

Fisheries Program Agreement

Between:

Alberta Environment and Parks
(AEP)

-and-

Alberta Conservation Association
(ACA)

This agreement is made pursuant to the Wildlife Regulation, AR 143/97 and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AEP and ACA dated Dec 9, 2021.

Program Description

The Ministry of Environment and Parks (AEP) 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, AEP requires both internal and external resources to support management decisions and programs. 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 AEP High Priority Conservation Outcomes (HPCOs) 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 AEP protect, enhance and manage 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 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.

AEP 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 AEP/ACA Joint Programs Committee (JPC). Through this committee, ongoing

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

Outcomes

Yearly outcomes will be determined based on the specific approaches developed between AEP and ACA (through the JPC process) that are derived from the HPCOs. However, the following outcomes form the overarching expectations 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 AEP and ACA are effective in ensuring fisheries related HPCOs are discussed and clearly understood and appropriate approaches to address the HPCOs are developed.
- Fish stocking, aeration and evaluation is conducted at specified sites to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs.
- Angler surveys are completed to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs.
- Research to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs is undertaken.
- Specified actions from approved fish management and recovery plans are successfully implemented to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs
- Information and data is submitted to AEP 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. AEP 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 ACA Fish Stocking Plans**
(AEP requires fish stocking plans and aeration to effectively maintain the water bodies where stocking and aeration responsibility have been delegated to ACA).

AEP

- Provides HPCOs related to aeration and stocking 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 AEP to undertake agreed to work; and
- maintains Fish Culture Information System (FCIS) and Fish and Wildlife Management Information System (FWMIS).

ACA

- develops stocking and aeration plans, including identification of new sites (e.g. suggested water bodies, species, stocking rates and stocking schedule, all in accordance with Provincial policy) based on agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP through JPC, for information purposes;
- implements stocking and aeration plans (e.g. plans logistics and ensures delivery of fish to identified water bodies;
- 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 AEP 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** (AEP requires accurate information from resource users to help inform fisheries management decisions.)

AEP

- provides HPCOs relating to angler demographics, effort, catch and harvest to JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC;
- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from AEP to undertake agreed to work; and
- maintains FWMIS

ACA

- develops work plan to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP for information purposes;
- provides information to AEP in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS;
- provides third-party independent assessment of the effectiveness of regulatory or management changes in meeting stated fisheries goals; and
- ensures stakeholders are aware of the results of the projects.

- 3. Applied Research** (A necessary component of the adaptive management process, AEP requires science-based research, designed to answer specific questions relevant to policy and management decisions.)

AEP

- provides HPCO's related to research needs to the JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC;
- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from AEP to undertake agreed to work; and
- Interprets research results to inform development of management and/or policy actions.

ACA

- develops work plan to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP through JPC for information purposes;
- facilitates research projects to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs, through both direct projects and provision of grant monies;
- informs on work being undertaken and timelines;
- provides information to AEP 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. AEP requires external capacity to assist in implementing these actions.)

AEP

- provides HPCOs related to fish species recovery and management 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 AEP to undertake agreed to work.

ACA

- develops work plan to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP through JPC for information purposes;
- informs on implementation progress and identifies opportunities to refine;
- provides information to AEP in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- Ensures stakeholders are aware of project results.

Fisheries Program Performance Measures

AEP 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 JPC to help guide program refinement for the following years.

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

- accounting of levy funds by program area;
- all relevant information for FCIS and FWMIS provided to AEP within 30 days of fiscal year end;
- stakeholders are aware of activities supporting the Fisheries Program Agreement;
- Publically accessible summary reports are available on-line within 30 days of fiscal year-end, including reports related to on-going projects; and
- Over a 5 year period the majority of related HPCOs have been addressed.

Program Term

This Agreement shall commence upon the date of signature and remain in effect until Dec 9, 2024.

This Agreement is subject to annual review and may be amended from time to time as outlined in the MOU signed Dec 9, 2021 between ACA and AEP.