

**Alberta Conservation Association
2021/22 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: Management Plan Development

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Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks

Alberta Fish & Game Association

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Pheasants Forever – Calgary and Chinook Chapters

Key Findings

- Completed 14 conservation site management plans in 2021/22.

Abstract

ACA currently manages 411 sites, 387 conservation sites, and 24 fisheries access sites in Alberta. Of these, 38 new conservation sites were added in 2021/22 by completing three purchases, one eco-gift donation, and 34 title-sharing agreements with Alberta Fish & Game Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Nature Conservancy of Canada. To manage our conservation assets effectively, ACA develops management plans for all of our sites. We place emphasis on developing detailed habitat management objectives that maintain the

ecological integrity of each site while also providing recreational opportunities to the public. ACA works with our partners to develop management plans that 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 2021/22, we developed 14 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. ACA currently manages 411 sites, 387 as conservation sites, and 24 as fisheries access sites in Alberta. Of these, 38 new conservation sites were added in 2021/22 by completing three purchases, one eco-gift donation, and 34 title-sharing agreements with Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), and Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Approximately half of these sites (235) are managed on behalf of the Province, in which the original investment was made via the Buck for Wildlife program and administered by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP). The remaining sites (175) are held under sole or partial title with other conservation organizations. These sites have been secured through partner collaborations, our Habitat Securement Fund, Corporate Partners in Conservation, or donations to ACA by conservation-minded landowners.

Management plans are essential for effective management of 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 and fisheries access sites are managed both to ensure quality habitat for wildlife species and recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Once a new site 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 and Fisheries Access Site projects).

First, we prioritize sites for MPD 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 works with partners to identify 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 the draft management plan for consistency and submits the draft management plan to partners for review.
4. ACA finalizes the management plan and forwards it 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 14 management plans in 2021/22.

Table 1. ACA Conservation Sites Management Plans completed in 2021/22.

Site	Management Partners	Region
Allen	ACA, AFGA	Central
Boulder Lake	ACA, AFGA	Central
Drake	ACA, AFGA	Central
Flatbush	ACA	Northeast
Flatbush 4	ACA	Northeast
Flatbush 5	ACA	Northeast
Leddy	ACA	Northwest
Manyberries Creek	ACA, AFGA, PF	South
North Fawcett 3	ACA	Northeast
North Fawcett 4	ACA	Northeast
North Fawcett 5	ACA	Northeast
North River	ACA	Northeast
Sheep River	ACA, AFGA	Central
Therien (Titled Portion)	ACA, NCC	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 and fisheries access sites using a consistent and clearly defined process. MPD is an ongoing activity in our planning cycle. In 2022/23, 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.

Literature Cited

Not applicable

Photos



Photo 1. Right-of-way along the east side of Leddy Conservation Site (Northwest Region).

Photo: Garret McKen



Photo 2. Planted spruce growing on Flatbush 5 Conservation Site (Northeast Region).

Photo: Meagan Butler



Photo 3. Riparian habitat on Manyberries Creek Conservation Site (South Region).
Photo: Tyler Johns



Photo 4. Winter spring at Sheep River Conservation Site (Central Region).
Photo: Marco Fontana



Photo 5. Staff conducting habitat assessments at Flatbush 4 Conservation Site (Northeast Region). Photo: Meagan Butler



Photo 6. Sunrise during bird call surveys at North Fawcett 5 Conservation Site (Northeast Region). Photo: Meagan Butler