

Alberta Conservation Association
2020-21 ANNUAL PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT

Project name: Management Plan Development

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Project Leader: Roy Schmelzeisen

Project Coordinators: Marco Fontana, Sarah Bradley, Roy Schmelzeisen, and Tyler Johns

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Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks

Alberta Fish & Game Association

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Key Findings

- Completed 17 conservation site management plans in 2020/21.

Abstract

ACA manages and maintains over 215,000 acres (approximately 87,000 ha) of habitat in collaboration with AEP and other conservation partners. In order to manage our conservation assets effectively, management plans are developed for each of these sites. Emphasis is placed on developing detailed habitat management objectives that maintain the ecological integrity of each conservation site. ACA works with our partners to develop management plans which are used as guiding documents for overall site management. These plans provide specific details regarding site features, objectives regarding enhancement or restoration, recreational and facility enhancements, guidelines, and other planned activities for the site. Management plans are reviewed by ACA and our partners as required, or on a term basis (e.g., after five or ten years), to ensure we are meeting our intended goals and objectives. In 2020/21, we developed 17 management plans.

Introduction

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) conducts various activities through the Land Management Program (LMP) aimed at conserving, protecting, and enhancing wildlife and fish habitat and increasing sustainable recreational opportunities, particularly hunting and angling. In the LMP, ACA manages and maintains over 215,000 acres (approximately 87,000 ha) of habitat in collaboration with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and other conservation partners. Some of these sites are managed on behalf of the Crown, in which the original investment was made via the Buck for Wildlife program and administered by AEP. On other sites, we hold sole or partial title with other conservation organizations. Conservation sites are secured by collaborating with various partners, our Habitat Securement Fund, Corporate Partners, or were donated to ACA by conservation-minded landowners. Management plans are essential to effectively managing our conservation assets. They define the long-term objectives and features of the site and identify any enhancement activities that will take place during the term of the plan. Conservation sites are managed both to ensure quality habitat for wildlife species and foot-access recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Once a new acquisition is secured, ACA works with partners to develop a management plan. Once finalized, ACA and our partners review and update the plan as required or on a term basis (e.g., after five or ten years) to ensure that we are delivering on the objectives identified in the plan.

Methods

The Management Plan Development (MPD) Project is provincially coordinated to ensure provincial standards are adhered to by LMP staff. The LMP manager, LMP project lead, and coordinators are responsible for provincial coordination of this program. Prioritizing and developing management plans is coordinated regionally, with project staff being responsible for meeting with partners and ensuring activities identified in management plans are completed (completion of these activities is administered through the Conservation Site Management Project).

First, we prioritize conservation sites for management plan development as follows:

1. New acquisitions (management plans are required to be completed within one year of securement).
2. Sites that require extensive or immediate revisions.
3. All other sites requiring updates (i.e., have not been revised within the term period).

Second, we develop management plans using the following steps:

1. ACA identifies all partners required to develop or review each management plan and meets with partners to discuss specific goals, restrictions, and responsibilities that will be identified in the management plan.
2. ACA writes a draft management plan using an ACA provincially standardized management plan template and process.
3. ACA reviews draft management plan for consistency and submits draft management plan to partners for review.
4. ACA finalizes management plan and forwards to partners for final approval and signing.
5. ACA ensures that copies of the signed management plan are kept regionally and copies are forwarded to the appropriate government officials, partners, and to the ACA executive assistant (corporate office).

Results

We completed 17 management plans in 2020/21.

Table 1. ACA Conservation Sites Management Plans completed in 2020/21.

Site	Crown/Titled	Region
Baird	Titled	Central
Batty Lake Uplands	Titled	Northeast
Benoit	Titled	Northeast
Buffalo Lake Moraine Conservation Area (BLMCA)	Titled	Central
Funnell Lake	Titled	Northwest
Lac Cardinal West	Titled	Northwest
Lac Emelien	Titled	Northeast
Leddy	Titled	Northwest
Musidora 4	Titled	Northeast
North Kamisak Lake	Titled	Northwest
Northstar	Titled	Northwest
Rudakevich 1	Titled	Northwest
Rudakevich 2	Titled	Northwest
Silverberry (Expansion)	Titled	Northeast
Stefaniuk Family Homestead	Titled	Northeast
Thompson Park	Titled	Central
Wintergreen	Titled	Northeast

Conclusion

Developing management plans is an important component of caring for our conservation assets. These plans enable ACA and our partners to more effectively manage conservation sites using a consistent and clearly defined process. Management plan development is an ongoing activity in our planning cycle. In 2021/22, we will continue to develop and update plans for sites that we own or manage to ensure that effective and mutually agreed-upon goals and objectives are administered on these lands.

Communications

- Collaborated with project partners to determine roles and responsibilities, and development of management and habitat objectives for management plans on various conservation sites.
- Continued negotiations with AEP to determine requirements for management plans and prioritization of Crown conservation sites.

Photos



Beaver house maintained on Baird Conservation Site. Photo: Kirsten Azar



A plot on the Lac Cardinal West Conservation Site where weevils (*Mecinus janthinus*) were released for biocontrol of invasive yellow toadflax plant. Photo: Garret McKen.



White Spruce planted on the Northstar Conservation Site through a partnership between ACA, Mercer International, and the Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society (AWES). Photo: Garret McKen



Looking out at the lake at Funnell Lake Conservation Site. Photo: Sarah Bradley



Wetland on Buffalo Lake Moraine Conservation Area (BLMCA). Photo: Erin VanderMarel



Fescue field on Rudakevich that is slowly being colonized by shrubs and trees. Photo: Garret McKen



Photo of a weevil (*Mecinus janthinus*) released on Silverberry (Expansion) to control the invasive yellow toadflax plant. Photo: Stephen Nadworny



Photo of a boar skull on Wintergreen. Wild pigs are a management issue on some conservation sites. Photo: Dan Sturgess



Oxbow along Ross Creek on Chinook Conservation Site, providing habitat for northern leopard frogs. Photo: Tyler Johns



Project sign and path on Edson Creek Conservation Site. Photo: Joe Hopkins



Three-year old planted white spruce on North Rabbit Lake Conservation Site. Photo: Garret McKen



Ruffed grouse on Roy Ozanne Memorial Conservation Site. Photo: Garret McKen



Birch Coulee Conservation Site access and project sign. Photo: Roy Schmelzeisen



Staff conducting a vegetation survey on Grieve Conservation Site. Photo: Stephen Nadworny