

2008/2009



Annual Operating Plan

Annual Operating Plan 2008 – 2009

For copies of this document, contact:
Alberta Conservation Association

101 – 9 Chippewa Road

Tel: (780) 410-1999

Fax: (780) 464-0990

Email: info@ab-conservation.com

Website: www.ab-conservation.com



Alberta Conservation
Association

Conserving Alberta's Wild Side

Our Mission

ACA conserves, protects and enhances fish, wildlife and habitat for all Albertans to enjoy, value and use.

Our Vision

An Alberta with an abundance and diversity of fish, wildlife and their habitat; where future generations continue to use, enjoy and value our rich outdoor heritage.

Photo Credits:

Gordon Court, David Fairless, Doug Manzer



Contents

1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Linkage to ACA's 2008 – 2011 Strategic Business Plan	5
2.0 Program Areas.....	6
2.1 Finance and Administration Program.....	7
2.2 Communications Program	8
2.3 Human Resources Program	10
2.4 Information Technology	12
2.5 Wildlife Program.....	14
2.6 Fisheries Program.....	20
2.7 Land Management Program	26
2.8 Report A Poacher and Compensation Programs (formerly Human Interaction).....	29

3.0 Grant Funds	30
3.1 Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.....	31
3.2 Grants in Biodiversity	31
3.3 Habitat Securement Fund	31
3.4 ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Alberta.....	31
4.0 Monitoring and Accountability	32
5.0 Financial Summary.....	34



1.0

Introduction

For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, we have made several changes to our Annual Operating Plan. In an attempt to make this document more user friendly, we have significantly shortened the text. All relevant information with respect to the types of projects to be undertaken and the budgets are now supplied in an abbreviated table format. It is our hope that this new, shortened format results in the document receiving greater use throughout the year, not only by our stakeholders who are interested in what projects we are undertaking, but also by our employees.

As of September 2007, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) moved to a provincially based program model and began its 2008-2009 program planning using this model. As such, programs and budgets are no longer reported on a regional basis. All projects are now within eight program areas: 1) *Finance and Administration*, 2) *Communications*, 3) *Human Resources*, 4) *Information Technology*, 5) *Wildlife*, 6) *Fisheries*, 7) *Land Management*, and 8) *Report A Poacher and Compensation* (formerly *Human Interaction*). This new programming model helps to ensure projects within a single program area are standardized throughout the province. This model also avoids regionally specific issues taking precedent over provincial priorities.

In addition to the changes to our program management, we have also recognized the need to increase communication with our stakeholders and increase the public profile of ACA. To this end, funds have been allocated for undertaking a significant marketing campaign involving print, radio and television. This media campaign focuses on two key areas: 1) to increase public awareness of the ACA; and 2) to recruit new people into hunting, angling and trapping. We anticipate meeting with our member groups in the early spring of 2008 to discuss how we can work together to promote these activities in Alberta.

ACA is making a concerted effort to interact more with our stakeholders by attending more tradeshow and providing oral presentations to local groups wherever possible. We are increasing our quarterly communication with our member groups to keep them informed of what ACA is doing and where we could use their help as volunteers.

In January 2008, ACA held a facilitated member group meeting to discuss issues and concerns member group representatives had with ACA. This full-day meeting was very successful at identifying a number of underlying issues and identifying potential solutions.

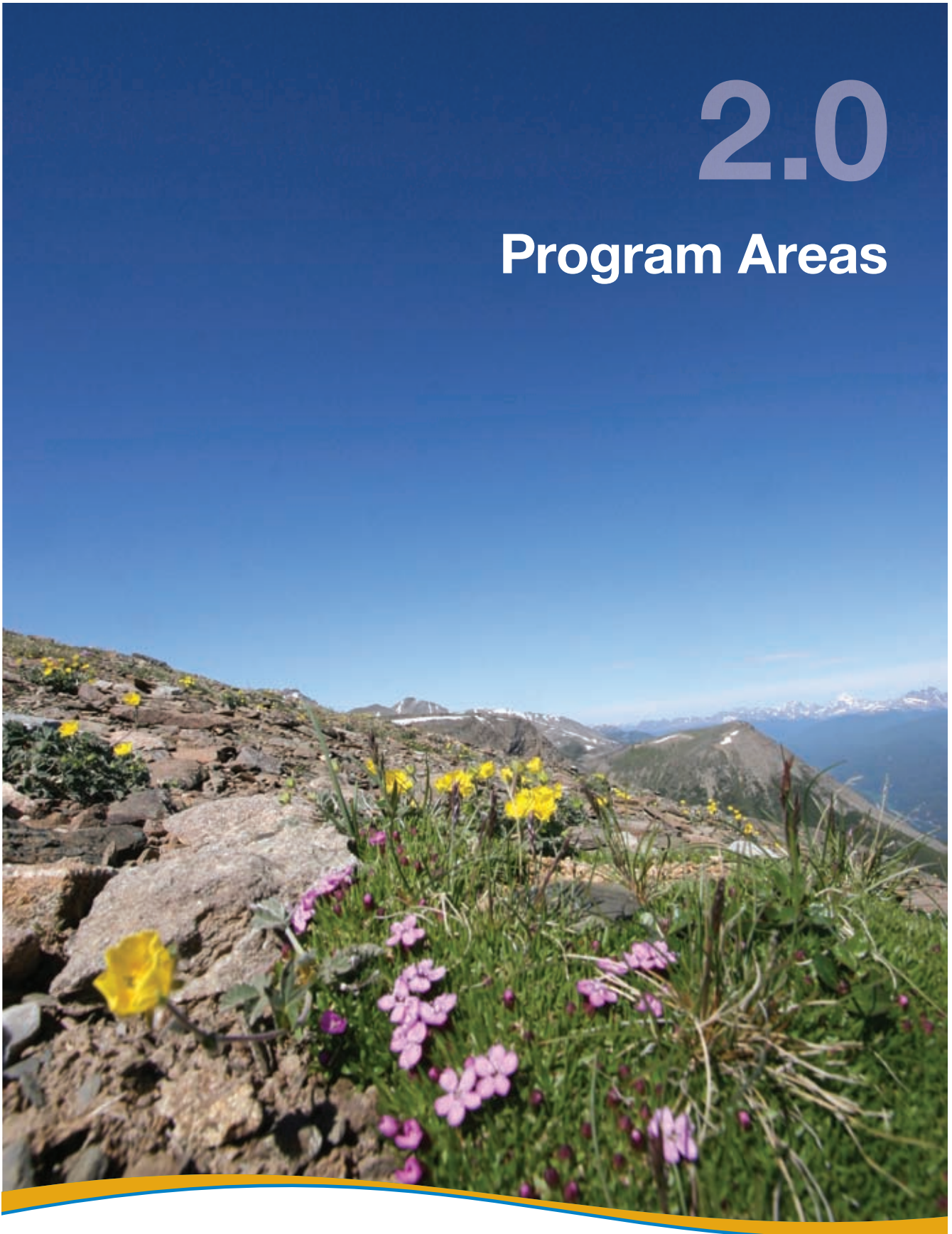
Senior management is working through the notes from this meeting and is implementing as many of the suggested solutions as possible. Above all, ACA management is committed to regaining and rebuilding the trust of the member groups so that all stakeholders look upon ACA as a valued and important part of conservation in Alberta.

1.1 Linkage to ACA's 2008 – 2011 Strategic Business Plan

In 2008–2009, ACA adheres to the focus and direction as articulated in our 2008–2011 Strategic Business Plan. We use the Strategic Business Plan as a roadmap to maintain our sense of direction and to remain focused on the goals and strategies that influence our effectiveness. Having this clear sense of direction, we are able to develop the most appropriate means to reach our goals, which contributes to our success. The 2008–2009 Annual Operating Plan identifies the goals that take us to our intended destination, and each program manager has reviewed the objectives and strategies laid out in the Strategic Business Plan in developing their respective program plans for 2008-2009.

2.0

Program Areas



2.1 Finance and Administration Program

The finance and administration program focuses on ensuring smooth, day-to-day operations of ACA. Tasks undertaken in this program include payroll, payables, receivables and providing administrative support for ACA management and Board of Directors.

Table 1: Finance and Administration Projects for 2008/09

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Administration	Provide administrative support to all areas to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of internal operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support given to Board of Directors and Executive. Maintain building operations. 	\$503,015	\$737,500	\$1,240,515
Finance	Provide financial services that safeguard the assets of the company, ensure legal and contractual obligations are met; provide accurate and timely information to the decision makers of ACA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively manage assets. Completed, on-time legal reporting. Meet management's information needs; facilitate effective decision making. 	\$543,545	\$40,000	\$583,545



2.2 Communications Program

The Communications program focuses on the mechanisms necessary to increase the profile and awareness of programs we deliver in our role as a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO) for Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) and as a non-profit organization.

The Communications program is responsible for external and internal communications, media relations, publications, outreach, graphic and web design, messaging and brand management. In addition to these responsibilities, we maintain a cost-efficient program through partnerships, in-kind support and by establishing revenue-generating opportunities.

We are also guided by the Public Information, Education and Communication Operations Agreement, which outlines the activities, roles, and responsibilities required for ACA and SRD to work together to provide Alberta's hunters and anglers with information related to conservation.

The major activities that we will implement this year are:

- The production, publication and distribution of the Annual Report, Strategic Business Plan, Annual Operating Plan, two issues of Conservation Magazine, the conservation site guide, media kit and style guide.
- Launch a brand awareness campaign.
- Develop, design and launch components of ACA website and continue to build multimedia abilities.
- Maintain, update and continue the promotion of ACA Conservation Sites.
- Assist with the completion of the re-branding exercise. Components include the truck fleet, promotional items and field identity, and property signage in coordination with the Land program.
- Provide Alberta's hunters and anglers with effective and current information and communications related to conservation and how levy dollars are spent.
- Hold quarterly meetings of the Joint Communications Committee established with SRD.

Table 2: Communication Projects for 2008/09

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Advertising/ Marketing	Identify key advertising and marketing opportunities and implement strategies that align with and support ACA's objectives to increase program and brand recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TV and print marketing campaign launched. · Partnership growth. · Brand trucks and property signage. 	\$49,870	\$50,000	\$99,870
Internal Communications	Provide communications support to the President and CEO, VP and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Launch internal marketing campaign before public launch. · Collaborative delivery of <i>Use Respect-Ask First</i> Program. · Develop key communications (Media Releases, PSAs, style guide etc.). · Establish program communications working group to maximize promotional opportunities. · Program representation continues on the magazine editorial committee. 	\$8,000		
External Communications/ Outreach	Increase visibility among stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Program, design and launch of new website components. · Monitor external website to ensure currency of information. · Expand conservation site database. · Represent organization at tradeshow and events. · Create visual media display. · Submit key award applications. 	\$21,000	\$20,000	\$41,000
Print and Publications	To enhance visibility and recognition among stakeholders, partners and the media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Publish two issues of <i>Conservation Magazine</i>. · Develop and produce 100,000 copies of the Conservation Site Guide. · Coordinate, develop and produce the Annual Report. · Design and print the Strategic Business Plan and Annual Operating Plan. · Write and design a media information package that is available via print, CD and online. 	\$100,290	\$8,000	\$108,290
Promotional Materials	Provide support and brand management advice on promotional materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Produce a cohesive line of recognizable branded materials. 	\$66,000		
Sponsorship	Use sponsorship in the form of promotional items to build and maintain stakeholder relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Enhance and respond to donation requests for promotional items for stakeholder events. 	\$26,400		
Organizational Requests	Provide support for extra requests made by the President & CEO and Vice President.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Allow for extra flexibility in communications. 	\$10,000		

2.3 Human Resources Program

The Human Resources program focuses primarily on employee retention and recruitment through a number of different projects. Key to this program is the yearly online survey that allows for the identification of challenges within the organization and allows management to develop appropriate projects to improve or eliminate these challenges.

In 2008/09 the Human Resources program will focus on solutions to facilitate communication from management to region staff, as well as solutions to barriers identified in the performance review process in regards to roles and responsibilities. By focusing directly with these identified barriers, ACA can improve employee retention and the ability to recruit new staff.



Table 3: Human Resources Projects for 2008/09

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Professional Workshop	Identify, track and promote participation in professional workshops throughout Alberta, for all employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase professional knowledge and skill base. · Increase employee retention rates. 	\$13,000		\$13,000
Conferences	Identify, track and promote participation in professional conferences. Encourage presentations at conferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase professional knowledge and skill base. · Recognize ACA better, through posters and oral presentations. 	\$20,600		\$20,600
Professional Development	Develop plans for employees to identify courses needed to advance in career.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase professional knowledge and skill base. · Increase employee satisfaction with opportunities to develop in their career. · Increase employee retention rates. 	\$71,398	\$25,000	\$96,398
Online Survey	Determine level of employee satisfaction with various aspects of ACA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Identify problem areas and develop plan to deal with these areas. 	\$13,500		\$13,500
Recruitment	Recruit the best possible candidates for ACA job postings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hire high-quality employees that fit ACA culture. 	\$25,000		\$25,000
Awards	Recognize employees for long term employment and other work-related achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recognize employees for their achievements. · Increase employee satisfaction with recognition programs. · Increase employee retention rates. 	\$9,500		\$9,500
Health and Wellness	Provide an extra level of health benefit to our employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase employee satisfaction with benefits plan. · Create healthier employees. · Increase employee retention rate. 	\$32,500		\$32,500



2.4 Information Technology

Information Technology plays a vital supporting role for all ACA operations. In 2008/09, the IT department will improve web-based linkages between offices, including creating a solution for e-mail issues and better access to our own server. In 2008/09, the IT department will explore the possibility of providing web hosting from our server for our Member Groups.

Table 4: Information Technology Projects for 2008/09

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Information Technology/ Systems	Provide technical support to all areas involving information systems. Meet high level of security for ACA's networks. Evaluate and improve ACA's information systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Operate efficient information systems . · Information systems utilize up-to-date technology. · ACA network and data structures are kept secure from external sources. · Existing technology provides information in an efficient and effective manner. 	\$369,897		\$369,897





2.5 Wildlife Program

The wildlife program focuses on the following four thematic areas: 1) ungulates, 2) upland game birds, 3) waterfowl and 4) species at risk. Program objectives are prioritized at the provincial level through strategic and operational planning into the following nine possible categories: (1) Species/Population Inventory, (2) Plan Development and Implementation, (3) Species Management and Enhancement, (4) Aerial Ungulate Surveys, (5) Applied Research/Ecological Studies, (6) Status Assessment, (7) Habitat Inventory and Enhancement, (8) Recreation Opportunities and (9) Education and Outreach. A pivotal step in our program development is ongoing discussion with ASRD and other external experts and stakeholders to gain insight into current wildlife priorities and to build opportunities for collaboration.

For 2008-2009, ACA's wildlife program will focus on delivering aerial ungulate surveys, identifying habitat limitations for a variety of ungulates, and implementing associated habitat enhancement activities. Smaller components of the program will include defining a sharp-tailed grouse inventory tool, habitat enhancement for pheasants and cavity-nesting waterfowl, carrying out recovery actions outlined in approved provincial recovery plans, assisting with assessing the status of Alberta's wildlife, and contributing to education and outreach initiatives. The wildlife program will also provide input into ACA's Land Management program to ensure effective linkages between these two programs.

Table 5: Wildlife Projects for 2008/09

Ungulates					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Aerial Ungulate Surveys Multi-year	Provide information on ungulate population size, trends, demographics, and reproductive outputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and report population information for approximately 30 to 35 of ASRD's priority survey units. 	\$1,161,802	\$80,000	\$1,241,802
Elk Habitat Planning Tool 3 of 3 years	Deliver a planning tool that is used by managers in the Foothills Natural Region to evaluate alternative industrial disturbance scenarios and to identify habitat compensation/ restoration opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A user-friendly, validated tool is available for use in the Clearwater region. Develop and test for applicability data, layers required for applying the tool to the Foothills and Woodlands regions 	\$46,175		\$46,175
Elk sightability in the Montane and Foothills Parkland Natural Subregions 1 of 4 years	Develop a correction function for elk population estimates in the Montane and Foothills Parkland Natural Subregions under varying environmental conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing elk sightability model developed in Upper and Lower Foothills Natural Subregions to construct correction function for elk collared as part of the Southwest Alberta Montane Elk Study. If required, modify existing Foothills model. Provide data to SRD for entry to FWMIS. 	\$96,491		\$96,491



Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Pronghorn Antelope Habitat Selection 1-year	Produce information on key habitat needs for pronghorn that contributes towards management in the Grassland Natural Region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provide information on habitat use and movement to ASRD to assist in pronghorn management (final report to be completed in FY2008). · Complete a gap analysis of outstanding information and management needs for pronghorn antelope in conjunction with ASRD and academic partners. · Scope need for further study for one or more outstanding information gaps. · Provide data to SRD for entry to FWMIS. 	\$67,453		\$67,453
Ungulate Winter Range Restoration Multi-year	Restore natural disturbance patterns in low-disturbance watershed sub-basins by providing planning support to ASRD's prescribed burn program and using mechanical clearing means where deemed appropriate to environmental and social conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Incorporate wildlife habitat needs into two ASRD burn plans. · Collect baseline habitat information for two proposed treatment areas. · Two prescribed burns occur in ungulate winter range portions of the Bighorn Backcountry (R11 FMU). · Outstanding mechanical treatment obligations are completed. 	\$123,348	\$111,000	\$234,348
Bighorn Sheep Population Demographics 1-year	Contribute to bighorn sheep management in southwestern Alberta by producing information on key ecological variables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provide information on demographics and growth limitations to ASRD and the greater conservation and scientific community to assist in sheep management throughout Alberta and North America. · Submit manuscript on results of this project to a peer reviewed journal in FY2008. · Scope need and, if positive, implement habitat treatments in Subalpine Natural Subregion to benefit sheep populations. 	\$22,830		\$22,830

Species at Risk					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Loggerhead Shrike Survey 1 year	Provide population data for 2008 loggerhead shrike survey. Participation depends on securing partner funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Deliver roadside surveys on predefined routes. · Contribute data to provincial population estimate. · Provide data to SRD for entry to FWMIS. · Test HSI model developed through MULTISAR. 	\$12,031	\$4,500	\$16,531
Alberta Piping Plover Recovery Program Multi-year	Implement select productivity enhancement, monitoring, habitat enhancement and public education initiatives detailed in AB piping plover recovery plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Apply predator exclosures to as many plover nests as possible. · Conduct adult plover surveys at 25+ core breeding lakes in AB. · Monitor, initiate and complete habitat stewardship initiatives on private land. · Provide data to SRD for entry to FWMIS. 	\$73,357	\$69,050	\$142,407
Alberta Northern Leopard Frog Recovery (NLFR) Program Multi-year	Implement select productivity enhancement, monitoring, habitat enhancement and public education initiatives detailed in AB northern leopard frog recovery plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assist with location and collection of egg mass and reintroduction of NLFR. · Survey 20 historical and recent NLFR sites and assess for habitat threats. · Implement habitat stewardship initiatives at 1 to 2 sites. · Provide data to SRD for entry to FWMIS. 	\$66,810	\$51,000	\$117,810

Species at Risk					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Alberta Wildlife Status Reports Multi-year	Coordinate and develop detailed status reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish four new detailed Alberta Wildlife Status Reports. Provide data to SRD for entry to FWMIS or ANHIC (for plants). 	\$ 28,187		\$ 28,187
Petro-Can Sustainable Grasslands Applied Studies Multi-year	Develop collaborative grasslands applied study program that will focus on sustainable land-use management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three applied projects – 1) Conservation design for energy development and sage grouse recovery in SE AB (action in recovery plan). 2) Silver sagebrush reclamation and best management practices for SE AB (action in recovery plan). 3) Pronghorn antelope as an indicator for conservation design in the northern great plains. 	\$21,179	\$150,000	\$171,179
Alberta Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program Multi-year	Engage members of the general public in reporting occurrence data for amphibians in Alberta.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit 50+ new volunteers to the program. Submit all contributed occurrence data to SRD for entry to FWMIS. Give presentations on the program to at least 5 groups/schools/ organizations. 	\$17,188	\$6,500	\$23,688
MULTISAR Multi-year	Engage landowners in stewardship activities to help conserve species at risk in the Milk River Basin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Habitat Conservation Strategy (HCS) for each of 4 cooperating landowners totaling 86,067 acres. Incorporate recovery actions from AB recovery plans into HSC's and implement habitat enhancement initiatives identified in the completed HCS's. 	\$143,669	\$198,600	\$342,269

Education and Outreach

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Wildlife and Fire Interpretive Hike 1 of 2 years	Take advantage of a recent burn in close proximity to a major road in the Central East Slopes to assess the feasibility of implementing an interpretive trail and outreach program focused on the benefits of fires for wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with multiple agencies and stakeholders, including ASRD and Tourism, Parks, Recreation, and Culture. Design an effective outreach program based on input from successful fire-wildlife programs. Ensure adequate accessibility for all ages; map existing trail network and assess whether additional trails are needed. Plan logistics of building the trail and appropriate signage needs. 	\$25,800		\$25,800



2.6 Fisheries Program

The Fisheries Program supports and enhances conservation activities that retain the diversity and abundance of fish populations, communities and the biological processes and habitats that support them. The program informs and supports ASRD in the development and implementation of management plans for priority species and the management of consumptive and non-consumptive uses.

Our Fisheries program is, therefore, designed to support fishing as a recreational use by Alberta anglers, and to implement fish conservation efforts in an effective, credible and collaborative manner that will sustain or improve Alberta's fish populations. Current program activities are organized into five thematic areas

1) Aeration, 2) Enhanced Fish Stocking, 3) Riparian Conservation, 4) Lentic (standing water bodies; e.g., lakes), and 5) Lotic (running water bodies; e.g., rivers and streams) inventory and monitoring. Activities under the Lentic and Lotic themes are complementary and include inventory and monitoring of priority species to provide timely and accurate information on population structure, abundance and status, as well as to describe and monitor levels of angler use, harvest, and associated demographics in priority waters.

The ACA Fisheries Program also manages and delivers the rivers and lakes sampling sub-program under the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Inventory (ABMI) aquatic program.



Table 6: Fisheries Projects for 2008/09

Aeration					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Lake Aeration	Create or enhance recreational angling opportunities for Albertans by developing and maintaining fish habitats to ensure year-round survival of stocked fish populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensure over-wintering survival and prevention of summer-kill of stocked trout in 16 water bodies distributed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Northwest Region, 8 water bodies: Moonshine, Cummings, Figure Eight, Swan, Sulphur, East Dollar, Cecil Thompson and Spring lakes. · East Slopes, 5 water bodies: Beaver, Mitchell, Millers, Ironside and Fiesta lakes. Commence access site development on Blindtrail Lake. · Southern Region, 3 water bodies: Boelke's Pond, Hansen's Reservoir, and Coleman Fish and Game Pond. 	\$189,667	\$31,000	\$220,667
Enhanced Fish Stocking					
Enhanced Fish Stocking	Provide anglers with increased angling opportunity to catch and creel more fish while maintaining the integrity of Alberta's natural waters and fish populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Stock 131,100 twenty-cm trout into designated water bodies. 	\$230,156		\$230,156



Lotic Fisheries Inventory and Monitoring					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Belly River Stock Assessment	Document fish species composition, relative abundance and density in the lower Belly River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and report fish species composition, relative abundance, and density in the lower Belly River. Provide data to fisheries managers for evaluation of extent cold-water fishery in the lower Belly River. Information available for input into local water management plans. 	\$13,404		\$13,404
Castle River Drainage Cutthroat Trout Population Assessment-Phase 2	Assess the status of the cutthroat trout population in the Castle River drainage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document distribution, abundance, density, and size-structure of the cutthroat trout population in the drainage. Enter Phase 2 (field) data into the Provincial Fisheries Management database. 	\$136,437	\$5,000	\$141,437
Upper Oldman Drainage Bull Trout Population Assessment-Phase 2	Assess the status of the bull trout population in the Upper Oldman River drainage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document migratory adult bull trout population size, redd abundance, and distribution in four tributaries to the Oldman River. Assessment of the prevalence and distribution of migratory and stream-resident bull trout life history forms in the upper Oldman River drainage. Enter Phase 2 (field) data into the Provincial Fisheries Management database. 	\$78,165	\$5,000	\$83,165



Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Upper Little Smoky River Arctic Grayling Population Assessment-Phase 3	Assess the status of the Arctic Grayling population in the upper Little Smoky River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce report on the distribution, abundance, density and size-structure of the Arctic grayling population. Make information available for managers to support decisions to minimize the effects of recreational and industrial activities on the upper Little Smoky Arctic Grayling population. 	\$43,717		\$43,717
Ram River Drainage Bull Trout Spawning Stock Distribution and Abundance- Phase 2	Document the characteristics of bull trout spawning activity in the Fall Creek drainage (tributary to the Ram River) and relatedness of the Fall Creek stock to bull trout in the Ram and North Saskatchewan rivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the timing, magnitude and location of bull trout spawning in the Fall Creek drainage. Document the overwintering location(s) of the Fall Creek bull trout spawning stock. Determine the relatedness of the Fall Creek bull trout spawning stock to stocks in the Bighorn, Ram and North Saskatchewan rivers. Enter Phase 2 (field) data into the Provincial Fisheries Management database. 	\$117,802	\$62,030	\$179,832
Arctic Grayling Population Fragmentation in Whitecourt Area Drainages (Freeman, Chickadee, Windfall, Lobstick rivers) and Lower Athabasca Grayling Status-Phase 1	<p>Examine effects of increased industrial activity, road construction, and angler access on the distribution, connectivity, and abundance of Arctic grayling populations and health of supporting aquatic systems.</p> <p>Collect preliminary data and prepare detailed study design for Lower Athabasca.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on extent of watershed fragmentation and relate to distribution, connectivity and abundance of Arctic grayling populations. Provide data to ASRD for input to reviewing provincial legislatures on ground rules and codes of practices for road/stream crossings. Provide input for informational posters. Enter data into the Provincial Fisheries Management Database. Prepare manuscript for peer-reviewed publication. Design proposal with detailed study to investigate status of Arctic grayling. Generate database on Arctic grayling for the lower North Saskatchewan drainage. 	\$167,860	\$16,000	\$183,860

Lentic Fisheries Inventory and Monitoring					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Lentic Angling and Stock Assessment	Provide information on fish stocks and sport fisheries to aid fisheries management at priority water bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess walleye stocks in Elinor, Ironwood, Haig and Wadlin Lakes to generate data on population structure, abundance and stock status. Conduct angler surveys to describe levels of angler use, harvest and demographics at Pinehurst, Moose, Pine, Buck, and Gull lakes. Produce sport fishery and stock assessment reports for walleye, northern pike, and lake whitefish. Formulate fisheries management plans from data used by ASRD. 	\$167,053	\$4,550	\$171,603
Trout stocking evaluation – Edmonton area	Understand the effect of recreational harvest on stocked trout fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop stock assessment tool. Assess population abundance and structure. Assess angler utility in regards to stocking efficiency and fishing quality. 	\$97,769	\$2,500	\$100,269
Wabasca Lakes Walleye Movements	Determine the spatial and temporal bounds of spawning walleye in North and South Wabasca Lakes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to ASRD for the evaluation and/or adjustments to current conservation closure to protect spring spawning walleye. 	\$63,766	\$10,000	\$73,766
Winagami Lake walleye spawning inventory	Determine if the adjacent Boone's Slough serves as spawning grounds for walleye from the lake and the effects of changes in water levels and water quality on walleye movement between the two habitats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish timeframe and associated water level and quality for spawning walleye movement into and out of Boone's Slough. Provide recommendations to ASRD for future habitat enhancement activities. 	\$10,766		\$10,766



Riparian Conservation

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Riparian Conservation in: 1) Beaverlodge River 2) South Heart River / Lesser Slave Lake 3) Todd/Beaver Creek 4) Battle/Red River 5) Bearberry Creek drainages	To enhance, maintain and protect priority riparian habitat through collaboration with private landowners, government, industry and other stakeholders. Continue to develop and implement appropriate monitoring protocols and Beneficial Management Practices for new and existing riparian enhancement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete annual field inspection and riparian health site assessments (Cows and Fish - short form assessment) for existing project sites. Establish 1 to 3 new riparian conservation projects and associated agreements (fencing agreements, alternate water sources, land acquisition, etc.) in each of the five drainages listed. Complete riparian health site assessments for each new project site. Expand awareness of and participation in the program through increased public presentations and direct contact with key shoreline property owners within the priority areas. Represent and participate in Watershed Groups/Councils/Stewardship Networks in all five drainages. Develop Bearberry Creek Conservation Working Group. 	\$278,553	\$49,000	\$327,553

ABMI River and Lake Sampling

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Program	To generate data that will aid in proper management and conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity in Alberta.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide data on physical characteristics, physiochemistry, and biota for 8 river systems and 8 lakes for input to the ABMI. 		\$300,000	\$300,000



2.7 Land Management Program

The Land Management Program encompasses activities intended to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and to increase consumptive and non-consumptive opportunities including angling and hunting. The major activities of this program for 2008/09 are: 1) Habitat Securement 2) ACA Conservation Site Maintenance and Management and 3) Recreational Opportunity Initiatives.

Habitat securement initiatives are used to secure important wildlife and fisheries habitats within focal areas across the province. The program also enhances recreational opportunities for both consumptive and non-consumptive users. Securement may occur through direct purchase, land donations, donated conservation easements, habitat lease agreements or protective notation.

ACA conservation site maintenance and management includes a number of investments made by the ACA. This includes maintenance and management of fisheries access sites, former Buck For Wildlife (BFW) properties, ACA titled lands, lands with conservation easements, riparian stream bank fencing projects and properties involved in the abandoned farmstead program.

Recreational opportunity initiatives on private land focus on communication tools and activities required to promote and increase public access to wildlife and fisheries habitat resources where stewardship of conservation-rich habitat is recognized. This includes the communication and delivery of the Use Respect Program aimed at increasing access to privately owned lands. Other activities managed under this program include ACA's online conservation site database promoting ACA and partner properties where hunting and angling is permitted.

Table 7: Land Management Projects for 2008/09

Habitat Securement					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Partner Securement Funds	To secure, protect and maintain high priority wildlife and fish habitat that provide sustainable recreational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and protect 1,000 acres of wildlife and fish habitat through land purchase, donated lands, and donated conservation easements. Increase sustainable recreational opportunities across the province. 	\$55,713	\$550,000	\$605,713
Boreal Habitat Conservation Initiative (Suncor)	To secure, protect and maintain important native habitat for wildlife, fish and recreational users in the Boreal Natural Region through strategic corporate partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure 640 acres of Boreal Habitat through acquisition within the Boreal habitat focal areas. Increase sustainable recreational opportunities within the Boreal Natural Region. 	\$83,732	\$350,000	\$433,732
Landowner Habitat Program	To protect and retain important habitats and enhance recreational opportunities on privately owned lands through habitat/access lease agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and protect important wildlife and fish habitat. Access to additional recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers on private land. Increase recognition by both landowners and the general public that habitat loss is the main issue that threatens wildlife and fish populations. 	\$54,363		\$54,363



Conservation Site Maintenance and Management					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Conservation Site Maintenance and Management	To manage and maintain priority conservation sites that support a diversity of fish and wildlife species and enhance sustainable recreational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain, enhance and manage 200,000 acres of habitat on 280 conservation sites throughout the province. 	\$820,117	\$67,030	\$887,147
Management Plan Development	To complete management plans for ACA Conservation Sites (ACA titled lands and former BFW Properties) that define habitat management/ enhancement objectives, partner roles and responsibilities and compatible land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete management plans on 100 percent of titled lands and complete draft plans on 33 percent of crown ACA conservation sites. Identify management objectives and responsibilities between project partners and other stakeholders. 	\$65,951		\$65,951
Fisheries Access Sites	To maintain and enhance fisheries access sites that support and increase recreational angling opportunities across the province.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and maintain 43 fisheries access sites across the province. Maintain recreational opportunities for anglers to access key streams, rivers, lakes and ponds throughout the province. 	\$157,482		\$157,482
Streambank Fencing Strategy	Develop a strategy to re-negotiate long-term and eternal Buck for Wildlife agreements to maintain riparian protection benefits achieved in the past on priority water bodies while reducing annual streambank fence maintenance costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategy outlining options of reducing annual maintenance costs as well as ensuring continued stewardship of riparian habitats. Develop new ACA riparian project agreements to take the place of inherited BFW eternal-agreements on priority water bodies and a divesture of agreements on non-priority water bodies. 	\$65,291		\$65,291

Recreational Opportunity Initiatives					
Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
<i>Use Respect- Ask First</i>	To increase recreational access opportunities on privately owned lands through renewed promotion of the <i>Use Respect</i> Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revitalize <i>Use Respect</i> Program (new profile) and deliver collaboratively with other conservation partners. Increase hunting and angling opportunities on privately owned lands across Alberta. 	\$18,448		\$18,448

2.8

Report A Poacher and Compensation Programs (formerly Human Interaction)

This program area deals with three projects: 1) Shot Livestock, 2) Predator Compensation and 3) Report A Poacher. Through renewed negotiations with ASRD enforcement, we plan to reduce ACA's role in all three of these programs, only to promote and administer the funds. Of the three projects, Report A Poacher is the most widely known and most widely used. ACA will continue to work closely with ASRD to ensure Report A Poacher continues to have a high profile with the general public.

Table 8: Report A Poacher and Compensation Programs for 2008/09.

Project Name	Primary Purpose	Expected Outcomes	ACA	Partner	Total
Shot Livestock	Provide Alberta livestock producers reimbursement for losses or injury to specified livestock as a result of being shot by a person during an open big game or bird game hunting season.	· Make compensation payments as approved claims are received from ASRD.	\$95,000		\$95,000
Predator Compensation	Provide Alberta livestock producers reimbursement for losses or injury to specified livestock due to predation by wolf, cougar, grizzly bear, black bear or eagles.	· Make compensation payments as approved claims are received from ASRD.	\$15,000		\$15,000
Report A Poacher	Provide administrative and advertising support to the Report A Poacher Program. This is a shared program with ASRD, who are responsible for handling the investigation and enforcement side of the program.	· Continue high profile for the program and compensation for those qualifying for a reward.	\$120,244	\$5,100	\$125,344



3.0

Grant Funds

Each grant fund addresses a particular conservation priority. This ranges from a vast array of general conservation initiatives with the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund, support of graduate students interested in conservation issues through the ACA Grants in Biodiversity to the Habitat Securement Fund, which is designed to support the protection and acquisition of critical parcels of habitat throughout the province.

3.1

Grant Eligible Conservation Fund

In 2008, the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund (GECF) makes \$1.2 million available to conservation across Alberta. This fund aids the ACA in establishing Alberta as a leader in conservation. Proposals that address the goals as stated in ACA's Strategic Business Plan are considered. Grants made to partners enhance and supplement ACA's ability to meet its goals and objectives, and demonstrate value to wildlife, fish populations and/or the habitat on which they depend.

As part of the annual planning process, the ACA reviews the criteria for this fund and reaffirms or adjusts the criteria included in that year's Annual Operating Plan. The deadline for funding proposals to ACA is January of each year, and proposal reviews occur during the month of February.

The ACA Board of Directors appoints a Granting Committee comprised of three board members and ten citizens of Alberta who referee and assess the grant applications based on the established funding criteria. ACA administers the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund. Applicants are notified of the status of their submission by March 1st of each year.

3.2

Grants in Biodiversity

ACA, in collaboration with the Alberta Cooperative Conservation Research Unit, administers the ACA Grants in Biodiversity Program. This program facilitates graduate student research on the conservation of Alberta's biological diversity. ACA makes an annual contribution of \$225,000 to this program and participates as a member of the Grants Program Committee that awards these funds to selected graduate students.

3.3

Habitat Securement Fund

The aim of the Habitat Securement Fund (HSF) is to assist ACA's Land Management Program in obtaining its goal of conserving high value habitat. Although ACA's Land Management Program uses the HSF, the fund is open to receive applications from anyone or any group interested in obtaining funds for habitat securement. All applications are assessed by the Land Management Program to determine a ranking of the proposed purchase based on both conservation values and recreational values.

3.4

ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Alberta

The ACA Chair position was established through an endowment to the University of Alberta. On a yearly basis, ACA allocates \$20,000 to educational initiatives for wildlife professionals through the ACA Chair, thereby ensuring a close connection between the ACA chair and ACA biologists.



By embracing the core values of Excellence, Accountability and Innovation, we make continuous improvements an integral component of our operations. Taking advantage of the expertise and knowledge of our Board of Directors through a Standards Review Committee, a select group of projects or programs are reviewed annually on the merits of scientific credibility and efficiency to produce results that positively impact conservation in Alberta.

In 2008-2009 ACA will make changes to the way projects are developed and reviewed. As of September 2007, ACA moved to a provincial programming model with Manager of Wildlife Programs, Manager of Fisheries Programs and Manager of Land Programs. Each of these resource managers are responsible for the technical aspects of projects within their resource area. As a result, each of these managers have been selected for their technical expertise and their ability to design and evaluate the rigour of projects within their program area. With this new model we are ensuring standardization of projects throughout the province that occur within the same program area.

As of April 1, 2008 we introduced a more rigorous monitoring and accountability process that ensures that every project undertaken by ACA is completed in a safe manner, on time, on budget and to the highest technical quality. Thus, safety, timeline, budget and quality are four criteria on which every project manager is measured. All projects require detailed timelines outlining exactly when the final report is completed and released to the public. In all cases, the release of the public report is to occur within 90 days of the completion of data analysis.

We believe that by making our resource managers responsible for the technical quality of the projects, we can then have our regional managers concentrate on the operational issues to ensure projects are completed on time, on budget and in a safe manner. This year is the first year of this new management structure and the higher level of accountability placed on individual project managers. We continue to monitor the success of this new approach and make changes as required.



5.0

Financial Summary

The 2008-2009 budget is a balanced budget based on the assumption that levy revenue is \$10,090,802. This levy projection is based on a 20 per cent increase in levy revenue over 2007-2008 actual receipts. The revenue allocated in this budget consists of levy revenue and planned revenue generated from external sources such as grants and partnerships. The summary budget also includes interests generated from the Reserve Fund that is being allocated to the Habitat Securement Fund and the Biodiversity Grants.

ACA administration expenses for 2008-2009 are projected to be 18 per cent of our total budget, which is comparable to previous years. Administration expenses include the Administration, Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology programs (Table 9). Looking at what has been historically referred to as the "Resource Programs" (wildlife, fisheries and land management), the budget for 2008-2009 allocates \$9,020,202 or 89.4% of the levy revenue value directly back to wildlife, fish and land management.

Table 9: Summary Budget 2008/09.

Program	Aca (Levy Funds)	Partner Funds	Total Budget
Administration Program	\$503,018	\$737,500	\$1,240,518
Finance Program	\$543,545	\$40,000	\$583,545
Communications Program	\$516,125	\$78,000	\$594,125
Human Resource Program	\$269,498	\$25,000	\$294,498
Information Technology Program	\$369,897	\$0	\$369,897
Wildlife Program	\$2,775,014	\$985,010	\$3,760,024
Fisheries Program	\$2,098,389	\$522,459	\$2,620,848
Land Management Program	\$1,672,300	\$967,030	\$2,639,330
Report A Poacher and Compensation Program	\$230,244	\$5,100	\$235,344
Safety Program	\$92,671	\$0	\$92,671
ACA Chair	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
Grant Eligible Conservation Fund	\$1,000,000	\$200,000 ¹	\$1,200,000
Biodiversity Grants	\$0	\$225,000 ²	\$225,000
Habitat Securement Fund	\$0	\$500,000 ²	\$500,000
TOTAL BUDGET	\$10,090,802	\$4,284,999	\$14,375,800

Budget notes:

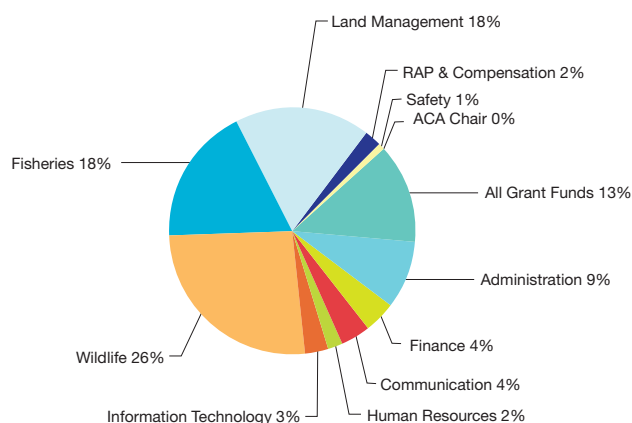
¹ The \$200,000 “partner funds” is actually carry forward within the Grant Eligible fund from previous years.

² The “partner funds” in the Biodiversity Grants and Habitat Securement Fund is actually funds from ACA’s investment account that are used to top up these funds on an annual basis.

A proposed additional carry forward of \$200,000 into the Communications budget for use in a retention and recruitment TV advertising campaign is planned. Funds are carried forward from an anticipated 2007/08 surplus.

As well, a proposed additional carry forward of \$400,000 is to be deposited into the Habitat Securement Fund. Funds are carried forward from an anticipated 2007/08 surplus.

Figure 1: 2008 – 2009
Budget Breakdown





Alberta Conservation
Association

Conserving Alberta's Wild Side

www.ab-conservation.com