

**Alberta Conservation Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2024 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Clarion Hotel & Conference Centre
2100 Premier Way, Sherwood Park, AB**



In Attendance:	Bill Abercrombie (Chairman)	Alberta Trappers Association
	Robert Gruszecki (Vice Chairman)	Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Assoc.
	Sandra Mellon (Treasurer)	Business Representative
	Chuck Priestley (Secretary)	Public at Large Northeast Region
	Robin Barnes (Director)	Public at Large Northwest Region
	Fred Calverley (Director)	Trout Unlimited Canada
	Lu Carbyn (Director)	Nature Alberta
	Brent Watson (Director)	Alberta Bowhunters Association
	Mark Boyce (Director)	ACA/UofA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife
	Jeana Schuurman (Director)	Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
	Beau Cleland (Director)	Alberta Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
	Randy Collins (Director)	Northern Board Liaison
	Rick Blakeley (Director)	Alberta Fish and Game Association Representative o/a Alberta Wildlife Federation
	Reg Prostebby (Director)	Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta
	Sue Cotterill	Minister's Representative - FP, EPA
	Todd Zimmerling	President and CEO, ACA
	Lori-Jeanne Edwards	Chief Finance and Information Officer, ACA
	Marlene Montgomery	Recording Secretary, ACA
Regrets:	Vince Aiello (Director)	Public at Large Central Region
	Ken Bailey (Director)	Pheasants Forever, Alberta Council
	Lisa Holdaway (Director)	Public at Large South Region
	Colleen Cassady St. Clair (Director)	ACA Academic Representative
	Vacant	Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
	Vacant	Indigenous Board Liaison

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bill Abercrombie called the June 8th, 2024 meeting to order at 9:13 AM.

2. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Bill Abercrombie welcomed everyone to the meeting, round table introductions were made.

3. **Approval of the Agenda and Meeting Time Limit**

Additions

- Term limits under PAL discussions
- Brent has an item under New Business

MOTION # 21/24

**Moved by: Robin Barnes
Seconded by: Brent Watson**

Move that the Agenda and Meeting Time Limit be accepted as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

4. **Acceptance of the Minutes/Electronic Voting**

MOTION # 22/24

**Moved by: Sandra Mellon
Seconded by: Rick Blakeley**

Motion to accept the minutes from the ACA Board of Directors meeting minutes from March 21, 2024 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Electronic Motion Numbers 03/24EV, 04/24EV, 05/24EC, 06/24EV, 07/24EV and 08/24EV presented with email votes attached.

MOTION # 23/24

**Moved by: Mark Boyce
Seconded by: Lu Carbyn**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors agree that this is an accurate reflection of the votes placed and therefore ratify Electronic Motion Numbers 03/24EV, 04/24EV, 05/24EC, 06/24EV, 07/24EV and 08/24EV as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

5. **Review of Action Items**

Action Items were reviewed and updates were provided.

6. **Committee Reports**

a. **Chairman / Executive Committee**

Bill Abercrombie reported that yesterday's strategic session was really productive, the meet and greet turned out well and it was nice to see some folks from GoA show up. Extended an invitation to the Alberta Trappers Association's annual Rendezvous on July 13th and 14th which is very much a family event

b. **President and CEO Report**

Todd Zimmerling announced that ACA won an *Emerald Award* for our contribution towards excellence in environmental issues through our Land Management Program.

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

- Attended the Bowhunters Banquet on April 6th
- Met with Minister Rebecca Schulz on April 11th
- APOS workshop on April 23rd, talk from Randy Larsen out of Utah was very impressive
- Met with Deputy Minister Shannon Marchand
- Involved with Minister's Advisory Committee
- Attended the Alberta Wildlife Federation awards banquet on May 25th
- Kim Morton with GoA has retired
- Fisheries and Wildlife Stakeholders meetings

c. **Finance and Audit Committee**

- The Finance and Audit Committee met virtually on June 3, Jared Harmata and Heidi Dasilva with KRP were in attendance.
- Sandra Mellon reviewed in detail the Audit Scope Memo, Final Audit Findings and DRAFT Audited Financial Statements to the ACA Board of Directors.

MOTION # 24/24

**Moved by: Robert Gruszecki
Seconded by: Chuck Priestley**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the Financial Documents presented with a slight change made to the Statement of Cash Flow under Operating Activities from *interest paid* to *interest and charges paid*.

MOTION CARRIED

It was mentioned that the Film collection is still on the books, Provincial Archives have the physical collection. Once the copywrite is transferred the value of those assets would no longer be present.

d. **Communications Committee**

Did not meet. Randy Collins, Committee Chairman, mentioned that there is a communications report included in the President and CEO report. Awards were given out for articles in the Conservation Magazine for Ken Bailey and Brad Fenson. Brad Fenson also won two awards for podcasts. The Peregrine falcon live feed gathers a lot of interest. Kudos to the Communications team.

e. **The ACA Grants Program Committee**

Did not meet.

f. **Operation Standards Review Committee**

Did not meet. Mark Boyce gave a verbal report to the Board of Directors, highlights included:

- April 6 – Safari Club Fundraising Banquet
- April 16 – workshop on land management and acquisition
- April 27 – presentation at the Snow Goose Festival in Tofield
- June 4 – monitoring workshop – kickoff lecture in research – drones would be great, especially for monitoring wild boar
- June 5 – gave a talk to Nature Calgary on sage grouse
- There is a paper out in Nature about what happened in terms of wildlife during the pandemic
- Carnivores went nocturnal. Malaysia, lockdown was a lockdown. CBC TV interview on it.
- June 6 – leading biologist at UofA, Ian Sterling’s memorial service
- June 20 - 22 – Rocky Mountain Bighorn Symposium & GSCO Canada Ribbon Cutting - will talk about big horn management according to the North American model
- Graduate students working on:
 - contact between bighorns and domestic sheep
 - wild boars and transmission of swine flu

g. **Recruitment Committee**

Did not meet.

h. **Governance Committee**

Noted that a new Committee Chairperson will need to be appointed.

Four policies up for review:

- i) BOD005-Rev3-20210611 – Code of Conduct
- ii) BOD011-Rev2-20210611 – Electronic Voting Process
- iii) BOD025-Rev0-20210611 – ACA Diversity Statement
- iv) BOD026-Rev0-20210611 – ACA Stock Donation Account Policy

The Governance Committee determined that no revisions are required and recommend that the ACA Board of Directors approve and maintain them for an additional three years.

MOTION # 25/24

**Moved by: Fred Calverley
Seconded by: Chuck Priestley**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the recommendations by the Governance Committee to keep the four policies as written and review again in three years as per the normal process.

MOTION CARRIED

TOR007-1-20130306 – ACA Stock Donation Account Policy was determined no longer required and the Governance Committee recommend that the ACA Board of Directors deem this TOR obsolete.

MOTION # 26/24

Moved by: Fred Calverley
Seconded by: Chuck Priestley

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the recommendations by the Governance Committee and deem the TOR007-1-20130306 – ACA Stock Donation Account Policy obsolete and remove from Terms of Reference.

MOTION CARRIED

i. Public At Large Member Committee

The PAL Committee met and provided PAL member reports for information purposes. The terms for the Public At Large Members were changed to three years to be consistent. See Motion #58/22 from December 15, 2022 which reads:

Move that the all PAL Representative positions have the same term limits, “Three year term with an option to be renewed for a second term”, to a maximum of 2 – 3 year terms.

j. Organizational Risk Report

Organizational risk – \$100,000 behind in levies from this time last year, partner funds also behind. Investments are doing well. No concerning health and safety issues. Update on the incident with the trespasser on Eagle Terrace – was fined \$600.00 RCMP did not file within the 6-month time limit so the charge was thrown out. Todd will be placing a call to contact in the justice office. A prime example of why stakeholders get so upset, it’s the principle of the matter.

k. Northern Board Liaison Report

Northern Board liaison report submitted by Randy Collins. He commented that putting in and pulling out aeration equipment is a young person’s game. Edmonton Trout Club has taken over the aeration of Spring Lake. Spring Lake has not budgeted enough funds to provide for aeration of Spring Lake. Has handed out a lot of Discover Guides. Mushroom picking is a popular activity. The legion provides an opportunity to bring more people outside.

l. Director Emeritus Report

Pat Long had nothing to report.

m. **Minister's Representative Report**

Sue Cotterill provided a verbal report to the ACA Board of Directors – see attached summary.

7. **Old Business**

i) Draft letter to Government of Alberta re: starting up AGPAC again

Brent Watson presented draft version #7 to the ACA Board of Directors. Alberta Trappers Association will be added to the group list and an electronic version will be circulated to the groups for signing. Brent will then submit it to the Ministers of Forestry and Parks and Environment and Protected Areas.

8. **New Business**

ABHuntLog - Brent had a conversation with ACA Staffer Sue Peters, Sue will put together a blurb for member groups to add to their websites that will direct users to the ACA website to promote ABHuntLog.

Discussion ensued regarding the minimum age allowed for hunting.

9. **Closed Session**

MOTION # 27/24

**Moved by: Sandra Mellon
Seconded by: Rick Blakeley**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors move to Closed Session at 2:53 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION # 28/24

**Moved by: Sandra Mellon
Seconded by: Reg Prostebby**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors revert back to the regular meeting at 3:17 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION # 29/24

**Moved by: Rick Blakeley
Seconded by: Sandra Mellon**

Move that ACA Board of Directors put together a Membership Committee.

MOTION CARRIED

The Membership Committee discussed the application of a new member group and recommended that the ACA Board of Directors deny the request.

MOTION # 30/24

Moved by: Sandra Mellon

Seconded by: Lu Carbyn

Move that ACA Board of Directors approve the recommendation from the Membership Committee to deny the application of a new member group.

MOTION CARRIED

11. Dates and location of next meeting

- August Committee meetings via TEAMS – dates to be determined
- Annual General Meeting August 14th, 2024 at Four Points by Sheraton in Sherwood Park 5:30 PM
- Board of Directors Regular Meeting August 15th, 2024 at Four Points by Sheraton in Sherwood Park

12. Adjournment

MOTION # 31/24

Moved by: Sandra Mellon

Seconded by: Mark Boyce

Move that the June 8, 2024 meeting of the ACA Board of Directors adjourn at 3:23 PM.

MOTION CARRIED



(Chairman)



(Secretary)

Government of Alberta Fish and Wildlife Program Updates

For June 8, 2024 ACA Board Meeting

Aquatic Health

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

- For the 2024 season, additional resources have been directed to the watercraft inspection and decontamination program. The number of stations has increased from 5 to 7, and a roving crew has been also added.
 - Stations are located at; Cold Lake, Vermillion, Dunmore, Coutts, Del Bonita, Carway and Burmis
- As of May 27, 2024, 629 inspections have been completed.
 - Eight mussel-fouled conveyances have been intercepted to end of May. This includes two mussel-fouled shipments (barge platforms) intended for launch in the Saint Mary River Irrigation District.
- A Provincial AIS Task Force has been created with the aim of strengthening Alberta's mussel defense. The task force is being led by MLA Grant Hunter.
- Invasive phragmites continues to be found in numerous new locations around the province. AIS program staff have now confirmed an invasive stand at an ACA property in Northern Sunrise County.
 - A formalized plan to address the issue has not been finalized however, AIS program staff will assist with planning and will help guide response efforts as ACA begins to address the emerging threat.

Common Carp

- A Common carp was recently caught in East Pit Lake, West of Edmonton. Common carp is not currently listed as a prohibited in the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* but poses similar risks to other prohibited fish species.
- There has been no final determination regarding how the carp made its way to East Pit Lake however it is thought that this is likely the result of illegal movement of the species.
- EPA is considering response options that may include chemical rehabilitation of the lake.
- This is the first detection of this aggressive invader in Alberta and this is likely the best opportunity to implement a management option to stop further spread in Alberta.

Wildlife Disease

Avian Influenza Virus (AIV)

- EPA continues to work with University of Calgary and Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) to monitor occurrence of highly pathogenic AIV in wild birds and mammals. Unlike 2022, there are no indications to date of wild species mortality in spring 2024.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

- Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) and AGI successfully delivered the 2023 hunter component of the CWD surveillance program. The overall deer harvest and number of ungulate heads and samples submitted for testing was lower than anticipated; however, hunters received test results in a shorter time frame.
- For the first time, a partnership with the Metis Settlements General Council was established, which resulted in training of designated volunteer sample collection coordinators, freezers being placed at settlement offices and coordinated transport of samples to the provincial lab.

White-nose Syndrome (WNS)

- Ongoing surveillance for WNS and the associated fungus in bats, in conjunction with the AB Community Bat Program and University of Calgary, confirmed presence of the fungus in Alberta in spring 2023. Fish and Wildlife Stewardship is awaiting results of a possible case of WNS in a bat collected in southern AB in May 2024. If confirmed, it would be the first documented case in AB.

Development of New Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Tools

- EPA is working in partnership with Parks Canada, Washington State University and the Government of BC to develop molecular tests for on-site diagnostics using portable qPCR instruments. Fish and Wildlife Stewardship is currently looking to develop tests for, but not limited to, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* and Bovine Tuberculosis. This new methodology can potentially be a more effective and efficient tool for EPA staff to diagnose diseases critical to the management of several big game species.

Species at Risk - Terrestrial

Greater Sage Grouse Translocation

- 2024 lek surveys - 20 male sage grouse were identified on the three active leks in Alberta. This is a 11% increase between 2023 and 2024 (18 in 2023).
 - The estimated Alberta population of sage grouse is 60.
- The Montana/Alberta Greater Sage-Grouse Translocation was a successful operation.
 - In early April, Alberta released 39 greater sage-grouse hens at a lek site near Manyberries, Alberta.

Piping Plover

- Populations of piping plover are listed as Endangered in Alberta and Canada due to low population size.
- Fish and Wildlife Stewardship has led a provincial prairie-wide survey every five years to monitor populations of piping plover, as part of a larger national census. The last provincial and national survey was conducted in 2016 (the 2021 survey was delayed because of capacity/covid-related reasons).
- The 2024 survey will be used to update the population estimate, determine population trends and results will inform future management actions.
- The Alberta survey will occur on 60 lakes and will be done in cooperation with the ACA (survey 25 lakes) with support from Environment Canada (survey about 2-5 lakes). The remaining lakes will be surveyed by Fish and Wildlife Stewardship.

Species at Risk – Aquatic

Native trout work features significantly in ACA's workplan; several updates were included in the ACA's President and CEO Report.

Other native trout related initiatives include:

- Silvester Creek
 - EPA, Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC), Cows and Fish and Elbow Watershed Alliance are collaborating to evaluate past remediation success as well as to inventory current and ongoing habitat threats. These partners will also look at the education and outreach needs for recreational users to deter illegal use and keep wheels out of water.

- Waipairous
 - TUC will be completing undesignated trail decommissioning and habitat remediation on Aura Creek
- Upper Oldman
 - Fisheries assessment of Camp Creek watershed will occur to look at species presence, abundance and distribution. Cows and Fish will also complete riparian health surveys to look at habitat risks.
 - Bioengineering techniques are being completed in Callum Creek watershed within Sharples Creek which formed the start of a watershed-scale rehabilitation project.
- Genetics
 - Collaboration continues with the University of Manitoba on westslope cutthroat trout (WSCT) genetics for broodstock and restoration stocking.
- Stocking
 - A WSCT stocking strategy is under development.
 - A WSCT broodstock is being developed within the GoA hatcheries system.
- Species at Risk Stock Assessments underway:
 - TriCreek area -Antler Creek/Margy Gregg Creek watershed assessments.
 - Pembina closure assessment.
 - Lake Sturgeon – Fish and Wildlife Stewardship is working to develop analytical methods needed to analyze and critically evaluate mark-recapture data collected by citizen science angling, with an intention to proceed with a citizen science survey in the South Saskatchewan River in 2025.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Monitoring Workshop

- The Alberta Remote Camera Steering Committee hosted a virtual workshop June 4-6, 2024, with over 160 registrants from the United States and Canada.
- The objective of the workshop was to explore current and prospective monitoring methods for ungulates, considering opportunities, challenges, and barriers to implementation, and identify next steps towards application of best methods to improve ungulate population management. The following techniques were included in the workshop:
 - Manned aircraft, aerial infrared imaging and drones, remote cameras, telemetry, genetic/DNA surveys (not eDNA), integrated population modelling.

Fisheries updates

Walleye Stocking and Spawn Investigations

- Three spawn camps were run this spring (Lac St. Anne, Rock Island Lake and Ethel Lake) for walleye stocking this season into provincial waterbodies.
- Additional source investigation was conducted in the Peace drainage at Graham Lake for potential future expansion of the program.
- The eggs have been raised to fry in the Cold Lake Hatchery and released to waterbodies throughout the province.
- A total of approximately 14 million fry were stocked.
- Waterbodies that fry were released to are:
 - Lac St. Anne fry – stocked to Travers Reservoir, Twin Valley Reservoir, Sherburne Reservoir, 40 Mile Coulee and 40 Mile Pond, Sylvan Lake
 - Rock Island Lake fry – stocked to Goose Lake, Minnow Lake, Winagami Lake
 - Ethel Lake fry – stocked to Crane and Skeleton Lakes

Harvest Slot Evaluation (final year)

- This is year 5 of the slot limit evaluation work for walleye slot limit regulation changes implemented in 2019.
- Fishing effort, angler satisfaction and human dimensions work is ongoing this summer at 12 lakes around the province (Sturgeon, Iosegun, Fawcett, Buck, Gull, Amisk, Skeleton, Floatingstone, Garner, Lac Ste Anne, Pigeon, and Smoke lakes)
- Anglers will be interviewed at the waterbodies throughout the summer and data evaluated in the fall/winter as part of the overall program.
- Fall Index Netting is also anticipated at most of these waterbodies.

NASIN Evaluation (North American Standard Index Netting)

- EPA is continuing to evaluate efficacy of the NASIN index netting technique in the province.
- Additional northern pike density and catchability information is being collected this season to add to the analysis.

Fall Index Netting (FIN) Assessments

- Joint Fish and Wildlife Stewardship and Hunting and Fishing priorities are being considered in prioritization for this year’s FIN program.
- Fish and Wildlife Stewardship anticipates a similar program to last year with 12 – 15 assessments around the province.

Stock Assessments

- Wapiti River – assessments are planned in support of the Wapiti Water Management Plan.
- Sheep Creek – Bull trout, and Arctic grayling assessments.
- Cold Lake Winter Creel – assessment of effort changes relative to anticipated regulation changes.

Hunting and Fishing Licence Update to May 31, 2024

- For the first week of draw applications in 2023 there were 56,581 draw applications, and for 2024 there were 54,579 (4% decrease). In 2023 there was no goat draw and so far in 2024 there have been 1,023 goat draw applications. If goat applications are not considered, Big Game draw applications are down over 3,000 in 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.
- So far in 2024, there have 7,623 Minister Special Licence draw applications. Antlered moose (n=1,895) has been the most popular and cougar (n=153) has been the least popular.
- Year to year comparison of Alberta resident sportfishing licences are noted below:

SEASON		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
							31-May-24
SPORTFISHING LICENCE ANNUAL SALES							
Alberta Resident Sportfishing Licence	FG	248,458	322,492	283,948	244,353	244,924	100,590