

**Alberta Conservation Association
2020/21 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: Kids Can Catch Program

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Partnerships

Program sponsors:

AltaLink

Cabela's Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund

Dow Chemical Canada

Wolf Midstream

Event organizers, partners, and sponsors

(14)

ACA

Cabela's Canada

Canadian National Railway (CN)

CN Police Service

County of Grande Prairie

EQUUS

Foster Park Brokers Inc.

Lake Chaparral Residents Association

MNP – Taber

Taber Co-op

Taber Dairy Queen

Taber Fish & Game Association

Taber McDonald's

Town of Taber

TransAlta

Key Findings

- 200 adults and children came out to fish at three Kids Can Catch events across Alberta.
*Note: Most Kids Can Catch events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- 18 organizations, partners and sponsors made Kids Can Catch events possible through financial, in-kind, and volunteer contributions.
- Dow's sponsorship, as well as Wolf Midstream's helped ACA continue the program for communities around Alberta.
- AltaLink's sponsorship allowed ACA to source fishing rods for local organizers to use at future Kids Can Catch events. Organizers will keep these rods in their inventory to use year over year.
- Most Kids Can Catch events had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic regulations in Alberta.
- With the loss of a signature event at Wabamun Lake in February during the free Family Fishing Weekend, ongoing support from the project sponsors (Dow, Equus, CN, Altalink, TransAlta, Wolf Midstream as well as the Cabela's Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund grant) allowed us to create an online giveaway for families to win 1 of 50 available family ice fishing kits, which was a huge public relations success as ice fishing climbed in popularity during COVID-19 restrictions.

Abstract

Kids Can Catch is a province-wide program in which ACA partners with community and corporate partners to create free family fishing events at lakes and ponds. We developed Kids Can Catch as a way to invite Albertans to fish at stocked and natural waterbodies and to hook new and young anglers on fishing, fish conservation, and responsible angling. In 2020, Kids Can Catch events across Alberta welcomed 200 adults and children and 18 organizations, partners, and sponsors. During this year, COVID-19 restrictions prevented many events from happening, but allowed those who did host events to become creative with ways to bring audiences in safely.

Introduction

Kids Can Catch is a province-wide program in which Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) partners with community and corporate partners to create free family fishing events at lakes and ponds. We developed Kids Can Catch as a way to invite Albertans to fish at stocked and natural waterbodies and to hook new and young anglers on fishing, fish conservation, and responsible angling.

Methods

ACA manages the province-wide program, including promoting the program as an opportunity for local groups interested in fishing, conservation, youth, recreation, or tourism; connecting local organizers with resources and partners as they plan, promote, and host their Kids Can Catch events; providing web and communication services to profile each event on the Kids Can Catch website (albertakidscatch.com); and offering online registration services to event organizers.

ACA provides local organizers with tools and resources to help as they plan, promote, and host their events. Typically, one local organization takes the lead to plan the event and engages community and corporate event partners to help with it. Partners help in a variety of ways, such as volunteering at the events, providing in-kind donations, providing sponsorship, coordinating specific event activities, or promoting the event.

Each Kids Can Catch event is free, non-competitive, and family friendly, making fishing fun and accessible for new and young anglers. Some events are new; other are long-standing community fishing events or part of an annual festival. Some attract large numbers of participants; others attract smaller numbers. But what all the events share is a chance to fish and to learn about fishing, fish conservation, and responsible angling.

Our program sponsors—Dow, Altalink and Wolf Midstream—make it possible for ACA to help local organizers source the supplies they need to host Kids Can Catch events. Local retailers helped us stretch our sponsor dollars further with discounts and matching donations. Cabela's Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund provided substantial funding (\$15,000) towards the project as well.

This year was incredibly different from others, as the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the province and local health regulations prevented many events from going forward. The three events that did occur (Taber, Grande Prairie, and Chaparral) either held much smaller in-person events where social distancing, masks, and detailed cleaning processes were in place, or they created a program where families could borrow fishing kits (rods, tackle, bait, snacks, local business coupons, etc.) and use the equipment to go fishing at local waterbodies. These events were seen as successful because they were well-received by locals in those communities who had not been able to spend much time outdoors doing activities like fishing.

Another success to note for this unprecedented year was the Kids Can Catch family ice fishing giveaway that was promoted via ACA social media accounts during January 25, 2021 – February 5, 2021. We were able to purchase fishing gear to create kits consisting of two ice fishing rods, a tackle box, tackle, a multi-tool, some hand warmers, and a carrying bag. Once the giveaway opened up on our social media accounts, participants were able to fill out some basic information and upload pictures of artwork that their children (or themselves!) had created related to ice fishing. Participants could upload a maximum of three pictures of artwork (for families who had more children and wanted each to participate). We had a total of 524 entries and 811 uploads of artwork from those entries. Once entries closed, 50 participants were randomly selected, contacted and pick up of prizes was arranged. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from families regarding this giveaway. It was the perfect way to encourage families to get outdoors and fish together safely while health regulations are in place. We are planning to have a spring/summer giveaway as well.

Lastly, the lack of events this year has allowed us to purchase equipment to have on hand for future local event organizers. Kids Can Catch branded signage and items that are regularly used at events will be readily available for when events are allowed to move forward again.

Conclusions

Partnerships are key to the success the Kids Can Catch Program and each Kids Can Catch event. A special thank you to our program sponsors—Dow, AltaLink and Wolf Midstream, Cabela's

Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund—and all event organizers, sponsors, partners and volunteers for giving kids and their families the opportunity to go fishing.

Communications

ACA Communications

We shared the story of the Kids Can Catch Program and its events through ACA communication channels, including:

- ACA website (www.ab-conservation.com): promotion on ACA’s main page promoted Kids Can Catch and events.
- Kids Can Catch Program website (www.albertakidscatch.com): one webpage was created for each event to promote the event and its sponsors. After the event, the webpage summarized the event and recognized all event organizers, partners, and participants.
- Constant Contact e-newsletter: ACA’s e-newsletter promoted Kids Can Catch events and the giveaway.
- Social media: Posts were used to promote events and the giveaway, share stories, and thank organizers and event partners.
- Here is a sample of the giveaway post on our Facebook and Instagram pages:

