

**Alberta Conservation Association  
2018/19 Project Summary Report**

**Project Name:** ACA Fish Stocking Project

**Fisheries Program Manager:** Peter Aku

**Project Leader:** Diana Rung

**Primary ACA staff on project:** Chad Judd, Andrew Clough, Andy Murphy, and Diana Rung

**Partnerships**

Access Pipeline

Agrium Redwater

Alberta Environment and Parks

Aquality Environmental

Canadian Tire

City of Fort Saskatchewan

Complete Crossings

County of Saddle Hills

Nutrien Agrium Inc.

SysGen Solutions Group

Town of Cochrane

**Key Findings**

- The ACA Fish Stocking project provided anglers opportunities to catch and harvest rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities are limited.
- We stocked two new ponds: Taber Pond and County Sportsplex Pond.

- We stocked 63 waterbodies with 95,250 rainbow trout, 5,000 brown trout, and 5,840 brook trout for a total of 106,090 trout.
- AEP biologists stocked yellow perch into Fort Lions Community Pond at West River's Edge.
- We installed signage at four waterbodies.

## **Introduction**

Stocked fish populations are an important part of Alberta's recreational angling experience. The primary objective of the ACA Fish Stocking (AFS) project (formerly Enhanced Fish Stocking Project) is to provide Albertans with increased recreational angling opportunities, particularly in areas of the province where such fishing opportunities do not otherwise exist. Under the AFS project, we stock catchable-sized (20 cm total length) rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout into ponds to create put-and-take fisheries where anglers can harvest up to five trout per day. To prevent interaction with native salmonids, trout stocking occurs only in the White Zone of Alberta (settled area of the province) and in waterbodies that frequently winterkill. Most AFS ponds are close to or in towns and cities, making them popular family destinations and ideal for the recruitment of new anglers.

## **Methods**

Trout stockings were completed through two contracts: one with a private grower and one with the Government of Alberta (GoA) fish hatchery. The stocking contracts for both the private grower and GoA were negotiated several months before stocking.

Spring stockings occurred between the last week in April and the May long weekend, early summer stockings occurred by the third week in June and fall stockings occurred in early September. We monitored the private grower contracts closely to ensure that the appropriate number and size (20 cm total length) of rainbow trout were stocked. Once growers were ready to transport the rainbow trout, a stocking date was arranged with a load-out monitor and a lake contact. The load-out monitor travelled to the grower's operation to inventory the fish being shipped and to measure a random subsample (30 to 40 fish) to confirm that fish were of adequate

size. We implemented a penalty system to deter growers from stocking undersized fish. The load-out monitor also assessed overall wellbeing of the fish by checking condition factor and obvious signs of disease and deformity. Once the correct number of trout were loaded into transport containers, the load-out monitor and grower signed a form documenting the number and size of fish. At the receiving waterbody, a volunteer lake contact monitored the stocking process to determine if there were stocking or transport-related mortalities. Fish stocked by GoA (i.e., rainbow, brown, and brook trout) did not require monitoring.

**Results**

In 2018/19, we added two new ponds, County Sportsplex Pond and Taber Pond, to our stocking list. We stocked 63 waterbodies with 95,250 rainbow trout, 5,000 brown trout into eight ponds, and 5,840 brook trout into nine ponds for a total of 106,090 fish. Approximately 60% of the stockings were completed before the May long weekend, 35% were completed in June and 5% were completed in September. The private growers stocked 70,163 trout and GoA stocked 35,927.

Two AFS ponds (Hermitage Pond and Fort Lions Community Pond at West River’s Edge) tested positive for whirling disease during AEP screening conducted in 2017/18. To reduce the risk of spreading the disease, AEP biologists, in consultation with ACA, stocked yellow perch instead of rainbow trout into Fort Lions pond primarily to support the popular annual Kids-Can-Catch event at this pond. Hermitage Pond was not stocked with any fish.

We installed project signs at four waterbodies (Table 1) to identify the waterbody as a site stocked by ACA and to identify contributing partners.

Table 1. Waterbodies where ACA Fish Stocking project signs were installed in 2018.

<b>Waterbody</b>
County Sportsplex Pond
Rainbow Park Pond
Shell True North Pond
Taber Pond

## **Conclusions**

The AFS project provided anglers with increased opportunity to catch and harvest rainbow trout, brook trout, and brown trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities do not otherwise exist.

Hermitage Pond tested positive for whirling disease and was not stocked. Fort Lions Community Pond at West River's Edge also tested positive for whirling disease. Instead of stocking this pond with rainbow trout, it was stocked with yellow perch by AEP to support the popular annual Kids-Can-Catch event at this pond.

## **Communications**

- A complete list of rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout stockings was posted on our website and updated frequently during trout stocking season.
- Five counties advertised the stocking of ACA ponds on their social media including Facebook and the local county newspaper. Ponds that were advertised include Mirror Reservoir, Mound Red Reservoir, Ray's Pond, Tees Pond, and Windsor Lake.
- Andrew Clough's article "Stocking a phantom: The elusive brown trout" was published in the fall/winter 2018 ACA's *Conservation Magazine*.

Photos



**Mound Red Reservoir  
is stocked with  
rainbow trout.**

**Go catch some!**

Alberta Conservation Association creates more than just angling opportunities; we create a reason to get outside with your friends and family and soak up the short Alberta summer.

Find a stocked fishing site near you with the FREE  
*Alberta Discover Guide* app or check out  
[albertadiscoverguide.com](http://albertadiscoverguide.com)

**Contributing Partners**



An example of an ACA-developed ad that was used by five counties to promote fishing within their municipalities. Photo: ACA



A 20 cm rainbow trout from Smoky Trout Farm. Photo: Diana Rung



A young angler tries her luck at Taber Pond. Photo: Ken Kranrod