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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**ACA Grants in Biodiversity announces award recipients from the 2017 competition**

Edmonton – March 13, 2018– A number of headline-grabbing topics will be receiving research funding from the ACA Grants in Biodiversity this year including feral horse management, Whirling disease hosts, mountain pine beetle attacks, and adorable cougar kitten survival. Not all the projects receiving funding this year will catch the public’s attention, but they are, nevertheless, providing critical information that impact Alberta’s biodiversity. Native berries, fungi and chickadees, amongst others, will all be receiving extra scrutiny in the next two years. The Alberta Conservation Association is proud to announce that 20 student projects will share \$208,460 of funding this year. This year’s grants ranged from \$4,650 to \$14,810 and were distributed to 6 PhD and 14 Masters candidates. The majority of the grants were awarded to University of Alberta students from either the Department of Biological Sciences or the Department of Renewable Resources. The University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge also picked up awards, as did the University of Saskatchewan.

The ACA Grants in Biodiversity program is funded by the Alberta Conservation Association and Syncrude. With this year’s awards, the 24 year old ACA Grants in Biodiversity has now awarded \$5.2 million dollars to 506 researchers. The research supported by the ACA Grants in Biodiversity ultimately aims to conserve, protect and enhance Alberta's fish, wildlife and natural habitats as well as develop biodiversity professionals for the future.

**ACA Grants in Biodiversity Recipients**

Recipient (Program)	Institution	Supervisor	Project Title
Sangwook Ahn (MSc)	University of Lethbridge	Cameron Goater	Effects of host community structure on parasite transmission and disease risk
Josue Arteaga (MSc)	University of Alberta	Kimberley Mathot	How do Black-capped Chickadees ( <i>Poecile atricapillus</i> ) respond to different types of information about predators?
Jackson Beck (MSc)	University of Alberta	Nadir Erbilgin	Impact of disturbance altered soil microbial communities on lodgepole pine seedline performance and carbon allocation
Paul Boyce (PhD)	University of Saskatchewan	Phil McLoughlin	Assessing the efficacy of immunocontraception to manage feral horses in the Alberta Foothills
Danielle Clake (PhD)	University of Calgary	Paul Galpern and Sean Rogers	Resilience of pollinator populations to landscape changes: using genomic methods to assess montane bumble bee populations in Alberta

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Jenna Cook (MSc)	University of Alberta	Rolf Vinebrooke	Phytoplankton communities as indicators of environmental change and water quality across the Canadian Rockies
Melanie de Kappelle (MSc)	University of Alberta	Nadir Erbilgin	Are lodgepole pine trees at higher elevations and latitudes more susceptible to attack by range-expanding mountain pine beetle?
Melissa Dergousoff (MSc)	University of Alberta	Bill Shotyk and Glynnis Hood	Factors influencing trace element concentrations in the tissues of beavers ( <i>Castor canadensis</i> ) from central and northern Alberta
César Estevo (MSc)	University of Alberta	Erin Bayne	Run to the hills: are boreal hilly systems in Alberta potential microrefugia for boreal bird communities in response to global warming?
Angelo Filicetti (PhD)	University of Alberta	Scott Nielsen	Recovery of woody vegetation on linear disturbances
Spencer Goyette (MSc)	University of Alberta	Toby Spribille	Fungal diversity associated with hair lichens in boreal and montane forests in Alberta
Jessica Grenke (MSc)	University of Alberta	JC Cahill	Grassland plant species and functional diversity responses to intensive grazing
Adriana Guerrero Chacón (PhD)	University of Saskatchewan	Jeffrey Lane	Intraspecific variation in the energetics of reproduction in Columbian ground squirrels ( <i>Urocitellus columbianus</i> )
Lee Hecker (PhD)	University of Alberta	Scott Nielsen and Mark Edwards	Trade-offs in foraging mechanisms influencing the habitat selection of wood bison on a multiple-use landscape
Jeremiah Kennedy (MSc)	University of Alberta	Erin Bayne	Using bioacoustic methods for assessment of predator avoidance behaviour and improved techniques for analyzing bioacoustic data
Zachary MacDonald (PhD)	University of Alberta	Felix Sperling	Does gene flow within a badlands butterfly, <i>Papilio machaon dodii</i> , follow eroding riverbank corridors?
Corey Smereka (MSc)	University of Alberta	Andrew Derocher	Survival of cougar kittens and maternal space use in west-central Alberta
Samantha Stachiw (MSc)	University of Alberta	Bill Shotyk	Trace elements in native berries growing in the vicinity of open pit mines and upgraders: distinguishing root uptake from aerial deposition of dusts
Nikki van Klaveren (MSc)	University of Alberta	Suzanne Tank	Assessing stream functional responses across a gradient of agricultural land use in Alberta
Colby Whelan (MSc)	University of Calgary	Leland Jackson	Occupancy and habitat preferences of <i>Tubifex tubifex</i> , alternate host of Whirling disease, in Banff National Park