

**Alberta Conservation Association  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2024 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
Four Points by Sheraton  
1005 Provincial Ave, Sherwood Park, AB**



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<b>In Attendance:</b>	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
	Vince Aiello (Director)	Public at Large Central Region
	Lisa Holdaway (Director)	Public at Large South Region
	Lu Carbyn (Director)	Nature Alberta
	Brent Watson (Director)	Alberta Bowhunters Association
	Gordon Burton (Director)	Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
	Randy Collins (Director)	Northern Board Liaison
	Rick Blakeley (Director)	Alberta Fish and Game Association o/a Alberta Wildlife Federation
	Sue Cotterill (Non-voting GoA Rep)	Minister's Representative (non-voting) – EPA
	Colleen Cassady St. Clair (Director)	ACA Academic Representative
	Shane Schreiber (Director)	Minister's Representative (voting) – Forestry and Parks
	Ken Bailey (Director)	Pheasants Forever Alberta Council
	Mark Boyce (Director)	ACA/UofA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife
	Reg Prostebby (Director)	Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta
	Robin Barnes (Director)	Public at Large Northwest Region
	Beau Cleland (Director)	Alberta Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
	Todd Zimmerling	President and CEO, ACA
	Lori-Jeanne Edwards	Chief Finance and Information Officer, ACA
	Laura Volkman	Recording Secretary, ACA
<b>Regrets:</b>	Silvia D'Amelio (Director)	Freshwater Conservation Canada (formerly Trout Unlimited Canada)

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Bill Abercrombie called the December 12, 2024 meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Bill Abercrombie welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made. Bill spoke about how impressive the presentation was from Scott Napper the previous evening.

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

Additions: None.

**MOTION # 45/24**

**Moved by: Sandra Mellon  
Seconded by: Bob Gruszecki**

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

**MOTION CARRIED**

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

*Electronic Motion # 44/24EV presented with email votes attached and circulated for signatures.*

**MOTION # 46/24**

**Moved by: Vince Aiello  
Seconded by: Randy Collins**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors agree that this is an accurate reflection of the votes placed and therefore ratify Electronic Motion # 44/24EV stating: **“Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the meeting minutes from August 15, 2024 as presented.”**

**MOTION CARRIED**

5. **Review of Action Items**

*(Attachment A)*

Action Items were reviewed, and updates were provided.

- Todd: As of Monday, December 16 we will no longer be in possession of Karvonen Archives.
- Todd: Thanks to Shane Schreiber, the Eagle Terrace property is moving along very well.
- Todd: Working to get some quotes for different health and insurance benefits. Talking with 2-3 different providers.
- Todd: Acquisition of memorial site for Tom Bateman is going slow, not much land is being transacted at the moment.
- Brent: This action item involved the need and want from stakeholder groups to get back to formal collaborative meetings with the Government on hunting and fishing. Shane will look into restarting broader stakeholder meetings.

6. **Review of Nominations**

Nominations for Executive Board position were reviewed.

7. **Executive Reports**

a. **Chairman / Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee (Bill Abercrombie):

- As a Board, we need to dial in on what the roles committees and their chairs are. The discussions in committees have strict time limits and they need to be adhered to and stick to the agenda, not get off topic. It is incumbent on Chairs to ensure order is followed and discussions are appropriate within the purview of ACA.
- In the interest of efficiency and time, Executive Committee proposes some changes to streamline operations and be mindful of Board Members time. Recommend to the Board to retire the OSR and Communications Committees. Dr. Mark Boyce can add himself to the Agenda as appropriate and a Communications report can be added to the Agenda as needed. The pros and cons were discussed amongst the Board.

**MOTION # 47/24**

**Moved by: Gordon Burton  
Seconded by: Bob Gruszecki**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors retire the OSR and Communications committees in lieu of a report to the Board as needed.

**MOTION CARRIED**

b. **President and CEO Report**

*(Attachment B)*

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

- Sitting on Ministers Advisory Committee (MAC) on Recreational Access on Lease Land, MAC Fisheries, MAC Wildlife.
- September highlights: news stories on high number of snakes killed on highways.
- October highlights: Meeting with Minister about Predator Compensation; good meeting with Assistant Deputy Minister Andrew Horton regarding ecological goods and services program; discussions on future vision for the TransAlta property.
- November highlights: Mule deer collaring project meetings, issue with Logan Energy on one of our properties.
- December highlights: One-on-ones with staff were positive, they like new things happening at ACA.
- Todd presented an update on the mule deer project: a collaboration involving APOS, AEP, Forestry, and Parks to establish a large-scale, long-term collaring program. The program, modeled

after a successful project in Utah, will use satellite transmitters to track mule deer over the long term, providing valuable data on survival rates, predation patterns, environmental factors impacting deer survival, and health indicators, such as rump fat measurements. This data will contribute to a strong population model and improve trust in population estimates with ACA developing a public-facing process for sharing the data. Member groups, if there is interest, can assist with purchasing collars, securing landowner permissions, and removing carcasses. The project will use helicopter netting for collaring. The project requires at least five years to produce comprehensive data.

- We have a partnership with AHEIA for the RAP trailer and it's been great. Provided highlights of a report on the Mobile Outreach Education Program and how successful it has been. A report on the success of the AHEIA Conservation & Angling Student Training (CAST) Program has shown tremendous success as well.

## 8. Committee Recommendations

### a. Finance & Audit Committee (*Attachment C*):

- Reviewed financial overview & unaudited financial report.
- \$2 million more in cash than last year due to levy increases, we are in strong financial position. We have asked administration to provide an amended budget for the surplus so that we have accurate accounting of how those dollars will be spent this fiscal.

#### **MOTION # 48/24**

**Moved by: Mark Boyce**  
**Seconded by: Reg Prostebby**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors concur with management and accept the Financial Overview for the period ended October 31, 2024, as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

- Draft AOP 2025/2026 review.

#### **MOTION # 49/24**

**Moved by: Rick Blakeley**  
**Seconded by: Bob Gruszecki**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors accept the Draft AOP 2025/2026 as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

- Since we have policies that set parameters around our investment funds and our endowment funds, it is apparent a similar policy is needed to be developed regarding unexpected substantial budget surplus or substantial unexpected budget deficits. These are the components for consideration in the development of that policy:
  1. What is the trigger point for board action.
  2. Where does money go and who determines the disposition of such funds.

3. What is the process for how and where to dispense the excess or deficit of such windfalls or events.
4. Define percentage of revenue or deficit of specific amount of definition of such surplus / deficits or windfalls.
5. At very least have a wish list of projects or funding allocations that demonstrate a need to earn more to fund such projects.
6. Definition of trigger points to set process for management to seek matching funds from industry or specific "outside" donors.

**MOTION # 50/24**

**Moved by: Bob Gruszecki  
Seconded by: Rick Blakeley**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors create a policy regarding unexpected substantial budget surplus or deficits.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**b. Communications Committee:**

- Had last meeting yesterday, attended by Tara who gave an update. Discussed Communications strategies. Randy expressed enjoyment of being the Chair while committee existed.

**c. Grants Program Committee:**

- Committee looked at list of applicants for Research & Biodiversity grants. The list of MSL and CCEG applicants was not yet available prior to this meeting. A list of applicants for all four grants will be sent to the Board for review along with the policy of disqualification.
- Two Board members are required as adjudicators for CCEG grants, the committee recommends Randy Collins and Colleen Cassady St. Clair.

**MOTION # 51/24**

**Moved by: Chuck Priestley  
Seconded by: Lu Carbyn**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve Randy Collins and Colleen Cassady St. Clair as adjudicators for the CCEG grants.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**d. Operation Standards Review Committee:**

- The Wildlife Society is meeting in Edmonton in October at the Shaw Conference Center and will be the biggest meeting of wildlife professionals in the world. Mark hopes that ACA is well engaged in this. Possibly have Doug Manzer and Robert Anderson do symposiums. Mark will be doing one on ecological theory to conservation.
- Discussion in the committee meeting involved: removal of trapping limits, wildlife responder grizzly program, among other items.

- e. Recruitment Committee (*attachment D*):
  - Reviewed list of Board Members with term start/end dates.
  - Reviewed timeline for PAL's.
  - Discussed who does the reviews for PALs when a second term comes up, determined it would be Executive Committee and if necessary, would be brought to the Board.
  - Doesn't seem that there any restrictions for outgoing PAL members to reapply and put their name forward with other candidates.

f. Governance Committee:

- i) TOR012-0-20141211 Recruitment Committee (*Attachment F*)

<b>MOTION # 52/24</b>	<b>Moved by: Vince Aiello</b> <b>Seconded by: Chuck Priestley</b>
Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the changes recommended by the Governance Committee to TOR012-0-20141211 Recruitment Committee.	
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>	

- ii) TOR014-0-20190614 Indigenous Liaison (*Attachment G*)

<b>MOTION # 53/24</b>	<b>Moved by: Vince Aiello</b> <b>Seconded by: Lu Carbyn</b>
Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the changes recommended by the Governance Committee to TOR014-0-20190614 Indigenous Liaison.	
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>	

- iii) TOR018-0-20230323 Business Representative (*Attachment H*)

<b>MOTION # 54/24</b>	<b>Moved by: Vince Aiello</b> <b>Seconded by: Randy Collins</b>
Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the changes recommended by the Governance Committee to TOR018-0-20230323 Business Representative.	
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>	

- g. Public At Large Member Committee:
  - Looking for a new Chair for this committee.
  - Looked at position end and start dates.
  - Thanked Chuck for his time on the committee, very appreciated.
  - Also discussed Chuck still managing the grant review process.



**MOTION # 55/24****Moved by: Randy Collins  
Seconded by: Vince Aiello**

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve Chuck Priestley managing the Grants review process as a non-Board Member.

**MOTION CARRIED**

- h. Organizational Risk Report:
- Organizational risk report was reviewed.
  - Health & Safety incident at Taber Pheasant Festival where a dog fell down a well and a staff member rescued it. Too much liability involved in this on work time, next time call emergency responders.
  - Aeration cables were stolen at Muir Lake.
  - New tires were put on an ACA truck at a shop, staff member stopped to have them retorqued but found that one lug nut was cracked and another broken, could have been a big incident.
  - Brute force attack on our IT system but due to our cybersecurity and Sysgen, it was able to be shut down. Have implemented a VPN (Virtual Private Network) for staff working outside of ACA offices as added security.
- i. EPA Representative Report (Sue Cotterill):
- Please see attached report.
- j. Director Emeritus Report: none.
- k. Minister's Representative Report (Shane Schreiber):
- Provincial Hunting Day (September 28) didn't seem to get the level of awareness that was hoped for. We want to hype this day, and Shane has asked the Board/member groups help publicize it better and they desire to do more formal higher visibility events.
  - 3 Minister Advisory Committees.
  - The Minister has the draft Mule deer management plan.
9. **New Business**
- a. Election of Officers and Committee Appointments:
- No further nominations from the floor.
  - All Board of Directors Members that expressed interest in sitting on committees accepted said committees.

	ACA Program Grants	PAL Member	Finance & Audit	Executive	Recruitment	Governance
Albert Mast						
Beau Cleland	✓		✓			✓
Brent Watson	✓		✓		✓	✓
Chuck Priestley	✓					
Colleen St. Clair	✓	✓				
Gordon Burton*						
Jeana Schuurman*			✓			
Ken Bailey			✓	Treasurer		✓
Lisa Holdaway		✓			✓	
Lu Carbyn					✓	
Mark Boyce	✓					
Randy Collins	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Reg Prostebby			✓			✓
Rick Blakeley	✓		✓		✓	✓
Robert Gruszecki	✓	✓	✓	Chair	✓	✓
Robin Barnes	✓	✓			✓	✓
Sandra Mellon	✓	✓	✓	Vice Chair	✓	✓
Shane Schreiber	✓		✓			✓
Silvia D'Amelio						
Sue Cotterill						
Vince Aiello	✓	✓	✓	Secretary	✓	✓
Todd Zimmerling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Executive Committee was voted in as follows, by acclamation:

Bob Gruszecki – Chair  
 Sandra Mellon – Vice Chair  
 Vince Aiello – Secretary  
 Ken Bailey – Treasurer

**b. Selection of MSL adjudicators for Wednesday, February 26, 2025:**

- Mark Boyce – Post-secondary rep
- Randy Collins – PAL rep
- Lu Carbyn – Nature Alberta
- Rick Blakeley – AWF
- Albert Mast – ATA
- Beau Cleland – Alberta Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Jeana Schuurman – APOS
- Will need remaining Member Groups to put forward a representative.

**10. Old Business**

- Todd presented each Bill and Chuck with a gift from the Board of Directors and thanks for their time and commitment on the Board of Directors.

**11. Closed Session**

None required.





12. **Date and Location of Next Meeting**

*(Attachment K)*

2025 Meeting schedule and calendar event list was discussed. No changes were made.

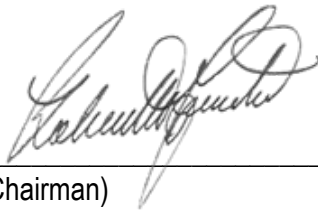
13. **Adjournment**

**MOTION # 56/24**

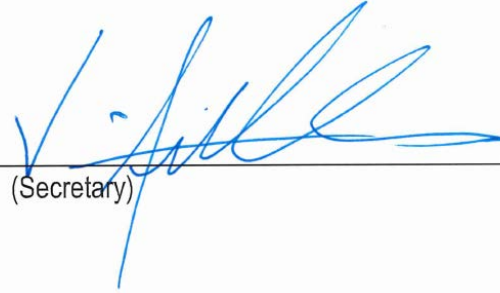
**Moved by: Gordon Burton  
Seconded by: Reg Prostebby**

Move that the December 12, 2024 meeting of the ACA Board of Directors adjourn at 1:38 PM.

**MOTION CARRIED**



(Chairman)



(Secretary)

**ACA AGM and Regular Board of Directors Meeting  
December 13, 2024**

**Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch (FWSB) Program Updates**

**Fisheries**

**FIN Surveys – 2024 Fall Monitoring and Programming**

- Our regional fisheries teams were very busy in the field this fall, assessing fish populations in 32 waterbodies throughout the province.
- Those staff are now working on data entry, quality control, analysis and reporting. Survey reports will be publicly available later this winter on Open Publications at [publications - Open Government](#)

**Wildlife**

**Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Wildlife Survey Trials**

- FWSB conducted some proof of concept trials to understand the strengths, limitations, feasibility, and costs of using RPAS surveys to estimate wildlife population size and composition. Trials focused on pronghorn and were completed in September 2024.
  - Two camera types were used - a gimbaled infrared camera and a gimbaled RGB (red, green and blue).
  - Initial footage from trial using the infrared camera indicates this method may be ineffective. Pronghorns could not be easily detected and sex and age (young vs adult) could not be determined.
  - When sample footage from the RGB camera trial was reviewed by FWSB staff, they were able to determine sex and age of pronghorns from the footage.
- A report summarizing findings from the trials and providing recommendations for future use or exploration of this and similar technology will be completed this winter/spring following contractor submission of footage and data.

**Winter Aerial Ungulate Surveys**

- FWSB worked with Hunting and Fishing Branch to understand their priorities for aerial ungulate surveys, as well as identifying within-branch priorities.
- Surveys for the 2024-25 winter season will start in January and focus on:
  - South - 102, 116, 118, 119, 624, 303, 304, 305, 306, 308, contingency 310 and 302
  - NE - 504, 506, 509
  - NW - 350, 511, 542, and 544 (alternate prey surveys); 536, 539 (Hay Zama bison survey)
- This is an ambitious list and completion will be subject to suitable survey conditions.

**2024 AIS Season**

**Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination**

- FWSB operated 7 Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination stations and also had a roving inspection crew. As of October 31, all stations were closed for the season.
- Over 13,000 inspections were completed with a total of 15 mussel-fouled watercraft intercepted over the season.

### **AIS-Related New Fines**

- Two fines were increased in 2024 related to aquatic invasive species programming:
  - Bypassing an open inspection station (under the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* S. 33.2(3)). This fine was raised from \$324 to \$4200. In the 2024 season, 22 charges were laid and 4 warnings issued.
  - Failing to pull lower hull or bilge in transporting a boat (under the Fisheries (Ministerial) Regulation S. 6.1). This fine was raised from \$180 to \$600. In the 2024 season 1 charge was laid and 19 warnings issued.

### **Provincial Task Force**

- The Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force, which advises Minister Schulz, met regularly over the summer and fall developing recommendations to enhance Alberta's invasive mussel defence.

### **Moss Ball Occurrence via Quebec Distributor**

- On October 22, 2024, there was another a moss ball occurrence in Alberta, with invasive mussels found in the moss balls.
- The purchaser in Fort McMurray was advised to hold inventories of moss balls for further direction from DFO Enforcement, who are taking the lead on inspections and possible enforcement.

### **Invasive Phragmites Occurrence**

- FWSB encountered invasive phragmites being used in as decorations at two separate weddings this summer.
- Seeds are likely viable in the heads encountered based on the plants' development stage.
- Staff leveraged previously established contacts with Amazon from the moss ball response in March 2021, and advised Amazon of awareness about import and possession prohibitions.
  - As a result, Amazon was able to remove access to invasive phragmites products in Canada.
  - While this is a positive step, it highlights the ongoing challenge of monitoring online e-commerce sellers.

### **Species at Risk**

#### **Inventory/Monitoring 2024**

- Species surveyed in 2024 included: American golden plover, greater short-horned lizard, tiny cryptantha, burrowing owl, woodland caribou, wood bison, sage-grouse, loggerhead shrike, swift fox, long-toed salamander, piping plover, and lake sturgeon (North Saskatchewan River citizen science).
- For more information on any of these species, please reach out to Kelly Williams, Director of Species at Risk and Stewardship ([kelly.williams@gov.ab.ca](mailto:kelly.williams@gov.ab.ca)).

### **Recovery Planning**

- We are focusing on bat conservation and have wrapped up public engagement on the draft Little brown and northern myotis recovery plan.
- Targeted engagement as part of the wood bison recovery planning process is underway.
- The Ronald Lake Buffalo Herd Cooperative Management Board, advisory to the Minister of EPA, is working on a management plan specific to the Ronald Lake wood bison population.

**Fish and Wildlife Indicators – Condition of the Environment**

- The Office of the Chief Scientist worked with FWSB to calculate and report on two fish and wildlife indicators. The first indicator summarizes the General Status of all 584 native vertebrate species in Alberta every five years from 2000 to 2020. The second indicator summarizes the General Status of over 1600 vascular plant species every five years dating back to 2015.
- The indicator reports can be found at [Condition of the environment | Alberta.ca](#).

**Nature Strategy**

- Lands Division is leading the development of a draft nature strategy based on input from public and stakeholder engagement earlier this year.

## **2024 FIN Surveys - Waterbodies/Reservoirs**

- Amisk Lake
- Berry Creek Reservior
- Blakett Lake
- Buck Lake
- Cow Lake
- Crawling Valley Reservoir
- Eagle Lake
- Equisetum Lake
- Fawcett Lake
- Floatingstone Lake
- Garner Lake
- Goodfish Lake
- Gregoire Lake
- Gull Lake
- Hilda Lake
- Iosegun Lake
- JacksonLake
- Kinnard Lake
- Lac Ste Anne
- Lake Isle
- Lake Newell
- Lessard Lake
- Milk River Ridge Reservoir
- Peerless Lake
- Pigeon Lake
- Rattlesnake (Sauder) Reservoir
- Shingingbank Lake
- Skeleton Lake
- Smoke Lake
- Sturgeon Lake
- Vandersteene Lake
- Wolf Lake