

**Alberta Conservation Association
2024/25 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: Conservation Site Management

Land Management Program Manager: Robert Anderson

Project Leader: Mandy Couve

Project Coordinators: Taylor Dickson, Tyler Johns, Dan Sturgess, and Erin VanderMarel

Primary ACA Staff on Project: Meagan Butler, Mandy Couve, Taylor Dickson, Marco Fontana, Jeff Forsyth, John Hallett, Tyler Johns, Garret McKen, Stephen Nadworny, Terri Perron, Diana Rung, Roy Schmelzeisen, Lenore Seward, Shana Sklapsky, Dan Sturgess, Clayton Temple, Mike Uchikura, and Erin VanderMarel

Partnerships

Alberta Conservation Association Minister's Special Licence Raffle Funds Grant	Environment and Climate Change Canada Freshwater Conservation Canada
Alberta Fish & Game Association Minister's Special Licence Program	Government of Alberta Lethbridge County
Alberta Professional Outfitters Society Minister's Special Licence Program	Medicine Hat Fish & Game Association Nature Conservancy of Canada
Alberta Wildlife Federation	Neighbouring landowners
Brooks & District Fish & Game Association County of Newell	Pheasants Forever – Calgary and Chinook Chapters
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Project Forest
Eastern Irrigation District	Volunteer stewards
Edmonton and Area Land Trust	

Key Findings

- Completed annual inspections on 205 conservation sites and 11 conservation easements.
- Completed routine maintenance activities on 51 sites. This included managing beaver activities, habitat and invasive vegetation, and maintaining nesting structures, fences, and signs.
- Installed new project signs on two conservation sites.
- Enhanced habitat on 61 conservation sites, including planting 2,600 trees and shrubs, restoring 416.5 acres to native grass species, planting 10 acres of food plots for upland game birds, removing 1,260 m of barbed wire fence, and installing 1,000 m of wildlife-friendly fencing.
- Improved facilities for public foot access on 27 conservation sites by installing pedestrian gates, maintaining trails, footbridges and parking areas, and restricting vehicle trespass with barriers. Volunteer stewards assisted with inspections and maintenance on 52 conservation sites across the province. There is growing interest from individuals and clubs – in 2024-25 we enrolled 19 new and retained 18 volunteer stewards.
- Received funding from the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program for administrative expenses and endowments for two conservation sites; received funding from the Minister’s Special Licence Program (AFGA, APOS and ACA Raffle) for wildlife habitat enhancement on three sites.

Details

Alberta Conservation Association’s (ACA) Conservation Site Management (CSM) project manages and maintains over 219,000 acres of titled and Crown land in Alberta, in collaboration with the Government of Alberta and other conservation partners. CSM project activities are guided by site-specific management plans and an annual project description to complete inspections, maintenance, habitat enhancement, restoration activities, and provide sustainable recreational opportunities, specifically for anglers and hunters. ACA staff and volunteer stewards complete field inspections on conservation sites throughout the province, assessing habitat condition and contractor compliance, identifying maintenance issues, enhancement

opportunities, and other information regarding site use. ACA offers livestock grazing and haying opportunities to producers on certain conservation sites to simulate natural disturbance and promote healthy forage growth.

In 2024/25, we completed inspections on 205 conservation sites and 11 conservation easements and completed routine maintenance on 51 sites, including control of invasive vegetation and repairing fences. Recreational enhancement activities were completed at 27 sites, including constructing pedestrian gates and installing barriers to restrict vehicle trespass. We installed new project signs on two conservation sites, installed boundary and informational signs on 19 sites, and replaced project signs on six sites.

We completed habitat enhancement activities on 61 conservation sites. ACA partnered with Project Forest, the Minister's Special Licence Program and Environment and Climate Change Canada to restore natural biodiversity to former cropland on three sites, reseeding 416.5 acres to native grass (Manyberries Creek and Pomrenk) and planting 1,000 shrubs and trees as an ecobuffer on the Leavitt Conservation Site. Volunteers from the Brooks Fish & Game Club planted 1,500 trees and shrubs at Brooks Aqueduct Conservation Site and 100 shrubs were planted at East Hays and Legacy conservation sites. We managed licence agreements for haying on 28 conservation sites (3,435 acres) and grazing on 11 sites (3,482 acres). Other habitat enhancement activities included removal of buildings, structures, and debris from 17 sites and building Zeedyk structures to control surface water flow on Manyberries Creek Conservation Site.

Wildlife movement was enhanced through removal of 1,260 m of barbed wire fencing on five conservation sites (Flatbush, Flatbush 5, Manyberries Creek, Reinwood, Wilfort) and installation of 1,000 m of new wildlife-friendly fencing on the George and Joan Mitchell Memorial Conservation Site.

Our success in managing and enhancing conservation sites is achieved through a collaborative effort with a growing number of partners and volunteers throughout Alberta.

Photos



Photo 1. Caroline Shell Conservation Site. Photo: Jade Janzen



Photo 2. Meadow flowers at Drake Conservation Site. Photo: Erin VanderMarel



Photo 3. Drake Conservation Site in the fall. Photo: Erin VanderMarel



Photo 4. ACA staff member Marco Fontana completing invasive phragmites control at East Reno Conservation Site. Photo: Clayton Temple



Photo 5. Ruffed grouse at Lac Cardinal Point Uplands Conservation Site. Photo: Clayton Temple



Photo 6. Old fence post removal at Manyberries Creek Conservation Site. Photo: Tyler Johns



Photo 7. Nature Conservancy of Canada (M. Asante and P. Asplund) and ACA staff members constructing Zeedyk structures to control surface water flow at Manyberries Creek Conservation Site. Photo: Tyler Johns



Photo 8. Beaver dam management by ACA seasonal staff member Aneilia Ayotte at Gouin Conservation Site. Photo: A. Yorke



Photo 9. Foot access sign at Wabamun/Whitewood Conservation Site. Photo: Meagan Butler



Photo 10. Fall colours at Wabamun/Whitewood Conservation Site. Photo: Meagan Butler