

Wildlife 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 30, 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.

The Wildlife 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 Wildlife Program comprises a suite of activities that help to inform management decisions around maintaining the diversity and abundance of Alberta's wildlife populations and the biological communities that support them. These include the delivery of upland birds enhancement programs, delivery of MULTISAR program, assessment and monitoring of specified wildlife populations, implementation of wildlife management and recovery plans, and the facilitation of applied research projects. Additional activities are designed to enhance recreational hunting opportunities, through the stocking of game-birds and the provision of education and outreach projects.

ESRD values an adaptive process in managing Alberta's fish and wildlife resources. To ensure the delegated Wildlife 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

development, evaluation and adaptation of programs will occur through a collaborative process, defined in the MOU between the parties.

Outcomes

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

- Communications between ESRD and ACA are effective in ensuring priority wildlife management projects are delegated to the ACA.
- Monitoring programs for identified populations are conducted and reported.
- Detailed Status Reports for specified species are prepared.
- Delegated portion of MULTISAR program is delivered.
- Successful implementation of identified wildlife recovery and management projects.
- Identified upland game bird enhancement projects are successfully implemented.
- Priority research needs are addressed.
- Relevant information is submitted in a timely manner.

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 Joint Program Committee (JPC), defined in the Memorandum of Understanding. 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. **Wildlife Population Monitoring** (ESRD requires information on the distribution, abundance and population trends of specific wildlife populations and priority species for determining appropriate policy and management actions. Annual aerial ungulate surveys are not included in this program.)

ESRD

- provides list of short term (1-2 years) and long term (3-5 years) priorities to the JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC;
- ESRD, through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work; and
- maintains Fish and Wildlife Information System (FWMIS).

ACA

- develops projects and work plan to address priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- implements projects according to work plan;
- informs on progress of implementation and identifies opportunities to refine;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

2. Development of Detailed Status Reports (ESRD requires Detailed Status Reports for status assessment of designated species for consideration through the Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC) process.)

ESRD

- provides species priorities to the JPC;
- provides funding to pay for printing of reports and contracted author fees;
- provides input into annual program development (such as terms of reference for reports, species specialists recommendations, timelines, etc.) through the JPC;
- receives report for submission to the ESCC status assessment process; and
- maintains FWMIS.

ACA

- develops work plan to meet agreed upon priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- coordinates preparation of Detailed Status Reports to be used in status assessment;
- provides information to ESRD in report form, and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures Status Report is communicated to stakeholders.

3. Delivery of MULTISAR Program

ESRD

- provides short term (1-2 years) and long term (3-5 years) priorities to the JPC;
- provides resources as agreed by ESRD and ACA;
- provides input into annual program development, through the JPC;

- Coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work through the JPC; and
- maintains FWMIS.

ACA

- develops work plan to meet agreed upon priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- informs on delivery progress and identifies opportunities to refine;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

4. Implementation of Wildlife Recovery/Management Plans (ESRD requires assistance in implementing prescribed actions for species recovery or management.)

ESRD

- Provides short term (1-2 years) and long term (3-5 years) priority actions for implementation to the JPC;
- provides input into annual program development, through the JPC;
- coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work through the JPC process; and
- maintains FWMIS.

ACA

- develops work plan to meet agreed upon priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- implements priority activities;
- informs on progress and identifies opportunities to refine methodologies and protocols;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

5. Upland Game Bird Enhancement (ESRD requires enhancement of upland game bird populations through a range of projects including habitat enhancements, land owner habitat programs and release programs, including pheasant releases.)

ESRD

- Presents short term (1-2 years) and long term (3-5 years) species priorities to the JPC;
- presents management goal for upland game bird numbers in the province to the JPC;
- presents long term (3-5 years) priorities for habitat enhancement areas;
- provides input into annual program development through the JPC;

- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from ESRD to undertake agreed to work; and
- ensures continuity between hunting regulations and game bird release program.

ACA

- develops work plan to meet agreed upon priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- leads development and implementation of habitat enhancement projects and land owner habitat projects;
- leads development of the game bird release program, including stocking rates, timing of stocking and location of release sites;
- leads implementation of game bird release plan (e.g. contracting of game bird stocks, coordination of releases);
- ensures public is aware of release site opportunities;
- conducts research related to game bird release success and the establishment of self-sustaining populations of game birds;
- leads annual review of implementation and identifies opportunities to refine;
- identifies opportunities for habitat enhancement on release sites;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

6. Applied Research and Ecological Studies (ESRD requires science-based information to address knowledge gaps around specific management objectives.)

ESRD

- provides list of long term (3-5 years) priority research needs to the JPC;
- provides input into work plan development, through JPC process, as requested by ACA; and
- maintains FWMIS.

ACA

- develops work plan to meet agreed upon priorities;
- communicates work plan to ESRD for information purposes;
- facilitates research projects to address priorities through direct projects and through provision of grant monies;
- informs on work being undertaken and timelines;
- provides information to ESRD in an annual report, project summary report, and with relevant data provided to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

Wildlife Program Performance Measures

ESRD requires a progress 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 Wildlife Program implementation, including recommendations for improvement. This report will be reviewed by the JPC 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 the JPC that are successfully completed;
- all tasks/annual objectives are reported;
- all relevant information is submitted to FWMIS within 30 days of fiscal year-end;
- stakeholders are aware of game bird release sites and birds are released according to agreed upon criteria from the JPC; and
- publicly 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.