



annual report

CONSERVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION 2004 - 2005





OUR VISION

An Alberta where there is good stewardship of our natural biological resources, where habitats are maintained and improved, where people work together so future generations can value, enjoy, and use those resources.

OUR MISSION

ACA will work to conserve, protect, and enhance our natural biological resources.

Chairman’s Message .02

Managing Director’s Message .03

Financial Highlights .04

ACA Story .06

ACA Team .08

ACA Strategy .12

ACA Conservation Funding .24

ACA Partners .28



CHAIRMAN's message

Conservation of our fish and wildlife and the habitats they rely on is the business of every Albertan. Whatever your interest, be it angler, hunter, bird watcher, berry picker, off-road vehicle user, camper, canoeist, artist, logger, miner or the myriad of others who love our wild resources, we all share a responsibility to maintain a healthy environment that can sustain and support the wild things that help make Alberta a special place.

Thanks to conservation levies applied to hunting and fishing licenses and to the financial contributions of other partners, the Alberta Conservation Association annually carries out approximately \$10,000,000 in conservation projects and programs throughout the province. Since our establishment in 1997, we have become a recognized leader in helping establish a conservation agenda within the province, as well as a role model for other jurisdictions.

Yet the future of our functioning ecosystems remains uncertain. For Alberta, our rapid growth has placed increasing demands for all uses – urban, agricultural, industrial, and recreational – on our resources. Our burgeoning population and increasing industrial demands on a finite land base could prove to be a classic case of the “tragedy of the commons,” with too many users trying to sustain themselves off finite resources.

At the federal and provincial levels, new models need to be considered that will provide additional resources for conservation purposes. These options could range from the establishment of a conservation reserve program to encourage lands be kept as wildlife habitat, to the establishment of trust funds for conservation, to working collaboratively with groups in a manner that allows them to take responsibility for conservation

programs and actions. While there are many options, unfortunately it has proven difficult to get conservation issues brought to the forefront of government and public agendas.

In order to ensure future generations can have access to the fish, wildlife, and publicly accessible lands that we enjoy, all users need to become part of the solution. There is increased realization in virtually all business and community sectors that we can no longer sustain a philosophy that suggests any and all uses may be appropriate for any and all lands. This is simply no longer a sustainable policy in a province that is growing as rapidly as Alberta.

ACA staff, our Board of Directors, and our member groups are working diligently to continue the good work we have started, as well as continuing our efforts to initiate and develop partnerships and collaborations that bring industry, government, non-governmental organizations, and the public together for the cause of conservation. As part of our strategic planning, we are striving to establish links and working relationships with all those concerned with the future of Alberta's fish and wildlife resources.

I want to acknowledge all those who hunt and fish in our province. Without your support, the ACA would not exist and our fish and wildlife would be much poorer for the lack of support. Albertans owe you a huge debt of gratitude for your steadfast contributions and efforts over the years. On behalf of our staff, our Board of Directors, our member groups, Albertans in general and our voiceless fish and wildlife, “Thank you!”



Don Pike,
Chairman



MANAGING DIRECTOR'S message

We started the year by setting carefully chosen objectives. As I review the progress we have made it reinforces my belief in the fundamental importance of our work with wildlife, fisheries, and habitat. As more people move to Alberta and urban sprawl becomes more predominant, it becomes even more important to maintain ecologically sensitive habitat in its natural state.

As an organization, we value scientific excellence and credibility. It's in our core values, which you will see written throughout the report, and published in our business plans. Along with our commitment to education and collaboration, these values guide our strategic direction.

In our Annual Report, you will see words like “collaboration” and “partnership” repeated as a theme. ACA actively seeks out conservation partnerships. We recognize - and embrace - the fact that through collaboration, we can accomplish more together than we could as a single organization. By strengthening our partnerships and pursuing continuous improvement and excellence, I know we will be able to achieve our vision for the future.

Part of the collaborative effort involves having the dedication of a strong team. They help to define ACA as a leader among our partners in the area of conservation work. I would like to thank the board for their confidence in the staff and applaud

the energy and commitment of ACA staff in their delivery of programs, research, and data collection. Their support on conservation issues ensures credible programming is being done, which guarantees the implementation of conservation efforts in Alberta. I would also like to say thanks to the many outdoor enthusiasts who fund our work. Together we will raise the awareness of conservation issues and ultimately have a positive impact.

I look forward to facing another productive year, full of many challenges and opportunities. If you stop and think about where we were, where we are now, and where we are going, I hope you can appreciate the change and growth that has taken place within ACA and share my confidence about our very positive future.



Steven Hull,
Managing Director



“I look forward to facing another productive year, full of many challenges and opportunities.”

“excellence”

We work to achieve the highest standards in everything we do.

FINANCIAL
highlights

AUDITORS’ REPORT

May 27, 2005
Edmonton, Alberta

To the members of Alberta Conservation Association:

The accompanying summarized statements of financial position and results from operations are derived from the complete financial statements of Alberta Conservation Association as at March 31, 2005 and for the year then ended. In our auditors’ report on the complete financial statements dated May 27, 2005, we expressed a qualified opinion because we were unable to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of donation revenue. The fair summarization of the complete financial statements is the responsibility of management. Our responsibility, in accordance with the applicable Assurance Guideline of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants is to report on the summarized financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements fairly summarize, in all material respects, the related complete financial statements in accordance with the criteria described in the Guideline referred to above.

These summarized financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the Association’s financial position and results of operations, reference should be made to the complete financial statements.

Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP
Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP
Chartered Accountants

SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS*

Alberta Conservation Association - Year Ended March 31, 2005

RESULTS FROM OPERATIONS	2005	2004
REVENUES		
Fees and assessments	7,566,707	7,544,542
Partner contributions	2,211,056	2,041,571
Other	588,778	568,938
	10,366,541	10,165,051
EXPENSES		
Salaries and benefits	3,931,361	3,956,746
Contracted service	1,784,436	1,401,723
Grants	1,688,372	1,393,672
Rentals	1,026,575	978,514
Office	598,791	630,587
Travel	508,480	495,014
Amortization	372,368	342,370
Materials and supplies	227,691	336,687
Advertising	204,143	274,635
Landowner agreements	125,357	116,377
	10,467,574	9,926,325
OTHER REVENUE	172,625	85,106
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	71,592	323,832
ASSETS		
Current assets	1,286,799	709,895
Long-term investments	8,997,814	8,560,724
Property and equipment (net of accumulated amortization)	1,898,309	1,974,873
	12,182,922	11,245,492
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities	2,985,160	2,119,322
	2,985,160	2,119,322
NET ASSETS		
Invested in property and equipment	1,898,309	1,974,873
Internally restricted	8,484,681	8,367,768
Externally restricted	(1,185,228)	(1,216,471)
	9,197,762	9,126,170
	12,182,922	11,245,492

*Complete audited financial statements are available on our website or by request.

“integrity”

We maintain high ethical standards in everything we do. We are truthful, keep our promises, and deliver on our commitments.

OUR story...

“CONSERVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION” – These words guide the Alberta Conservation Association, ACA, and act as the foundation for our success in working with various partners.

Every time a hunting or fishing licence is purchased in Alberta, or a donation is made by other conservationists, funds are put to work on ACA's wildlife, fish, and habitat initiatives. During the current fiscal year, nearly 10 million dollars has been generated and committed to conservation efforts in Alberta. These conservation initiatives are often collaborative efforts with ACA stakeholders, and ultimately benefit a wide variety of interest groups as well benefitting the province's fish and wildlife populations.

WHO WE ARE

ACA is a non-profit, non-government association that works collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders to conserve and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fisheries, and habitat.

Formed on April 1, 1997, ACA is a non-profit organization committed to the conservation and enhancement of Alberta's natural biological resources. ACA is a Delegated Administrative Organization under the Alberta Wildlife Act, specifically Section Two (2) of the Wildlife Regulations. The Alberta Wildlife Act provides ACA with powers, duties, and functions enabling the Association to carry out activities related to the development



and enhancement of populations and habitats of wildlife, fish, and endangered species in Alberta.

WHAT WE DO

ACA staff are conservation specialists who work across the province to deliver on-the-ground projects. ACA plans and implements scientifically credible conservation programs either as the project leader or as a partner. We work with a variety of groups throughout the province to study and collect important data and information for the province's fish and wildlife managers.

ACA is also a funding agency. We contribute significant financial support to other conservation organizations and individuals through environmental grants and project funding.

WHAT WE DON'T DO

It is important to recognize that ACA is non partisan and non regulatory. ACA has no role in enforcing resource use; the Government of Alberta has the ultimate responsibility for the management and regulation of the province's natural resources. We do not lobby or issue position statements on natural resource issues.



WHERE WE ARE LOCATED

ACA is divided into four administrative regions with a central office located in Edmonton. Since each region of the province has its own unique conservation challenges, ACA staff have become respected specialists in managing a wide variety of conservation programs and projects.

Northwest Region

ACA offices located in Peace River and Slave Lake –

This large Boreal Forest region comprises nearly 40 per cent of the province with a diverse assemblage of habitat, wildlife, and fish species. The Northwest Region is facing a particularly rapid increase in industrial and agricultural development combined with population expansion. Due to its geographic location and relatively pristine fisheries and wildlife resources, the Northwest Region is a popular destination for hunters and anglers.

Northeast Region

ACA offices located in Edmonton and St. Paul –

Four major eco-regions are contained within the Northeast Region, providing a wide range of soil, vegetation, habitat zones, and wildlife. From north to south they are the Canadian Shield, the Boreal Forest, the Aspen Parkland, and the Prairie. The major concern for this area is the loss or permanent alteration of habitat due to human disturbance. Forestry, agriculture, and hydrocarbon extraction have effects on the area's watersheds as well as lands.



East Slopes Region

ACA offices located in Rocky Mountain House, Cochrane, and Edson –

Located on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, this region contains Prairie Foothills, Montane, Parkland, and Boreal Forest ecosystems. The four largest cities in Alberta are all in close proximity to the East Slopes. The resulting pressure on natural resources from both recreational users and industrial economic development is high. Petroleum extraction, recreational facilities, timber extraction, agriculture, water storage, and urban sprawl all provide major impact on the East Slopes Region.

Southern Region

ACA offices located in Lethbridge, Red Deer and Blairmore –

The Southern Region contains the Prairie Grassland Natural Region of Alberta, an area of rapidly vanishing native prairie habitat. Landscapes within this region also range from wetlands to irrigated farmland to rolling prairie. Eighty-five percent of Alberta's high-rated endangered species inhabit this diverse region. Similar to the East Slopes, this region is impacted by oil and gas development and urban sprawl.

“respect”

We value the differences and similarities of our employees, partners and stakeholders. We strive to treat both our people and The Resource with the dignity they deserve.

ACA team...

The success of ACA is not only defined by its services but also by its people. The conservation, protection, and enhancement of Alberta's natural resources are in very capable hands.

ACA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ACA is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors represented by conservation groups, industry, science, and the public at large. No matter what their background, the 14 ACA Board Directors share a universal passion for Alberta's wildlife, fisheries, and habitat. Together they share a vision for ACA's role in the conservation of these resources. ACA's Board of Directors was originally formed by seven founding member groups that are still active supporters of ACA today:

- Alberta Fish and Game Association
- Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Alberta Trappers Association
- Federation of Alberta Naturalists
- Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
- Trout Unlimited Canada
- Western Walleye Council

Board's Role

Looking for ways to generate the most impact on conservation in our province, the Board sets policy and provides direction and monitoring for the Association. The Board offers varied viewpoints on important issues to ensure the most positive impact on conservation in Alberta.

Board Structure

ACA's Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from concerned conservation member groups, a provincial government representative, and six appointed Public at Large Directors (representing academic, business and each of the four regions: Northwest, Southern, Northeast, and East Slopes).

Executive*

Mr. Don Pike - Trout Unlimited Canada
Chairman since Dec. 2003

Mr. T.J. Schwanky - Public at Large, East Slopes Region
Vice Chairman since Dec. 2003

*Please refer to our website for full Executive and Director bios.



Back Row (L to R): Mark Boyce, Terry Birkholz, Lee Foote, Tom Bateman, Patrick Long, Ken Ambrock
Front Row (L to R): Dave Powell, Gerald Gustavson, Don Pike, Glen Semenchuk Missing: T.J. Schwanky, David Bissett, J.R. Giroux



Dr. Lee Foote - Public at Large, Northeast Region
Secretary since Dec. 2002

Mr. Dave Powell - Alberta Fish and Game Association
Treasurer since Dec. 2004

Mr. Terry Birkholz - Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
Past Chairman (Chairman from 2001 – 2003)

Directors

Mr. Ken Ambrock - Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Mr. David Bissett - Public at Large

Dr. Mark Boyce - Public at Large

Mr. Gerald Gustavson - Alberta Trappers Association

Mr. Glen Semenchuk - Federation of Alberta Naturalists

Mr. Tom Bateman - Public at Large, Southern Region

Mr. Patrick Long - Public at Large, Northwest Region

Mr. J. R. Giroux - Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

ACA STAFF

ACA has approximately 61 core staff who run the daily operations, along with various term positions throughout the year that help with seasonal assignments. All staff across the province are highly trained and experienced in conservation programming. The dedication of ACA staff is demonstrated on a daily basis through their interaction with co-workers, customers and partners.

ACA has identified the health and well being of its employees as a priority. In 2004/2005 ACA developed a comprehensive safety program where conservation and safety go hand in hand. Additional professional development and safety training is on-going.

ACA continues to foster a team environment and philosophy through its culture to view mistakes as a learning opportunity and where innovation is valued. Employees are also rewarded for their demonstration of "ACA values" and through their demonstration of high performance as identified in the "competency mapping tool" introduced to the Regional Business Units this year.

"collaboration"

We work closely with each other as well as with our partners to positively impact Alberta's natural biological resources.



ACA ALLIANCES

A strategic alliance means building and maintaining relationships with like minded organizations. ACA uses this strategy in order to be more effective and to ensure a positive impact on conservation efforts in our province.

ACA is in a unique position to build relationships with a variety of different stakeholders including government, community associations, and academics. Facilitating and developing these alliances is an innovative approach to conservation that enhances ACA's impact and adds to Alberta's conservation initiatives.

Government

Working closely with all levels of government brings different viewpoints to policy regulators and provides opportunities for proactive decision making. Key partnerships include:

- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- Environment Canada
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Municipalities

Community Group Alliances

ACA is working with different community groups who have a role in shaping ideas and information related to conservation. Some of the programs we help to sponsor include:

- Provincial Museum - Wild Alberta Gallery
- Emerald Award Foundation

Academic Alliances

ACA is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of scientific credibility, transparency, and accountability for all of its programs. Collaboration with the scientific community is key to science-based management decisions. Examples include:

- ACA Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife
- Alberta Cooperative Conservation Research Unit (includes major Alberta Universities)
- Integrated Landscape Management

Conservation Groups

ACA also collaborates with several conservation groups in the province at a project level. ACA hopes to increase collaboration to ensure coordination of our efforts and greater impact on our common goals. Linking to these groups ensures the contributions of hunters and anglers to conservation efforts in the province are well represented. Examples include:

- Foothills Model Forest
- Ducks Unlimited
- The Nature Conservancy
- Pheasants Forever



ACA and SRD

ACA works closely with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) in developing and delivering programs. ACA has special status as a delegated administrative organization, which means that the Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development has delegated certain responsibilities to ACA.

ACA's habitat program fulfills a number of legal, ethical, and moral obligations that the Association inherited through the legacy of the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund. These include private landowner agreements, maintenance of fish access sites, dams, weirs and dugouts that were funded through the Buck for Wildlife program. Currently, over half of ACA's habitat funding is allocated to these obligations.

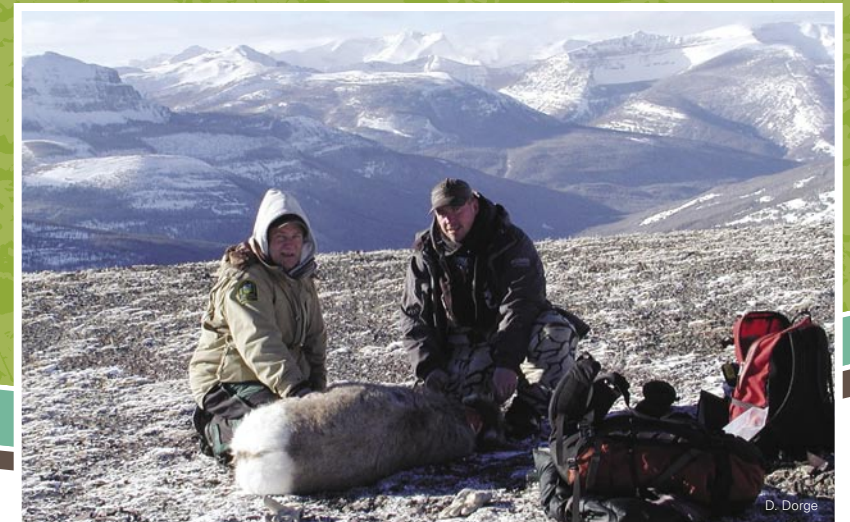
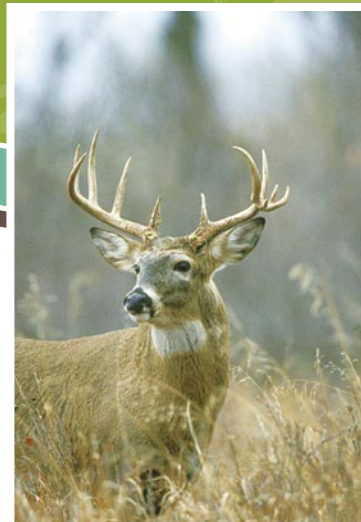
ACA is committed to providing SRD with the most relevant, credible, and timely information possible, thereby contributing to the success of the Ministry.

Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU)

MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities for ACA and SRD in relation to a number of activities. It includes a process for the development of specific program agreements, which outlines organizational roles and responsibilities with respect to program planning, implementation, and reporting. Agreements include:

- Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Development Program Agreement
- Wildlife Management Enhancement Program Agreement
- Fisheries Management Enhancement Program Agreement
- Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program Agreement
- Predator Compensation Program Agreement
- Shot Livestock Program Agreement
- Enhanced Fish Stocking Program Agreement
- Report A Poacher Program Agreement
- Information and Education Program Agreement
- Shared Services Program Agreement

ACA strategy...



ACA's business of conservation is based on collaboration. ACA programs are grouped into four main business areas: **Wildlife, Fisheries, Habitat, and Support Programs**. Our delegated responsibilities and additional projects fit within at least one of these areas.

Our conservation programs are innovative, efficient, and scientifically credible. The projects cover a vast array of services, ecosystems, and species. Each program aligns with ACA's strategic direction and has key priority areas. Priority areas are continually reassessed to reflect current conservation priorities in Alberta. Many of these programs are partnered or supported by industry conservation associations or government. Visit ACA's website www.ab-conservation.com for more information on any of the outlined projects or for a complete listing of programs and projects.

WILDLIFE TEAM

The focus of ACA's Wildlife Team is to deliver wildlife programs that positively influence the resource and its users. The following projects highlight some of the goals and priorities of the 2004/2005 wildlife program.

1. Population Assessment and Status Determination

Population inventory data is used to describe the distribution and abundance of species and to aid in the effective management of wildlife by providing accurate trend information. Inventories that capture information on priority management issues are the major focus of this program area.

Milk River Basin Wildlife Inventory

The Milk River Basin has the highest diversity and density of Species at Risk (SAR) in Alberta. In 2004/2005, the Milk River Basin project collected population and habitat information on 15 selected species. The wildlife inventory data serves two purposes for the MULTISAR Stewardship program under ACA's Habitat Team:

- It allows the program to prioritize the lands within the basin in terms of need for conservation.
- It will also serve as baseline information to gauge the success of the program in years to come.

Aerial Ungulate Survey Program

In 2004/2005, ACA provided funding and support for aerial surveys of deer, moose, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and caribou.

Central East Slopes Elk Study

Initiated in 2000 through the collaborative efforts of ACA, Alberta Fish and Wildlife, partner conservation organizations and granting agencies, industry, and researchers at the University of Alberta, the primary objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Develop a sampling protocol for surveying wintering elk in the east central foothills of the Rocky Mountains of Alberta.
- 2) Assess the success of the elk translocation program into the central east foothills of the Rocky Mountains of Alberta and recommend improvements.
- 3) Evaluate the cumulative effects of forestry, oil and gas development, and habitat improvements on elk in the central east slopes of Alberta.

Information gained from the first two objectives will be used by SRD for improved management of the resource. The third objective will be completed by the fall of 2005 and will utilize information currently being generated by a GECF-supported wolf study.

As part of a larger research collaboration, the project is making critical links between local environmental variability and the movements, distribution, and potential abundance of elk throughout their range in North America.

2. Implementation of Management, Conservation or Recovery Plans

Management, conservation or recovery plans identify actions that can be taken to maintain or re-establish the abundance and distribution of a species within their natural range.

Alberta Northern Leopard Frog Recovery Program

The northern leopard frog was once commonly found across southern and central Alberta but is now listed as "threatened". The newly formed Northern Leopard Frog Recovery Team collaboratively guides the development of recovery strategies through a balance of action, monitoring, and research.

ACA has played a key role in the development of a draft recovery plan and education and outreach materials. In an attempt to recover the population, reintroductions of up to 13,000 captive-reared leopard frogs have occurred at three sites from 1999 to 2004.



D. Fairless



D. Dorge



D. Fairless

Habitat Selection by Pronghorn Antelope in Alberta

Among the diversity of prairie wildlife, the pronghorn antelope is the most specialized and representative large mammal in the Grasslands Natural Region. The purpose of the project is to define the influence of land cover (native and anthropogenic) and disturbance sources on the distribution and resource selection patterns of pronghorn antelope in southern Alberta.

- In March of 2005, 24 new pronghorn were captured and fitted with a Lotek GPS 3300 collar. A female was recaptured and her collar replaced after her collar failed to drop off in December 2004.
- GPS location data was retrieved from 19 dropped collars in December 2004. Eight of the recovered collars were from animals collared in agricultural areas, six were from animals collared in the mixed habitat area and five were from animals collared in the native habitat type.
- Analysis of the first year's data will begin in 2005.

Yarrow-Castle Bighorn Sheep 2004/2005

In January of 2004, an additional 12 ewes were collared bringing the total to 40 collared ewes within the Yarrow-Castle area. This represented approximately 37 per cent of the total ewe population in the Yarrow-Castle area. The collared ewes are regularly monitored for their lambing status and individual fate.

During the 2004 lambing season, of 38 collared ewes 25 had lambs. The lambing period appeared to be delayed this year by several weeks and the majority of the lambs entered the winter season with smaller than normal body size.

Four collared ewe mortalities occurred in 2004. Two of the deaths occurred as a result of natural causes. The reason for the other two deaths is unknown.

Field data collection will continue in 2005/2006, and the project will conclude in a final technical report that will discuss the project results and future management recommendations.

3. Habitat Inventory Information

The condition of wildlife populations must be related to the status of the habitats that support them so habitat and wildlife management occurs in a synergistic and effective manner.

Duck Nest Box Program

For several years ACA has worked in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada and SRD, and recently with Windsor Plywood to erect over 1200 nest boxes for cavity nesting waterfowl. This project examines the reproductive success of Goldeneye and Bufflehead in sites with and without artificial cavity nests. The project is being conducted as a graduate student research project in collaboration with the University of Alberta, and is scheduled to be completed in 2005/2006.

4. Compilation, Archival, and Management of Information

Information that is collected and compiled is only useful for managing biological resources if it is in a useable format.

Data Management

ACA wildlife staff worked with SRD regional wildlife staff in Alberta to locate and enter priority historical wildlife observation information into the Biodiversity Species Observation Database.

5. Human/Wildlife Interaction

The process of identifying and often mitigating when and where humans and wildlife will interact and what the outcomes of those interactions will be.

Hay-Zama Wetland Monitoring

The Hay-Zama lake complex is recognized internationally as a critical waterfowl nesting and staging area. The oil and gas industry has been extracting oil and gas deposits beneath the complex since the mid 1960's. A partnership developed with industry, government, and ACA supports weekly monitoring of waterfowl to identify risk to waterfowl posed by industrial activity.

In 2004/2005 waterfowl numbers at offshore well sites on Hay-Zama complex were monitored during the spring and fall migrations periods.

FISHERIES TEAM

ACA's Fisheries Team focused on the following issues in 2004/2005 to ensure the responsible participation in the use of fish and aquatic resources. The project highlights demonstrate how ACA is addressing these fisheries issues in Alberta.

1. Fish Population Inventory, Monitoring, and Assessments Lake and Stream Monitoring

- Walleye, northern pike, lake whitefish, cutthroat trout, and bull trout were the focus of these monitoring projects.
- Lake monitoring projects occurred from reservoirs in Southern Alberta to more remote lakes in northern parts of the province.
- Monitoring data collected from fish populations in the East Slopes ranging from Blairmore to Grande Prairie.
- Most of the data collected fed directly into fish species management plans, allowing SRD to modify angling regulations according to the status of the population in question.

Innovative Fisheries Inventory, Monitoring, and Assessments

- Fisheries managers frequently have specific concerns or questions regarding a population of fish that differ from typical inventory or monitoring objectives. ACA continues to develop projects to address these unique questions and concerns.
- Examples of projects include:
 - Sport fish stock assessments in Shiningbank, Fickle, Gods, Graham, Long, Round, Vandersteene, Orloff, Buck lakes, and Crawling Valley Reservoir.
 - Walleye movement in the South Heart River Drainage.



- Bull trout monitoring in the Clearwater River and Lynx Creek drainages.
- Distribution and relative abundance of sport fish in the lower Red Deer and Simonette rivers.
- Angler surveys were conducted to quantify angler effort and harvest on Shiningbank, Fickle, Marie, Orloff, Buck, Crawling Valley, Gods, Graham, Long, Round, and Vandersteene lakes, the upper Oldman and Livingstone rivers, and Dutch and Racehorse creeks.

2. Fish Habitat Issues

Identify and describe problems associated with stream crossings

- Road development in the forested areas of Alberta results in increased numbers of road-stream crossings. Frequently, these crossings have the potential to fragment and alter fish habitats.
- Stream crossings assessed and reviewed for remediation south of Grande Prairie. Models were developed to predict the probability of fish occurrence and to identify sensitive fish habitat. Results of this work have been presented



- to representatives from industry with the intent that problems will be rectified.
- Reviewed Off-highway Vehicle data, defined the issues related to use, and investigated ACA's role in positively effecting conservation of fish and fish habitat as they relate to OHV use.
- Investigated the use of water temperature and flow stations in predicting water temperatures at other locations within a watershed.

3. Enhance the level of scientific credibility of ACA's fisheries programs

Identify areas for improvements to scientific standards

- The need to review existing northern pike index-netting protocols used provincially and to develop more consistent and scientifically rigorous protocols. As a result, most sport fish stock assessment projects in 2004/2005 were designed to collect data necessary to address these concerns. The joint ACA and SRD standards committee used this data to develop draft protocols that are significantly more rigorous than many of the methods used previously to assess northern pike populations.



- A complete review of the Cooperative Fisheries Inventory Program was conducted to identify program highlights and areas that require improvement and to provide future direction for stream inventory projects.
- Discussions occurred with the University of Calgary and SRD to review and assess the protocols used to monitor fish populations in large-scale watersheds.

Fish Species at Risk

- Data describing distributions and status of sauger and quillback were collected to update their status provincially.
- Contributions were made to update the general status ranks for all fish species in the 2005 version of "The General Status of Alberta Wild Species".
- A detailed status report was completed for Arctic Grayling.



D. Fairless

HABITAT TEAM

ACA's habitat program is committed to maintaining or increasing habitat for priority species or populations that are habitat limited and to provide sustainable recreational opportunities. The following projects highlight examples of how ACA addressed habitat issues in 2004/2005.

1. Riparian Habitat

ACA has been asked to sit as an ex-officio member of the Alberta Riparian Habitat Society (Cows & Fish Program).

- The Northwest Region delivered two riparian conservation projects including the Beaverlodge Drainage Conservation and South Heart River/Lesser Slave Lake Conservation Projects. ACA staff gave several riparian conservation presentations at public meetings and several articles were

highlighted in local news media. As a result, landowners have become more informed and educated regarding riparian health.

- The Northeast Region initiated riparian conservation projects at Moose Lake and Lac La Biche. Low-level aerial videography of the shoreline at both lakes (64 and 172 km respectively) was captured by aircraft. Riparian Management Area (RMA) Health and Integrity (H&I) Assessments were generated for these shorelines using ACA's Aerial Videography RMA-H&I Assessment Scorecard for Lakes.
- ACA entered into an operational and funding partnership with Lakeland County to fund development of the Lac La Biche RMA-H&I and to generate other aerial videography products to support sustainable development decisions in the county.



D. Dorge



D. Rung

- The East Slopes Region delivered two riparian programs, one in the Little Red Deer River Drainage and the other in Clearwater County. Five riparian projects were jointly completed with landowner and watershed partners.
- In 2004, 35 private landowner agreements expired on Dogpound Creek and three properties in Rocky Mountain House. The maintenance of the fences and livestock crossings is now the responsibility of the landowners.
- The Southern Region delivered two riparian projects in the Todd Creek Watershed and Cottonwood Creek Watershed. With cooperation from the landowners and other partnerships, approximately 2.5 km of riparian habitat was enhanced for fisheries and wildlife needs. This allows recreational users reasonable access to 640 acres of land.

2. Habitat Supporting Species at Risk

Piping Plover Habitat Enhancement Program

Fencing projects were completed on six lakes in 2004/2005. In addition to fencing projects, a number of informational signs were placed at strategic locations throughout the piping plover's range in Alberta.

Trumpeter Swan Staging Wetland Project

This project examined the riparian health of seven ponds in the Sibbald Flat area, west of Cochrane. Riparian protection strategies will be developed and implemented with amiable landowners and partners in 2005.

MULTISAR

The goal of MULTISAR is to help landowners continue to maintain habitat for species at risk on 250,000 acres of land within the Milk River Basin until 2008. MULTISAR has initiated stewardship programs on 61,280 acres of continuous native prairie supporting a diversity of both species at risk and game species in 2004/2005.

MULTISAR is a joint project whose partners include Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Public Lands and Forest Division, The Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program, and The North American Waterfowl Management Biodiversity Group.

Special Areas Habitat Stewardship

There are significant tracts of native prairie still intact within the boundaries of Special Areas. These tracts are habitat for numerous species at risk including burrowing owls, loggerhead shrikes, ferruginous hawks, long-billed curlews, and northern leopard frogs. In 2004 the first Habitat Conservation Strategy was developed with a landowner for 8,320 acres of habitat. Conservation of the native prairie habitat within the Special Areas boundary ensures the conservation of the listed species at risk.

Western Blue Flag Conservation

ACA has been one of the main proponents in the delivery of the stewardship activities to conserve western blue flag and the native habitat where they are located.



Implementing recommendations from management plans and evaluation of activities continued with participating landowners in 2004/2005. In conjunction with the first annual Waterton Lakes National Park Wildflower Festival, a western blue flag educational public presentation site visit was completed.

Sage Grouse Conservation Initiative

A range assessment was conducted on a ranch in southeast Alberta within the current occupied range of sage grouse. The assessment resulted in the development of recommendations to improve habitat for sage grouse and other wildlife species.

3. Critical Upland Habitat

ACA's Provincial Habitat and Wildlife Teams are currently in the process of developing a provincial document that outlines how and where ACA will focus efforts on restoring ungulate winter range. The document is to be completed in 2005/2006.

- Research was started on development of a GIS database for identification of critical upland habitats. Inspection, maintenance, and industrial referral activities occurred on 47 crown and private land BFW projects.
- The Southern Business Unit re-cleared 26 moose blocks totalling 155 acres in the Chain Lakes Area.

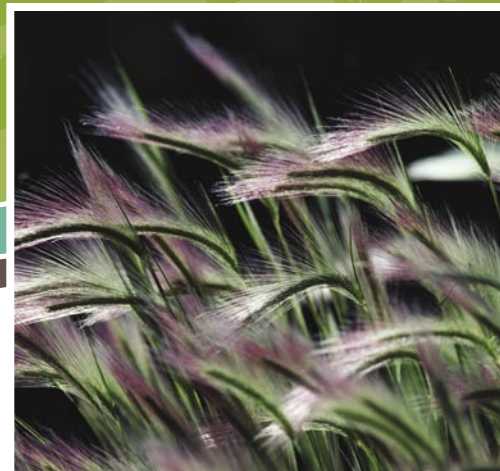
- In the Spring of 2004, ACA partnered with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) on their Johnson property located on the Milk River Ridge. Range health, habitat assessments, and wildlife surveys were completed in 2004. Information and results from these activities were compiled to create recommendations to assist with management of this property. The provincial habitat team has suspended this program for the 2005/2006 fiscal year until a Provincial Grassland Conservation Program is developed.

4. Habitat Supporting Recreational Opportunities Lake Enhancement

The Northwest Region operated and maintained lake aeration for nine lakes supporting yellow perch, rainbow, brown, and eastern brook trout. All lakes successfully wintered.

The Northeast Region operated and maintained two lake aeration projects at Jackfish Lake (by Myrnam) and Spring Lake (by Stony Plain). These ponds support rainbow trout and yellow perch populations respectively.

Three aerated lakes (Mitchell Lake, Millers Lake, Beaver Lake) are operated and maintained in the East Slopes for rainbow trout and brown trout. All three successfully wintered. Ironside Lake aeration planning started and is proposed for 2005.



Fisheries Access Sites

The Northwest Region maintained two fisheries access sites to provide additional angling opportunities to local communities.

The East Slopes Region has one unofficial fisheries access site on the North Raven, which it maintains. It received some upgrading in 2004.

The Southern Region maintained 15 fisheries access sites to provide additional angling opportunities to local communities.

5. Habitat Securement

- The Northwest Region led the development of a key partnership between ACA, Suncor and Provincial Parks. This partnership focuses on the Suncor Boreal Habitat Replacement Project efforts securing important wild-life habitat in several areas in the Northwest and Northeast regions.
- ACA partnered with Alberta Fish and Game Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Nature Conservancy Canada to acquire a quarter section of native Aspen Parkland habitat directly adjacent to the Buffalo Lake Moraine Conservation Area. The acquired habitat provides quality opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. The project

supports both pristine upland vegetation and an abundance of very productive wetlands.

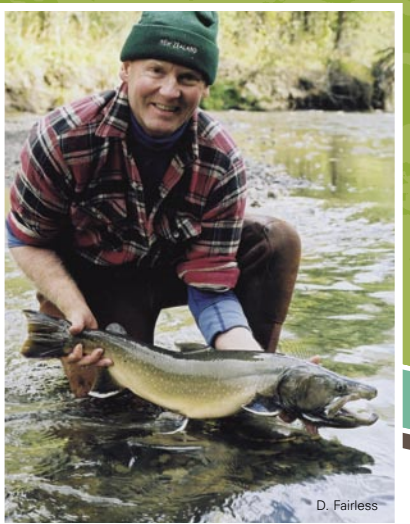
- ACA continues to partner with Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada in the Jefferson Conservation Pasture. ACA is responsible for the wildlife surveys and annual field tour coordination. ACA received dollars for the Linder property from the Federal GreenCover program for re-seeding cultivated lands to native grasses.

6. Other Programs / Partnerships Cavity Nesting Waterfowl Habitat Program

This program is directed at cavity nesting species and informs the public and land managers of the habitat requirements of cavity nesting species through presentations and nest box building seminars.

In 2004/2005 presentations were delivered on the importance of habitat preservation of cavity nesting species to participating landowners. As a result mature woodlands, riparian edges, and water quality was improved.

ACA has placed over 1200 nest boxes and is in the process of distributing information to over 2000 land managers.



SUPPORT PROGRAMS

All ACA support programs are coordinated with the wildlife, fisheries, and habitat teams to ensure they are included in the development of team goals and priorities.

Report A Poacher Program

Created in 1990, RAP provides hunters and anglers with the opportunity to help protect our wildlife resources by reporting suspected resource violations by calling a toll-free phone number (1-800-642-3800). ACA works closely with SRD who investigates each report.

- Approximately 3,600 reports per year
- Over \$48,000 in rewards were paid in 2004/2005
- Over \$5,000 received in donations from rewards donated back into the program

Shot Livestock Program

Shot Livestock Program is designed to compensate farmers and ranchers who have livestock killed or injured from accidental or negligent actions resulting from individuals using a weapon. Through ACA's program, livestock owners can apply for compensation if their animal was killed or injured during game bird or big game hunting season.

- 12 eligible claims for compensation received
- Over \$11,000 was paid to livestock producers

Predator Compensation Program

Predator Compensation Program is funded by hunting licence levies and its goal is to reduce the financial burden incurred by livestock producers as a result of wildlife predation. Producers who have livestock killed or injured through predation by wolves, grizzly bears, black bears, cougars, and eagles are eligible to make a claim.

- 107 claims received
- Over \$60,000 was paid to livestock producers

Crop Damage Control Program

Crop Damage Control helps reduce the amount and severity of waterfowl damage to cereal crops during the fall migration period. SRD, Environment Canada, and ACA work together to develop program activities and areas of operation. Program components include operation of alternate feeding areas (bait stations) and provision of waterfowl scaring equipment and advice to Alberta grain producers.

- In 2004-05, the CDC program responded to 330 complaints of waterfowl crop damage
- Eleven bait stations provided nearly two-million days of duck feeding

Enhanced Fish Stocking Program

The Enhanced Fish Stocking Program's goal is to enhance and increase fishing opportunities for Alberta anglers by working in collaboration with SRD to determine priority stocking locations and densities and ensure introduced stocks do not interact with native stocks.

- 67 water bodies were stocked with 131,300 trout
- Some sample water bodies include:
 - Morinville Lake
 - Pleasure Island Pond
 - Windsor Lake
 - McQuillan Reservoir

ACA CONSERVATION funding...



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Three Dedicated Funding Streams Supported
- \$1.825 million dollars available for conservation projects in Alberta
- Member of the Canadian Environment Grant Makers Network

FUNDING PROGRAMS – AVAILABLE CONSERVATION FUNDS

ACA funding supports a wide variety of applicants and project types that contribute to conservation efforts in Alberta. Applications are received from a diverse cross section of the population including: Albertans, community groups, conservation organizations and leading edge scientific researchers. The increasing number of applicants shows that ACA programs are becoming widely known.

• Grant Eligible Conservation Fund	\$1,100,000
• Habitat Securement Fund	\$500,000
• ACA Grants in Biodiversity	\$225,000

GRANT ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION FUND

Grants made to partners are intended to aid in the delivery of ACA's mission and Strategic Business Plan and should demonstrate value to local wildlife, fish population, or the habitat on which they depend.

In 2004/2005, ACA received 120 funding applications from across the province, with a total value of \$2.9 million. The ACA Board of Directors appoints a Granting Committee comprised of three board members and ten citizens, who referee and assess the grant applications based on the established funding criteria. Over \$1,100,000 was awarded through this fund to 61 conservation projects. For a complete list of these projects, visit www.ab-conservation.com.

Annual Funding Cycle Dates

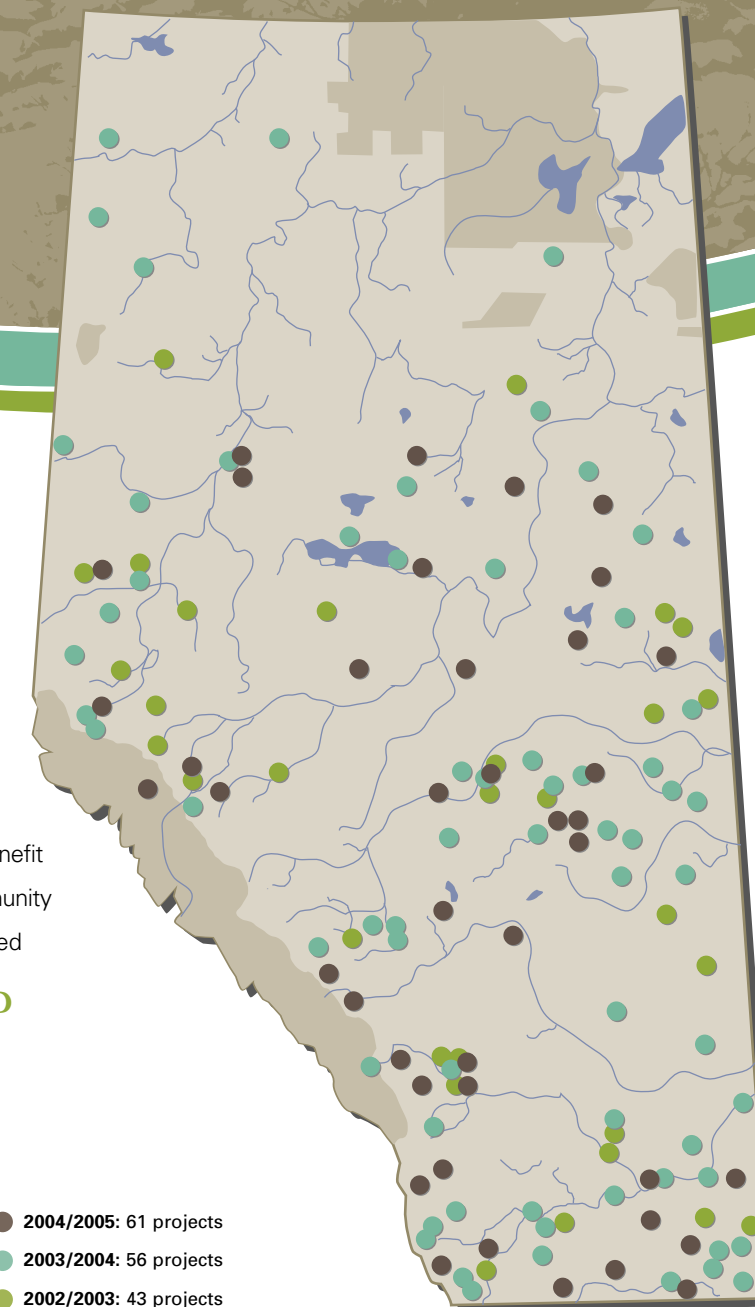
Posting of the guidelines and application forms on ACA's website **December 15**
Window to receive completed applications **January 1-31**
Proposal Review Committee Adjudication meeting . . . **February**
Notification of applicants as to funding status **March**
Projects work occurs. **April thru March**

Key Highlights - Grant Eligible Conservation Fund

- Range in project funding allocation (\$950 to \$60,000)
- A wide range of projects were initiated with far reaching benefit
- To date over \$3 million provided to the conservation community
- Since 2002, 162 conservation projects have been funded

GRANT ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION FUND PROJECT LOCATIONS

ACA's GECF projects cover a wide range of the province. Many of the projects have a provincial scope and therefore are not geographically represented on the map.



“accountability”

We are all responsible for our results and effectiveness toward conservation in Alberta and will accept responsibility for our actions.



HABITAT SECUREMENT FUND

Acquiring parcels of land or protecting large tracts of land via other means is a very effective method of conserving critical habitats. The goal of ACA's Habitat Securement Fund (HSF) is to conserve critical habitats in Alberta. A preliminary Habitat Securement Strategy that guides all aspects related to the acquisition or securement of critical habitats was approved as part of the 2003-2006 Strategic Business Plan.

The aim of the HSF is to assist ACA's Habitat Program in achieving its goal of increasing consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities in Alberta. It does this by increasing available habitat for priority species or populations that are habitat limited. The HSF is designed to guide, facilitate, and provide financial support for the purchase and or the securement of critical natural habitat(s) in Alberta. Successful proposals to this fund will be determined by the Board of Directors at ACA.

ACA GRANTS IN BIODIVERSITY

ACA's Grants in Biodiversity Program is run in collaboration with the Alberta Cooperative Conservation Unit, which represents a consortium of Alberta Universities including: University of Alberta, University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge. ACA's annual financial contribution to the fund is \$225,000.

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are invited to submit applications for research funds. The mandate of the program is to increase knowledge of the flora and fauna of Alberta. Most of the funding recipients work in the areas of conservation biology, environmental biology, and ecology. Successful applicants will receive grants of up to \$20,000 in support of field and research expenses.

Nineteen research projects were supported during this review cycle.

Grant applications are adjudicated once a year with results released in March.

For more information on current projects visit the ACA Grants in Biodiversity Program website at:
<http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/biodiversity/>



HOW DO I APPLY FOR FUNDING FROM ACA?

For project submission guidelines, application forms and more, please visit our website **www.ab-conservation.com** under the Funding section or call toll free **1-877-969-9091**.

ACA corporate office mailing address:

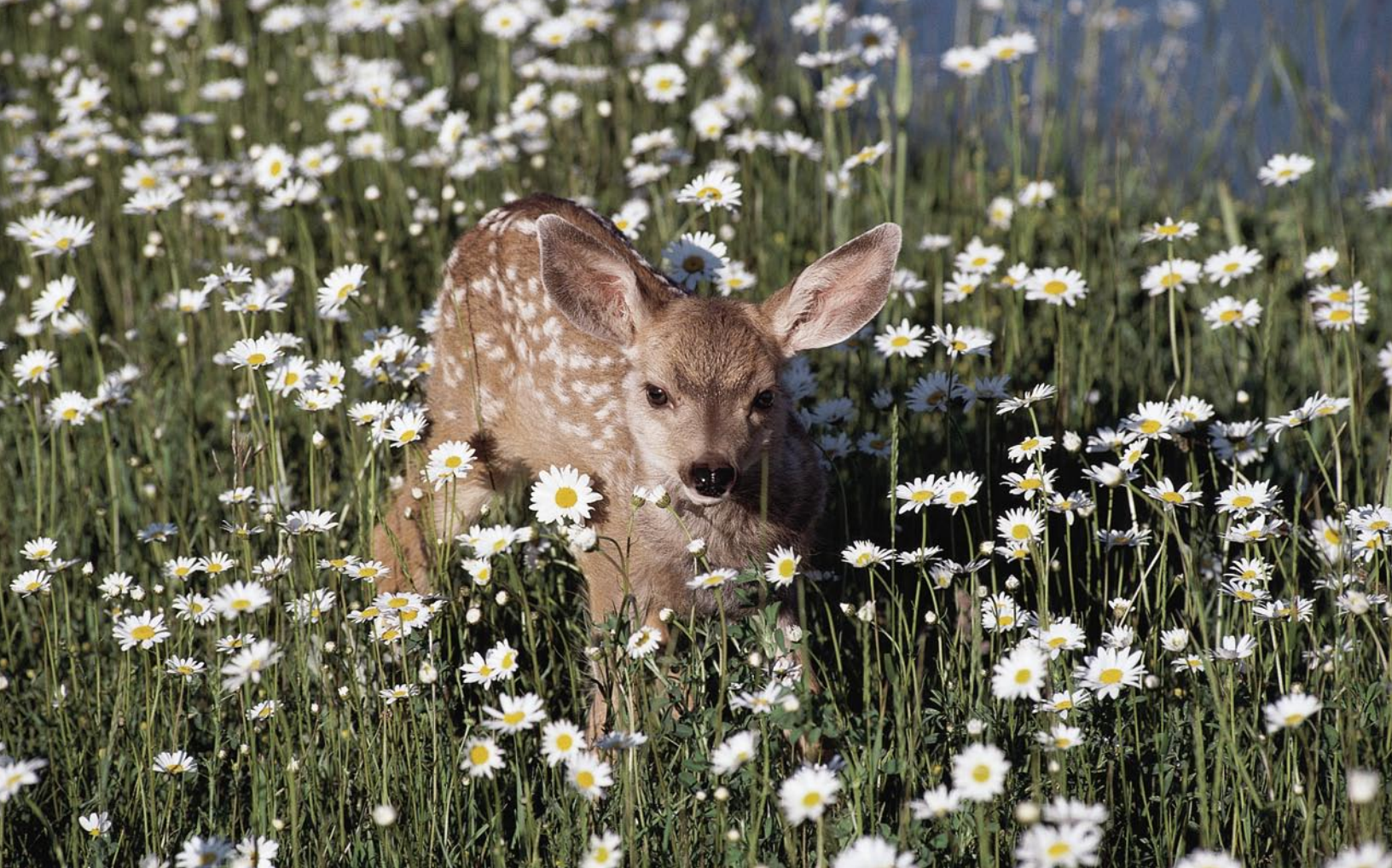
P.O. Box 40027 Baker Centre Postal Outlet
 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
 T5J 4M9

Environmental Savings

This annual report has been printed on 100% post consumer recycled fibre (manufactured with windpower), resulting in the following environmental savings:

- 11.91 trees not cut down
- 536.51 lbs. solid waste not generated
- 34.37 lbs. waterborne waste not created
- 1,048.55 lbs. atmospheric emissions eliminated
- 5,056.84 gallons water/wastewater flow saved
- 6,852,701.42 BTUs energy not consumed

Values were derived from information publicly available at:
<http://www.ofee.gov/recycled/cal-index.htm>
<http://www.ofee.gov/recycled/calculat.htm>

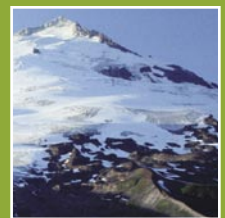


PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

ACA's business of conservation is based on collaboration. We actively seek out partners in order to maximize our impact on conservation work in Alberta. Together we are stronger. Partnered projects leverage dollars, combine resources, pool valuable data, and become a catalyst for innovative solutions. ACA recognizes that effective partnerships exist at many

levels. We work successfully with major corporate and industry partners, academic and government alliances, as well as community conservation groups, individual landowners, and any concerned citizen of Alberta. ACA is pleased to call the following organizations and groups our partners in conservation for the 2004/2005 year.

Ainsworth Lumber Limited Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Alberta Agriculture – Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Alliance Alberta Beef Producers Alberta Commercial Fisherman's Association Alberta Community Development, Parks and Protected Areas Division Alberta Community Lottery Board Alberta Environment Alberta Fish and Game Association Alberta Fish and Game Association – Zone 1 Alberta Hunter's Education Instructors Association Alberta Lotteries Alberta Municipal Affairs - Special Areas Board Alberta Pacific Forest Products Alberta Professional Outfitters Society Alberta Provincial Rural Crime Watch Association Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Alberta Research Council Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Public Lands and Forest Division Alberta Trappers Association Atlas Energy Atlas Lumber (Alberta) Ltd. Anderson Resources Beaverhill Bird Observatory Brightbank Lion's Club Boehlke Pond Recreation Board Boreal Forest Research Centre Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network Canadian Forest Products Limited Canadian Wildlife Service Cardinal River Coals Limited Cavern Oil Limited	Centre for Wildlife Conservation - USA City of Calgary City of Edmonton City of Lethbridge Clearwater County County of Barrhead, Agriculture Services Board County of Grande Prairie County of Lethbridge County of Newell County of Warner Cows and Fish Program Crispin Energy Services Cypress Hills Provincial Park Daishowa-Marubeni International Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada Devlan Exploration Inc. Ducks Unlimited Canada Edmonton Reptile and Amphibian Society Edmonton Trout Fishing Club Edmonton Old Timers Fishing Club Environment Canada Environmental Training Centre ESPRIT Exploration Federation of Alberta Naturalists Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) Fishin' Hole Fishing Alberta Television Program Foothills Model Forest Fort Macleod Fish and Game Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Friends of the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery Friends of Saskatoon Island Provincial Park Government of Alberta Summer Temporary Employment Program Government of Canada, Habitat Stewardship Program for Species At Risk Government of Canada, Human Resources Development Canada	Gregg River Resources Ltd. Harry Tyrell Hinton Fish and Game Association Hunting For Tomorrow Foundation Icefield Helicopter Tour Inland Cement Jack Alstad Jasper National Park King Motion Pictures Lakeland College Lamont Fish and Game Association Len Thompson Lures Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park Let's Go Outdoors Radio Program Lethbridge Community College Living By Water Program Manning Diversified Forest Products McNeil Island Correctional Centre, GeoAnalytic Inc. Millet Fish and Game Association Millar Western Moonshine Lake Provincial Park Municipal District #14 Municipal District #17 Municipal District #131 Municipal District of Big Lakes Municipal District of Bighorn Municipal District of Rockyview Nature Conservancy of Canada NAV Energy Trust North American Waterfowl Management Program North Saskatchewan River Watershed Alliance Parks Canada Peace Country Fly Fishers Peace Parkland Naturalists Pengrowth Corporation Pheasants Forever - Lethbridge Chapter Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Provincial Museum of Alberta	Red Deer River Naturalists Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Royal Canadian Mounted Police Runner's Soul Special Events Shell Canada Limited Shell Environmental Fund Slave Lake Pulp Special Areas Board Student Career Placement Program Student Temporary Employment Program Suncor Energy Sundance Forest Products Sundre Forest Products Talisman Energy TD Friends of the Environment Foundation Tall Pine Timber Company The Calgary Zoo Town of Fairview TransAlta Utilities Corporation TransCanada Pipelines Limited Treaty 8 First Nations Trout Unlimited Canada Trout Unlimited, Central Chapter University of Alberta University of Calgary University of Lethbridge Village of Spring Lake Waterton Lakes National Park Weldwood of Canada Ltd. Western Walleye Council Wetaskiwin Fish and Game Association Weyerhaeuser Canada Willow Valley Trophy Club Wildlife Society – Students Chapter Lethbridge Community College World Wildlife Fund Yellowstone to Yukon Science Grant Y2Y Initiative – Wilberforce Foundation Zama Community Society
--	--	--	---



toll free: 1-877-969-9091 • ph: (780) 427-5192 • fax: (780) 422-6441 • email: info@ab-conservation.com • website: www.ab-conservation.com

Charitable Registration #88994 6141 RR0001