

## Wildlife 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 Alberta's *Wildlife Act* and *Wildlife Regulation*, undertakes projects and programs to address AEP High Priority Conservation Outcomes (HPCOs) 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 AEP protect, enhance and manage the diversity and abundance of Alberta's wildlife populations and the biological communities that support them. These activities include the delivery of upland bird enhancement projects, delivery of MULTISAR, 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.

AEP 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 AEP/ACA Joint Programs 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**

Yearly outcomes will be determined based the specific activities developed between AEP and ACA (through the JPC process) that are derived from HPCOs. However, the following outcomes form the overarching expectations of the delegated Wildlife Program. These outcomes play a vital role in supporting adaptive management of Alberta's wildlife resource and offer metrics to help ensure ongoing program success.

- Communications between AEP and ACA are effective in ensuring wildlife related HPCOs are discussed and clearly understood and appropriate approaches to address the HPCOs are developed.
- Monitoring programs to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs are implemented.
- Delegated portion of MULTISAR/SHARP is undertaken to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs.
- Wildlife recovery and management projects are undertaken to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs.
- Upland game bird enhancement projects are undertaken to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs.
- Research projects are initiated 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. 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. Wildlife Population Monitoring** (AEP 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.)

### AEP

- provides HPCOs related to wildlife population monitoring to the JPC;
- provides input to annual program development, through the JPC;
- AEP, through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from AEP to undertake agreed to work; and
- maintains Fish and Wildlife Information System (FWMIS).

ACA

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

**2. Delivery of private land wildlife habitat projects (e.g. MULTISAR, SHARP)**

AEP

- provides HPCOs relevant to private land habitat projects to the JPC;
- provides resources as agreed by AEP and ACA;
- provides input into annual program development, through the JPC;
- Coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from AEP to undertake agreed to work through the JPC; and
- maintains FWMIS.

ACA

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

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

AEP

- Provides HPCOs related to wildlife recovery and/or management plans to the JPC;
- provides input into annual program development, through the JPC;
- coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from AEP to undertake agreed to work through the JPC process; and

- maintains FWMIS.

ACA

- develops work plan to address agreed upon approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP for information purposes;
- informs on progress and identifies opportunities to refine methodologies and protocols;
- provides information to AEP in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

**4. Upland Game Bird Enhancement** (AEP 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.)

AEP

- Presents HPCOs related to upland game bird enhancement to the JPC;
- provides input into annual program development through the JPC;
- through the JPC coordinates all permits, licenses or approvals required from AEP to undertake agreed to work; and
- ensures continuity between hunting regulations and game bird release program.

ACA

- develops work plan to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP 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;
- leads annual review of implementation and identifies opportunities to refine;
- provides information to AEP in an annual report, project summary report and relevant data to FWMIS; and
- ensures project results are communicated to stakeholders.

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

AEP

- provides related to applied research to the JPC;
- provides input into work plan development, through JPC process, as requested by ACA; and

- maintains FWMIS.

#### ACA

- develops work plan to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs;
- communicates work plan to AEP for information purposes;
- facilitates research projects to address agreed to approaches supporting HPCOs through direct projects and through provision of grant monies;
- informs on work being undertaken and timelines;
- provides information to AEP 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**

AEP 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 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 is submitted to FWMIS within 30 days of fiscal year-end;
- stakeholders are aware of activities supporting the Wildlife Program Agreement; and
- publicly accessible summary reports are available on-line within 30 days of fiscal year-end, including reports related to on-going projects.
- 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.