

Alberta Conservation Association



Minutes of the March 23, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting

Four Points By Sheraton Sherwood Park
1005 Provincial Avenue, Sherwood Park, AB T8H 0Y7
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

- PRESENT:**
- Bill Abercrombie (Chairman) – Alberta Trappers Association
 - Robert Gruszecki (Vice Chairman) – Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association
 - Sandra Mellon (Treasurer) – Public At Large, Business Representative
 - Chuck Priestley (Secretary) – Public At Large – NE Region
 - Vince Aiello (Director) – Public At Large, CE Region
 - Ken Bailey (Director) – Pheasants Forever Alberta Council
 - Robin Barnes (Director) – Public At Large, NW Region
 - Tony Blake (Director) -Nature Alberta
 - Rick Blakeley (Director) – Alberta Fish & Game Association
 - Sue Cotterill – EPA
 - Mark Boyce (Director) – ACA / U of A Chair in Fisheries & Wildlife
 - Fred Calverley (Director) – Trout Unlimited Canada
 - Randy Collins (Director) – Northern Board Liaison
 - Richard Mellon (Director) – Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta
 - Gordon Burton (Alternate Director) – Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Todd Zimmerling – President & CEO, ACA
Marlene Montgomery – Executive Assistant to VP, ACA
Lori-Jeanne Edwards – CFIO, ACA
- VIA ZOOM:**
- Richard Stamp (Director) – Public At Large, SO Region
- REGRETS:**
- Neil Keown (Director) – Alberta Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
 - Brent Watson (Director) – Alberta Bowhunters Association
 - Debora Dueck – Recording Secretary, ACA
- Vacant – ACA Academic Representative
Vacant – Indigenous Board Liaison
Vacant - Treaty 8

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bill Abercrombie called the meeting to order March 23, 2023 @ 9:05 AM

Conserving Alberta's Wild Side

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Bill Abercrombie welcomed the current board members and returning board members round table introductions were made. Thank you for all the messages and support received during my family tragedy.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MEETING TIME LIMIT

Addition to Agenda
7 h. Virtual Meetings

MOTION #06/23

Moved by: Gordon Burton
Seconded by: Richard Stamp

Move that the March 23, 2023 agenda be accepted with additions.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting is anticipated to conclude by 4:00 PM.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

- a. December 15, 2022 Board of Directors' Meeting – Electronic Motion: 01/23EV
(Attachment A – Minutes of the December 15, 2022 BOD Meeting)

MOTION #07/23

Moved by: Chuck Priestley
Seconded by: Robert Gruszecki

Move that the ACA Board of Directors agree that this is an accurate reflection of the votes placed and therefore ratify Electronic Motion: 01/23EV stating: **“Move that the Minutes of the December 15, 2022 Board of Directors’ meeting, be accepted as presented”**.

MOTION CARRIED

5. BUSINESS ARISING

- a. Review of Action Items
(Attachment B – Action Items)

a) Action Items were reviewed and updates were provided.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Chairman / Executive Committee

Bill Abercrombie, Chairman, provided a report to BOD:

President & CEO annual performance review conducted, Todd Zimmerling will continue as the President and CEO of ACA. Confident that we have a very good board and have confidence in the CEO to lead the organization going forward.

The Executive Committee conducted the New Board Member orientation with Rick Blakeley and Robyn Barnes at a breakfast meeting.

b. President & CEO
(Attachment C)

The President & CEO report was reviewed and highlights were discussed and noted:

- Member Group events starting up again after the pandemic. Attended the Wild Sheep Conference/Banquet, it was nice to see such a good turnout.
- Meetings with Tourism and Minister Loewen. Tourism will be launching a fisheries tourism survey, ACA supporting role.
- CCEG Adjudication meeting went well, productive meetings.
- Was recommended to be a part of the NRCB Policy Advisory Group, will participate in one more meeting to see where this goes.
- Wild Boar discussions with Hannah McKenzie, concerns that they are still talking about the impact as opposed to what we are going to do to stop it. GoA is still allowing wild boars to be on farms, we need pressure from stakeholders. **ACTION ITEM: Richard Stamp will arrange a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture to discuss Wild Boar issues/concerns.**
- Meetings with the County of Lac Ste. Anne to develop a riparian program to improve the health of the Sturgeon River.
- Don Myhre retirement – end of March.
- In discussions with Forest Carbon Group - interested in purchasing our carbon credits, ACA would have to monitor for the next 100 years.

Refer to the President and CEO Report for updates in all the program areas.

c. Finance & Audit Committee
(Attachment D)

Financial Overview to February 28, 2023 - (Attachment D)

Sandra Mellon, Treasurer, presented the Financial Overview to February 28, 2023 points noted, results represent 11 months of operations:

Total revenue decreased from the prior fiscal year by \$(159,401).

- Levy revenues are \$(847,108) lower than received in the prior year.
- Resident Fishing license sales have decreased by \$(719,172) or 14.0% (approx. 39,299 less licenses over the prior year).
- Hunting licenses overall are down (\$206,871) or 1.2% at the same time last year

- Partner Contributions are \$601,645 higher than received in the prior year.
- Miscellaneous revenue is \$(17,213) lower than prior year, included is advertising fees for the Conservation Guide and Magazine, event sponsorship/registration and rental revenue.

Revenues are \$507,311 higher than year to date budgeted amounts.

- Levy revenue was lower than budgeted levels by \$(857,096).
- Partner revenue is higher than the year-to-date budget by \$1,132,356
- Grants and refunds are over budget by \$20,948
- Miscellaneous revenue is higher than budget by \$75,797

Operating expenses (expenses that are controllable by management) are \$1,472,608 higher than previous year levels. Although the individual expense categories vary, the overall expenditure is consistent with prior years to COVID.

The organization is \$(801,421) under budgeted year to date expenditures.

An operating surplus (excess of revenue over expenditures for management-controlled items including actual interest revenue which is outside of management control) of \$1,903,612 exists compared to the results of the prior year where a surplus of \$3,535,621 was recorded.

When adjustments are made to recognize realized and unrealized investment gains and losses, asset disposals, investment income and removing revenue from donations that was allocated to land purchases, the result ends in an accounting surplus of \$1,833,494 for the period compared to \$3,950,414 in the prior year.

ACA reported an accounting or total organizational surplus of \$1,833,494, an amount that included interest income, realized (actual changes from sold investments) and unrealized (changes in book value due to cost versus market fluctuations) results for investments and asset disposals that are not in management control. The realized gain on investments was \$49,710; the unrealized loss on investments was \$(502,991). Investment income was \$313,537. Exchange rate gain was \$56,999.

Once these are removed from the total organizational results, the operational surplus that is in direct control of management (including the interest revenue which is outside of management control) is \$1,903,612 compared to a prior period operational surplus of \$3,535,621.

Cash Flow Statement

- Cash flows from operating activities resulted in a cash increase of \$520,595. Inflows were used to maintain operating expenditure with amounts that are not restricted.
- The net cash balance after asset purchases, debt repayment and other operating cash uses is \$4,133,046. Of this amount, \$1,821,571 is restricted and not available for operating expenditures, which includes the In Trust, Restricted and RAP accounts. USD funds available for use are \$251,362 USD. USD cash was purchased in January in the amount of \$100,000.

Statement of Financial Position

As an overview of the financial position as of February 28, 2023, ACA reports:

- Current assets have decreased by (14.0%) from recorded levels on February 28, 2022. Accounts Receivable is comprised of receivables from partners, contributors and levies.
- The Endowment Fund balance is \$3,238,511 down (-0.2%) from last year. Half the increase in the fund on a yearly basis due to interest and gains (not including increase because of additional principle investment) is directed towards enhancement and/or management of ACA lands, and half is retained to grow the fund on an annual basis (to allow for monies to be removed from the fund the interest and gains retained must at minimum match the rate of inflation for the previous year).
- The Internally Restricted Fund is at \$1,704,967 compared to the previous year balance \$1,038,156 held in the restricted bank account with TD Bank. These are funds segregated from general operating cash and typically are carried through from year to year with pending land deals. Funds in this account consist of Scheerschmidt donations which will be used for future land purchases, cash for the CWD 5-year grant toward oral vaccine research and funds held for the Living Labs Climate Change project in collaboration with Food Water Wellness (FWWF).
- Equipment purchases this period were \$129,086.
- 49,326 total acres are held by ACA.
- The total fair market value of the investments is \$3,787,216 representing a decrease of (1.7%) over the fair market value at February 28, 2022.

MOTION #08/23

Moved by: Chuck Priestley
Seconded by: Robert Gruszecki

Move that the ACA Board of Directors concur with management and accept the Financial Overview for the period ended February 28, 2023, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

- Final Draft 2023-2024 Annual Operating Plan – Recommendation from the Finance and Audit Committee to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Operating Plan as presented.

MOTION #09/23

Moved by: Ken Bailey
Seconded by: Rick Blakeley

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the 2023-2024 Annual Operating Plan as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

d. **Communications Committee**

Randy Collins, Committee Chair provided update, points noted:

- Thank you to Don Myhre (retiring) for his years of service to ACA.
- Congratulations to Todd Zimmerling, recipient of the Queens Jubilee medal and Paul Jones, recipient of the Prairie Conservation Award which is awarded once every 3 years.
- Board of Directors bios are on the external website and staff directory has been removed.
- Nearly 900 people attended the Kids Can Catch event at Wabamun Lake on Family Day weekend.
- ACA promoted members groups and potential Christmas gift ideas of raffles or memberships.
- Sportsmen's shows and venues, benefits of the different shows were discussed.

e. **ACA Grants Program Committee**

(Attachments E, F and G)

Committee Chair, Chuck Priestley provided an update from the committee meeting held:

- ACA President and CEO, Todd Zimmerling advised that Committee Chair, Chuck Priestley's company was approved for receipt of funds through the CCEG Program. The ACA BoD agree that there is no conflict of interest.

MOTION #10/23

**Moved by: Randy Collins
Seconded by: Fred Calverley**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve recommendations of the ACA Grants Program Committee and release funds as noted:

1. ACA Grants in Biodiversity in the amount of \$210,912.00 (Two Hundred and Ten Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twelve Dollars).
2. Award the funds allocated to the successful recipients of the ACA Research Grants in the amount of \$329,306.50 (Three Hundred and Twenty-Nine Thousand, Three Hundred and Six Dollars and Fifty Cents).
3. Award the funds allocated to the successful recipients of the ACA Conservation, Community and Education Grants in the amount of \$969,938.02 (Nine Hundred and Sixty-Nine Thousand, Nine Hundred and Thirty-Eight Dollars and Two Cents).

MOTION CARRIED

f. **Operations Standards Review Committee**

Mark Boyce, Committee Chair provided updates from the meeting, points noted:

Wild Boar - Discussed in Agenda Item 6 b – President and CEO Report

Bear Smart - Bear Smart has been discontinued, however AHEIA has a Bear Awareness program.

Sandhill Cranes – Research project is on track

Wild Sheep - Anne Hubbs providing presentation and update on the Wild Sheep.

g. Recruitment Committee

No committee meeting held no report provided.

h. Governance Committee

No committee meeting held no report provided.

i. PAL Member Committee

(Attachment H)

Committee Chair, Vince Aiello, provided an update from the meeting that was held, points noted.

- PAL Member quarterly reports were provided for information, reviewed and discussed.
- **ACTION ITEM: PAL Member documents to be revised, edited and branded and will be presented at the June meetings for approval.**

j. Organizational Risk Report

(Attachment I)

Organizational Risk Report was presented by Todd Zimmerling, President & CEO, no major risks were identified. Further discussion, points noted:

- Turkey translocation project – translocated turkeys are being tested, no disease evident, not collaring and tracking birds at this time. Most people approached were receptive to the turkey translocation.

k. Northern Board Liaison Report

(Attachment J)

Northern Board Liaison Report was submitted by Randy Collins for review and information.

l. Director Emeritus Report

(Handout)

No report provided.

m. EPA Representative Report

Sue Cotterill, EPA Representative provided an update, points noted:

Provincial Fish and Wildlife programming has been reconfigured with the Hunting and Fishing Branch being created in the department of Forestry, Parks and Tourism.

- This new branch is led by Director Matt Besko and has leadership for programming related to: allocation and use of fish and wildlife resources (hunting, fishing, trapping, outfitting), harvest of fish and wildlife by Indigenous peoples, licensing services, human-wildlife co-existence, oversight for the two delegated administrative organizations – ACA and APOS, and provincial-level stakeholder relations and public engagement for these management areas.
- Managers reporting to Matt Besko in the Hunting and Fishing Branch are Kim Morton (hunting, trapping, outfitting, wildlife co-existence), Shane Petry (fishing, aquaculture), and Rob Corrigan (licensing)

The Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch in Environment and Protected Areas has leadership for programming related to species and population assessment, habitat policy, land use input, species at risk conservation and management, fish and wildlife health, aquatic invasive species, and provincial-level stakeholder relations and public engagement for these management areas.

- Sue Cotterill is the Acting Executive Director for the branch.
- Directors reporting to Sue are Dan Farr (NE region), Craig Johnson (South region), Kayedon Wilcox (NW region), Dave Park (fish/wildlife health, AIS, habitat), and Kelly Williams (species at risk and stewardship).

- ***ACTION ITEM: Sue Cotterill will share a flow chart of organizational structure.***

7. Delegations: 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

a) 11:30 AM – 12:12 PM Anne Hubbs – Bighorn Disease Concerns PowerPoint Presentation

Ann Hubbs to provide presentation to the BoD to share with the Member Groups to get the message out.

8. Old Business

a. Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism Meeting – Update

- Fishing survey is being released.
- Follow up on the Predator Compensation and moving program to Agriculture.
- Minister Loewen is very supportive of ACA and the Member Groups.

9. Reports

a) 2023-2024 FINAL Annual Operating Plan – (Uploaded to BOD Website)

Presented for review and approval – see Agenda Item 6 c – Finance and Audit Committee Report

10. New Business

a) Ecojustice

Discussion in regard to the granting program and 3 different groups meeting the criteria or not. 2 of the groups responded as expected, 1 group required further investigation. Ecojustice had no public statements against hunting however they are involved in controversial public advocacy work that may be considered a potential reputational risk. Adjudication committee followed process/policy and recommended a stand-alone evaluation at the BoD level. There was debate as to whether or not there is not enough information at this time to decision this item.

MOTION #11/23

Moved by: Rick Blakeley
Seconded by: Gordon Burton

Move that the ACA Board of Directors table the discussion regarding the decision for Ecojustice being qualified or disqualified from the opportunity to apply for grants at this time.

MOTION DEFEATED

Move to original motion on the floor.

MOTION #12/23

Moved by: Mark Boyce
Seconded by: Tony Blake

Move that the ACA Board of Directors agree that the Ecojustice be qualified to apply for grants as an organization to receive funds from the granting program at this time.

MOTION CARRIED

b) 2022 Employee Survey Results

2022 Employee Survey Results were reviewed and discussed. Staff overall are happy, salaries are always a concern.

c) BoD Survey Results

In preparation for the June Strategic Planning meeting the BoD Survey Results were provided for information.

d) Tomahawk Ranch Discussion

Presentation on Tuesday, April 21, 2023, discussion and points noted:

- Reality is the funding is not available right now.
- Concept of working with ranches in this manner has a lot of potential.

- Opportunity of getting involved with how these lands are managed.
- Need to identify the risk to habitat loss.
- Need a sense of where the board stands on this concept.
- June 2023 agenda item for discussion.

e) **Electronic Motion #02/23EV; #03/23EV; #04/23EV (Attachment M - O)**

MOTION #13/23

**Moved by: Chuck Priestley
Seconded by: Sandra Mellon**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors' agree that this is a accurate reflection of the votes placed and therefore ratify the following Electronic Motions:

- Electronic Motion #02/23EV: "Move that the ACA Board of Directors' approve the wire transfer of \$1,550,000.00 (One Million, Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars) representing the funds to close to purchase the Manyberries Creek Expansion Conservation Site, 10-006-05-W4M (640 Acres). Closing Date: March 1, 2023."**
- Electronic Motion 03/23EV – Move that the ACA Board of Directors' approve \$48,954.00 (Forty Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Fifty Four Dollars) from the 2022/2023 Habitat Securement Fund to purchase the Silver Sage Expansion 6 Conservation Site. SE 04-004-05-W4M (158 Acres). In partnership with other conservation organizations.**
- Electronic Motion #04/23EV: "Move that the ACA Board of Directors' approve the allocation of ECCC Funds in the amount of \$229,750.00 (Two Hundred and Twenty Nine Thousand, Seventy Hundred and Fifty Dollars) to purchase the Sadie Conservation Site. NW 33-036-21-W4M (158 Acres). In partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada.**

MOTION CARRIED

Electronic Motion #03/23EV – Silver Sage Expansion 6 – HSF Proposal – (Attachment N)

Decision to rescind the offer to purchase due to additional information received with regard to the property.

MOTION #14/23

**Moved by: Fred Calverley
Seconded by: Randy Collins**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors' rescind Electronic Motion #03/23EV – Silver Sage Expansion 6- HSF Proposal for use of funds from the 2022/2023 HSF Fund, stating.

Electronic Motion 03/23EV – Move that the ACA Board of Directors' approve \$48,954.00 (Forty Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Fifty Four Dollars) from the 2022/2023 Habitat Securement Fund to purchase the Silver Sage Expansion 6 Conservation Site. SE 04-004-05-W4M (158 Acres). In partnership with other conservation organizations.

MOTION CARRIED

f) **ZOOM/Virtual Meetings**

Discussion regarding the continuation of ZOOM/Virtual meetings. BoD were advised of the costs involved in arranging the opportunity for virtual meetings, each virtual meeting has a cost equivalent to hosting a KCC Event.

MOTION #15/23

**Moved by: Chuck Priestley
Seconded by: Richard Mellon**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors' discontinue the practice of regular quarterly online hybrid meetings and return to in-person meetings.

MOTION CARRIED

11. Closed Session

No closed session required.

12. Additional Business

April 3, 2023 - Mark Boyce workshop 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM, presentation will be available on ACA Website

13. Date and Location of Next Meeting

- a) BOD Calendar Event List (Attachment P) – provided for information
- b) 2023 Meeting Calendar (Attachment Q)

The next scheduled BOD Meeting – June 8, 9 and 10, 2023, in Central Region

- **June 8, 2023 (Thursday) – Fishing Event**
- **June 9, 2023 (Friday) – Strategic Board Meeting and Meet & Greet**
- **June 10, 2023 (Saturday) – BOD Business Meeting**

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #16/23

**Moved by: Gordon Burton
Seconded by: Richard Mellon**

Move that the BOD Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The Board of Director's meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM.



(Chairman)



(Secretary)