aware of project results.

Fisheries Program Performance Measures

ESRD requires an annual report from the ACA at the conclusion of each fiscal year. This report will be in the form of the ACA Annual Report, and will contain a synopsis of the fisheries program implementation, including recommendations for improvement, and will be reviewed by the Joint Programs Committee to help guide project selection and implementation for the following years.

The following metrics will be used to track the success of this program:

- accounting of levy funds by program area;
- percentage of tasks/annual objectives identified by JPC that are successfully completed;
- all relevant information for FCIS and FWMIS provided to ESRD within 30 days of fiscal year end;
- stakeholders are aware of stocked and aerated water bodies; and
- Publically accessible summary reports are available on-line within 30 days of fiscal year-end, including reports related to on-going projects.

Program Term

This Agreement shall commence upon the date of signature and remain in effect until May 20, 2016.

This Agreement is subject to annual review and may be amended from time to time as outlined in the MOU signed May 20, 2014 between ACA and ESRD.