

Strategic Business Plan  
2003-2006



ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



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## Message from the Chairman

In this, the sixth year as a major player in the conservation community in Alberta, the Alberta Conservation Association is ready to move to an enhanced level of performance. We are charting a new direction for the association built upon a clearly defined focus and objective, as well as values and strategic goals that are outlined in this plan. Whether you are an ACA employee, business partner or other stakeholder, your involvement will make ACA's vision a reality.

Although this is a three year plan, the guiding principles are dynamic and will continue to be re-evaluated annually. This Strategic Business Plan is a cumulation of the direction and strategies developed by the Board and our staff over the last year. It is now a roadmap, with focus and direction, leading us to our destination.



Terry Birkholz

### ***Mission:***

To work together with all Albertans to conserve, protect and enhance our natural biological resources.

### ***Vision:***

Our vision is an Alberta where citizens understand and support good stewardship of our natural biological resources, where habitat integrity is maintained, where Government, business and citizens work together for nature conservation, and where future generations can value, enjoy and use those natural biological resources.





Steven Hull

## Message from the Managing Director

ACA is a non-profit, non-government association working collaboratively to conserve, protect and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fisheries and habitat.

This is an exciting and challenging time to be associated with a dynamic organization that is undergoing a metamorphosis; we are truly changing the way we do our business.

This three year outlook reflects the core tenets that are essential to ACA charting its new direction. Our purpose has been refined to clearly allow us to focus on becoming a leader in the conservation community in Alberta. Critical success factors are to become a performance based organization, to be a learning organization and to sharpen the focus on our lines of business. In addition, we have adopted a strategic planning business process and a team based organizational structure. These major changes will greatly increase our ability to impact conservation in Alberta.

The Strategic Business Plan process is as important as the end product presented here. A joint meeting was held with ACA and ASRD staff to discuss ACA's program priorities for the next three years. This successful meeting enhanced ASRD's awareness and understanding of ACA program priorities, while promoting a level of comfort with our new direction for our major partner. ACA's Board of Directors and member groups then confirmed their endorsement of this three year plan, allowing staff to move into the next step of preparing the Annual Operating Plan for Board review in December. The Strategic Business Plan becomes the guiding roadmap to plan each year's Annual Operating Plan.

I appreciate and commend the support ACA employees have shown in developing the goals and strategies described in this plan. By working as a team, we will achieve our goals and have a positive impact on conservation in Alberta.

*"At ACA we collectively define **conservation** as the protection, preservation, enhancement, and restoration of Alberta's natural biological resources for the benefit of future generations."*

# Why a Strategic Business Plan?

The dynamic environment in which ACA operates requires us to adapt as conservation needs in Alberta change. This Strategic Business Plan is a map that will enable us to navigate the road ahead, maintain our sense of direction and remain focused on the goals and strategies that are so important to our effectiveness.

## Focus and Objective

### *Our Focus:*

ACA is a recognized leader in the conservation community in Alberta and Canada.

### *Our Objective:*

To be innovative, efficient and scientifically credible in developing, supporting and delivering conservation programs in Alberta.

## Core Values

### *On behalf of our stakeholders, we model and promote:*

#### ***Innovation***

We strive to overcome new challenges and continually find new ways to improve.

#### ***Integrity***

We work in an ethical manner, with ideals focused on our appreciation and respect for Alberta's biological natural resources.

#### ***Excellence***

We work to achieve the highest standards in everything we do.

#### ***Collaboration***

We work together, using our strengths, skills and knowledge of all team members and partners within and across business units.

#### ***Accountability***

We accept ownership and responsibility for our actions and results.

#### ***Scientific Credibility***

We are dedicated to delivering scientifically rigorous programs with respect for the scientific process.





“Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work”

- Thomas Edison

## Upcoming ACA

# Challenges and Opportunities

**For this 2003 – 2006 planning period, we will focus on ten key areas:**

1. *Ensure ACA has a positive impact on conservation in Alberta.*
  - We are dedicated to conserving Alberta's biological natural resources.
2. *Focus ACA's efforts and resources in order to improve our efficiency.*
  - Our task is large and expansive and our resources are limited. In order for us to be effective we must focus our efforts and resources appropriately.
3. *Balance ACA's moral, legal and ethical obligations.*
  - Although we are charting a new direction as an organization, we remain committed to fulfill all of our obligations.
4. *Enhance the financial resources available to ACA.*
  - Conservation efforts could easily exhaust our available resources. We need to be proactive in acquiring additional revenue sources in order for us to improve our effectiveness.
5. *Develop and improve ACA's profile and identity within Alberta.*
  - ACA intends to be recognized for its positive impact on conservation throughout Alberta. This recognition will generate additional opportunities for ACA to increase its effectiveness.
6. *Develop ACA's scientific credibility within Alberta and among the scientific community.*
  - ACA is committed to developing and delivering scientifically rigorous programs.
7. *Improve our accountability.*
  - We are devoted to being accountable to each other and to our stakeholders in all facets of our business.
8. *Develop a collaborative work environment throughout ACA.*
  - We are developing a collaborative environment within ACA as we believe that teamwork can improve our effectiveness. In addition, we strive to work with other conservation minded organizations towards our common goals.
9. *Recruit, retain and develop highly qualified, professional employees.*
  - We are devoted to establishing a highly trained, well equipped, informed workforce.
10. *Develop a high performance based organization.*
  - By developing a high performance organization we can consistently meet and exceed the expectations of our stakeholders.

# *Our Operating Environment*

*ACA Employees*

*Our Stakeholders*

*ACA is committed to managing its business by selecting a combination of the most efficient and effective practices, utilizing appropriate technologies, cross-functional work teams and employee involvement. Our employees are expected to make decisions and be fully accountable for their actions and their areas of responsibility rather than relying on central control.*

*Our two major business areas consist of "on the ground" project delivery, and administering our Grant Eligible Conservation Fund. ACA will be responsible in managing costs while maintaining scientific credibility and excellence as cornerstones in the services we deliver. ACA also encourages open and effective communications among its Board, management, employees and stakeholders about its business and evolving strategy for the future.*





# ACA Employees

*Create a high-performance workplace to sustain a diverse and inspired workforce.*

ACA has approximately seventy, highly trained, experienced, full time staff throughout the province. This expands to a complement of over one hundred during the summer months. Our employees deliver a wide variety of conservation projects and programs often in close collaboration with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and other partners.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

- Conduct biannual employee satisfaction surveys.
- Establish a leadership culture through specific leadership training and coaching.
- Develop succession-planning protocols to pass along organizational knowledge.
- Build a stronger culture of safety by implementing a safety manual and policy.
- Enhance our positive working relationship with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.
- Successfully negotiate and complete the "Shared Services" Program Agreement and ensure its contents are clearly communicated throughout ACA and ASRD.
- Maintain a healthy relationship between employees and management.

## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

Provide a work environment that supports the health, safety and well-being of all employees and invests in their future development.

### **Strategies**

- Implement our performance management process whereby every employee possesses a personal development plan.
- Reduce the frequency and severity of injuries by developing a comprehensive safety policy and manual.
- Develop and implement a leadership program that builds strength and flexibility into our workforce.

### **Goal 2**

Our employees are engaged and satisfied with ACA's policies and practices and their administration.

### **Strategies**

- Ensure that ACA has clear, well written and concise personnel policies and procedures.
- Ensure that ACA policies and practices are being applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensure an internal communications plan is implemented and employees have a clear understanding of the values and standards that guide ACA's business decisions and activities.
- Actively seek input and opinions of employees at all levels of the organization to promote knowledge based decision making.
- Ensure that employees understand how their job contributes to our Focus, Objective and Goals of ACA.



# ACA Employees

## Goal 3

Employees and teams are rewarded and recognized based on their performance.

### Strategies

- Develop and implement an individual and team reward and recognition program.
- Compensation and advancement will be based on performance.



## Goal 4

ACA employees have the necessary resources available in order to achieve our goals.

### Strategies

- Clarify the relationship ACA has with the Alberta Government for shared accommodations, warehousing and the sharing of services.
- Explore linkages with other organizations where the sharing of assets, accommodations or services may be beneficial to both parties.



### Desired Key Results

- Every employee has internalized our safety manual and policy.
- A positive, collaborative relationship exists between all ACA and ASRD employees.
- Employees view management as an enabler and a positive contributor to our goals.
- A clear process for succession planning has been developed and implemented as part of our existing performance management process.
- A clear agreement between ACA and ASRD outlining a commitment to provide suitable infrastructure to ACA.
- Biannual employee surveys indicate an improved rate of satisfaction over the next three years.
- Employees are confident in their ability to acquire the appropriate resources required to effectively deliver their programs.



# Our Stakeholders

*ACA is committed to meeting the needs of its stakeholders. We strive to provide benefits to Albertans by developing and delivering programs aimed at positively impacting conservation in Alberta.*

ACA's conservation initiatives benefit a wide variety of interest groups that include: hunters and anglers, Alberta Government, local governments, industry, landowners, conservation organizations and the citizens of Alberta.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

- Annually provide the public with information on our business direction and priorities.
- Develop an ongoing process of receiving feedback from our stakeholders.

## **Desired Key Results**

- Our business planning process formally includes public involvement.
- We have a cost effective method of obtaining useful feedback from our stakeholders on a regular basis.

## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

To continue to improve our stakeholder's understanding and satisfaction with our organization and its performance.

### **Strategies**

- Develop an awareness campaign across Alberta highlighting who ACA is and what we do.
- Communicate priorities and directions outlined in our Strategic Business Plan and Annual Operating Plan.
- Develop a method of measuring satisfaction levels of our stakeholders.

### **Goal 2**

Align our ability to deliver programs and services with stakeholder expectations.

### **Strategies**

- Increase stakeholder involvement in developing priorities.
- Improve our ability to inform our stakeholders of what we do and our accomplishments.

# *Communications and Marketing*

*ACA is committed to becoming a recognized leader in the conservation community provincially, while building awareness for the Association nationally. We are also dedicated to continually improving internal communications to ensure our workforce has a clear understanding of ACA business direction and priorities, combined with ongoing opportunities for employee input and feedback. ACA marketing strategies are designed to attract new revenue partners and implement new fundraising initiatives annually by building upon benefits offered through the communications program.*





# Communications and Marketing

*ACA is committed to becoming a recognized leader in the conservation community provincially, while building awareness for the Association nationally.*

## **Strategic Initiatives**

- Maintain generic awareness messages and strategies within the annual communications plan.
- Add project-specific messaging and appropriate strategies to the annual communications plan.
- Expand the communications plan to support annual fundraising initiatives.
- Develop "Friends of ACA" - a revenue program that focuses on corporate, business and foundation targets for multi-year partner agreements.
- Secure one new corporate partner and one new foundation partner annually.
- Develop and implement a minimum of one new fundraising program each year.
- Provide internal and external audiences with standardized messaging and organizational information.
- Expand employee communication messages to increase awareness of ACA's scientific standards, promoting a culture of credibility and scientific excellence.

## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

Enhance general awareness and understanding of ACA to partners, stakeholders, government, industry, business and other conservation groups.

### **Strategy**

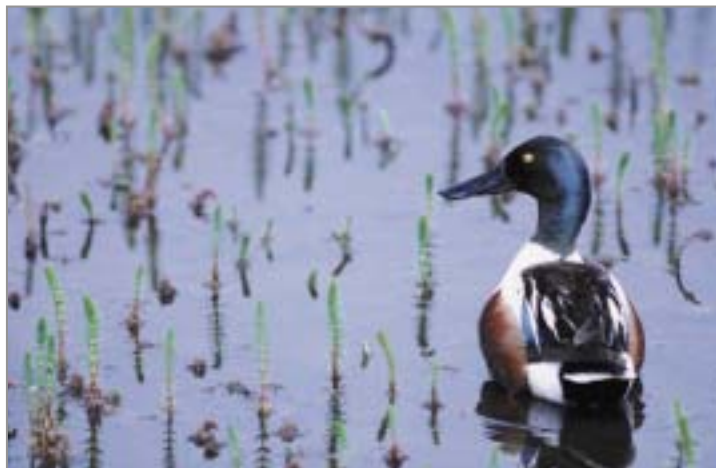
- Continue to promote profile, identity and understanding for ACA across all external audiences including stakeholder groups.

### **Goal 2**

Promote awareness and profile for ACA's impact on conservation efforts to a variety of external audiences.

### **Strategy**

- Include promotion for annual programs, specific projects and special achievements within the annual communications plan.



# Communications and Marketing

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## Goal 3

Develop and implement new fundraising programs to grow the revenue base of the Association.

### Strategy

- Develop an annual fundraising strategy that includes a balance of revenue targets from industry and corporate partners, foundation solicitations, and planned gift giving combined with shorter term fundraising projects.



## Goal 4

ACA employees have a clear understanding of the Association's mission, objectives, and mandate, including how individual program areas fit with overall goals and objectives.

### Strategies

- Develop and implement communication processes where employees have opportunities for input, feedback and recognition combined with regular communication of information that could affect their working lives.



### *Desired Key Results*

- Measurable increases in new revenue.
- Establishment of annual promotion campaigns supporting key events in ACA's business cycle.
- Increased exposure and profile for ACA programs and project areas.
- Improved staff understanding and satisfaction evident in quarterly staff engagement surveys.



## ***Building Scientific Credibility***

*Building scientific credibility is paramount to ACA becoming a recognized leader in conservation. ACA will continue to enhance the scientific credibility of its programs by developing and applying a rigorous review process and by communicating study findings to its stakeholders including the scientific community. These practices will allow ACA to develop and implement innovative and scientifically credible programs that support science-based management decisions.*

*As a prime example of this commitment to scientific credibility, ACA has endowed a Chairholder position in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Alberta. The world-class biological research conducted under the Chairholder's program has significantly enhanced ACA's efforts to support the conservation of Alberta's wildlife and fish resources.*

# Building Scientific Credibility

*Building scientific credibility is paramount to ACA becoming a recognized leader in conservation.*

## GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES

### Goal 1

Collect relevant and cost effective data that support the conservation of Alberta's wildlife and fish.

#### Strategies

- Identify and prioritize conservation program areas.
- Complete inventory and monitoring programs that describe the distribution and abundance of Alberta's wildlife and fish.
- Use collected data to focus discussions on conservation issues and management decisions and options.
- Analyze data to provide a defensible scientific base for conservation actions.
- Use data to critically evaluate the effectiveness of past and current land use practices, standards and guidelines.
- Develop innovative data archiving and retrieval systems.

### Goal 2

Maintain and enhance the scientific credibility of programs delivered by ACA.

#### Strategies

- Coordinate regional program design, implementation and reporting.
- Design scientifically rigorous programs that enhance conservation by reducing key scientific uncertainties.
- Develop and implement ongoing scientific training of staff.
- Enhance scientific credibility by ensuring that study findings are available for public review where appropriate.



### Strategic Initiatives

- Give presentations to academic institutions on who and what ACA is and highlight some of our accomplishments.
- Collaborate with other scientifically credible partners related to conservation.
- Create project planning and review processes to ensure that ACA projects are designed to deliver credible results.
- Implement a peer review process for selected reports.
- Develop and implement a technical report production and archival system.
- Facilitate ongoing training and development.



## Building Scientific Credibility

### Goal 3

Improve the level of recognition of ACA as a group of scientifically credible conservation specialists.

#### ***Desired Key Results***

- The scientific community is aware of and understands ACA's role in conservation.
- The scientific community views ACA as a group of scientifically credible conservation specialists.
- ACA employees have fostered an appreciation of excellence, innovation, accountability and credibility in the development and delivery of their programs.
- Increased number of partnerships with universities, government, industry and other conservation organizations to develop innovative ways to conserve Alberta's wildlife and fish.

#### **Strategies**

- Present results at scientific conferences and public venues.
- Publish results in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Participate in multi-disciplinary projects with other innovative research organizations.





# Operations

*Fisheries*

*Habitat*

*Wildlife*

*Operations at ACA have been grouped into three major business areas, Fisheries, Habitat and Wildlife. Our delegated responsibilities and additional projects we deliver fit within at least one of these areas. Project delivery is the core of our Association and where we make the most tangible strides toward our "bottom line" of having a positive impact on the conservation of fisheries, habitat or wildlife resources in Alberta.*

*As a part of our new strategic direction we have focused on clarifying our priorities within each program area. This was done collaboratively as part of our annual business process with our major partner, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.*

*ACA operations are committed to scientific excellence in the collection, analysis and reporting of biological data, and when appropriate, the effective promotion and communication of scientific results.*





# Fisheries

*ACA will strive to provide leadership in developing accountable and scientifically credible fish conservation programs that will positively influence fisheries management and conservation in Alberta.*

Alberta's lakes and streams support a diversity of fish species. ACA's Fisheries Program collects information on the distribution and abundance of fish to aid in their conservation. The Association also collects vital information on recreational use to ensure that angling opportunities are preserved.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

- Assist in the development of the staff training and safety manual.
- Ensure results of programs are conveyed to external audiences through such venues as scientific conferences and peer reviewed literature.
- Develop a program review and evaluation process.
- Collaborate with researchers on programs.
- Develop an ACA report series and related tracking and housing system.

## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

To increase the scientific credibility of ACA's Fisheries Programs throughout Alberta.

#### **Strategies**

- Develop and follow data collection and storage standards.
- Develop a technical training and professional development program for employees working on Fisheries Programs.
- Set scientific standards for project design and reporting.
- Foster linkages and relationships with the scientific community.

### **Goal 2**

To expand the level of financial resources available to Fisheries Programs at ACA.

#### **Strategies**

- Provide clear focus and direction to the Fisheries Program by developing concise priorities.
- Assist in marketing initiatives specific to the Fisheries Program.
- Develop a list of and a strategy for potential partners or alliances with other organizations.

# Fisheries

## Goal 3

Ensure information collected is used effectively.

### Strategies

- Develop processes that assist Alberta Sustainable Resource Development staff in using information to develop management strategies.
- Develop a communications plan for ACA's Fisheries Programs to ensure conservation professionals and stakeholders are aware of the information collected.
- Ensure that information collected in the Fisheries Program assists in guiding ACA's Habitat Program and is available for stakeholders.

## ACA Fisheries Program Priorities for 2003-2006

### 1. Fish Populations, Trends and Status

Effective resource management depends on the availability of timely and accurate information regarding status and trends over time. Currently, a comprehensive process that enables biologists to determine the condition of populations does not exist for all situations and species, especially non-sport fish species. It is necessary to develop and implement such a process.

### 2. Sport Fish Harvest and Angling Effort

Fish harvest and fishing effort are key management parameters that can be manipulated to ensure sustainable use of fish stocks. Some sport fish in Alberta, such as walleye and pike, have new management strategies that require specific data collection and analysis. Management plans for other species need to be developed or revised. The execution and revision of management strategies depends on timely and accurate data.

### 3. Cumulative Effects

The total influence of all human activities on aquatic ecosystems may exceed the "sum of their parts." In order to protect the basic elements of aquatic systems and ensure their sustainability, it is vitally important to understand the multiplicative effect of human activities on aquatic systems.

### 4. Fish Habitat Status and Change

The condition of fish populations must be related to the status of the habitats that support them, so that habitat and fish management occurs in a synergistic and effective manner. As with fish populations, a process needs to be developed and implemented in support of this need.



### Desired Key Results

- Information collected by ACA forms the scientific basis for many of the management decisions.
- A formalized process is developed that includes ACA information in the management decision making process.
- A standardized method of communicating relevant results from ACA programming to conservation professionals throughout Alberta is developed and implemented.
- A link to ACA's Habitat Program is developed and our Habitat Programs receive direction from information collected in the Fisheries Program.
- An ACA report series and related tracking and housing system is developed.
- Relationships are developed and formalized with key partners.
- Formalized linkages are developed with the scientific community.
- All employees are equipped with technical skills related to fisheries science and associated techniques.



# Habitat

*ACA will implement a strategy for its Habitat Programs, which is efficient, credible and accountable and will benefit Alberta's wildlife and fish resources.*

Alberta's wildlife and fish rely on a diversity of habitats. ACA's Habitat Program works closely with the fisheries and Wildlife Programs to conserve important habitats throughout the province. Our Habitat Program works collaboratively with other conservation agencies and individuals to promote habitat stewardship.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

- Development of a detailed *Habitat Securement Strategy*.
- Clarification of the management of conservation properties, ASRD and landowner agreements, capital project liabilities.
- Develop a focus and a prioritized direction to ACA's Habitat Programs.
- Develop and implement a rigorous internal review process for all ACA activities.
- Develop strategic alliances and policies for working with other organizations.

## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

ACA will resolve all outstanding historical issues related to inherited Habitat Programs and projects.

#### **Strategies**

- Develop a credible, effective detailed *Habitat Securement Strategy*.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities surrounding management of conservation properties.
- Review and clarify responsibilities associated with ASRD and landowner agreements.
- Research and clarify historical capital project liabilities.

### **Goal 2**

Ensure all projects are aligned with our goals and are delivered in an efficient and scientifically credible manner.

#### **Strategies**

- Develop and implement a rigorous internal project evaluation process
- Establish a link between the Habitat Team and the Wildlife and Fish Teams.
- Develop a system of peer reviews for projects.

### **Goal 3**

Work collaboratively with other habitat organizations and become a leader in habitat conservation in Alberta.

#### **Strategies**

- Develop clear criteria for working with other organizations.
- Develop strategic alliances with other habitat organizations.
- Provide landowners with options and opportunities to participate in habitat conservation programs.

# Habitat

## ACA Habitat Program Priorities for 2003-2006

### 1. Riparian Habitat

These habitats make up four percent of Alberta's land base. Yet, eighty percent of Alberta's wildlife and fish species depend on this habitat at some point in their life cycle. ACA is committed to conserving this rapidly disappearing habitat through a variety of methods.

### 2. Habitat Supporting Species At Risk

ACA is committed to conserving and enhancing habitats that support species whose populations are diminishing due to reduced availability of the habitat upon which they depend.

### 3. Critical Upland Habitat

These critical habitats could be defined as habitats that are limiting population viability, or are crucial to a particular species in a certain area or contributes a significant biological function to the ecosystem in question.

### 4. Habitat Supporting Recreation Opportunities

The conservation or enhancement of habitats that add value to wildlife and fish related recreational opportunities of Albertans are important for ACA.

## HABITAT SECUREMENT STRATEGY

This is the first year ACA has had clear priorities in place for its Habitat Program. These priorities are crucial in the development of the details of this strategy. Habitat Team members will be using the first year (2003/2004) to develop and define strategic alliances with key conservation organizations involved in habitat securement, and to evaluate and identify parcels currently secured through mapping and "on the ground" field inspections.

Priorities for ACA habitat securement will be to target parcels of land with the following characteristics:

- Aligned with priorities 1 through 4 as outlined above.
- Confirm critical habitat that is limiting wildlife and/or fish population growth or threatening stability.
- Contains existing native habitat.
- High potential to restore altered lands to native habitat.
- Partner interest in long term management and maintenance of property.
- Provides recreational opportunities.
- If not acted on promptly, negative impact on land through loss or alteration of habitat.
- Connection to other conservation lands and/or other ACA projects.

## Desired Key Results

- A clear, defensible strategy to guide ACA in securing and acquiring habitat in Alberta.
- Our projects have been evaluated and are aligned with our overall focus and goals.
- ACA has developed relationships and formalized agreements with key partners.
- A clear focus and direction for ACA's Habitat Program is developed and linked closely with the needs and priorities identified by our Wildlife and Fisheries Teams.

## Habitat Securement General Conditions:

- Purchases are not to exceed fair market value for the property.
- Unless initiated by ACA, funding for any purchase will not exceed 50% of the total cost of the acquisition.
- Where ACA is not named on title, ACA must have first right to purchase for \$1.00.
- Non-motorized access to the property for recreation must be available, subject to the nature of the property and reason for purchase.
- Management plan must be developed within 60 days of finalizing any acquisition.



# Wildlife

*To develop a strategy for an accountable Wildlife Program based on clearly defined priorities, making ACA a recognized leader in conservation.*

Alberta's array of ecosystems supports a diversity of wildlife species. ACA's Wildlife Program collects information on the distribution and abundance of wildlife to aid in their conservation. The Association also collects vital information on recreational use to ensure that hunting and other recreational opportunities are preserved.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

- Increase level of training within ACA for wildlife professionals.
- Recruit professional wildlife personnel into key positions.
- Establish a linkage with the scientific community.
- Develop strategic alliances with key partners.
- Review the effectiveness of our current methods of delivering our obligations within this program.

## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

ACA will become a major contributor to wildlife conservation in Alberta.

### **Strategies**

- Clarify and enhance the role of ACA in wildlife conservation.

### **Goal 2**

Enhance financial resources available for wildlife conservation programming.

### **Strategies**

- Provide focus to ACA's Wildlife Programs to make the best use of available resources.
- Explore non-traditional funding sources.
- Develop formalized relationships with key partners.



# Wildlife

## Goal 3

Clarify, research and deliver existing commitments or obligations within the Wildlife Program area.

### Strategies

- Ensure expectations related to existing commitments are well defined.
- Research other options for the delivery of these commitments and obligations.

## Goal 4

Develop and maintain a high standard of excellence and scientific credibility in ACA's Wildlife Programs.

### Strategies

- Improve relationship with the scientific community.
- Implementation of a project review process.
- Develop and acquire wildlife professionals.

## ACA Wildlife Program Priorities for 2003-2006

### 1. Population Inventory Data

The execution of field surveys to describe the distribution and abundance of a species to aid in the effective management of wildlife by providing accurate trend information.

### 2. Implementation of Management, Conservation, or Recovery Plans

Management actions taken to maintain or re-establish the abundance and distribution of a species within their natural range.

### 3. Collecting and Compiling Data

The collection and integration of information on the abundance and distribution of a species and/or their habitat requirements to assist in the effective management of the resource.

### 4. Habitat Inventory Data

The execution of field surveys to describe the diversity and abundance of physical habitats.

### 5. Data Management System

A systematic method involving computer hardware and software used to store, manipulate and export data.

### 6. Human/Wildlife Interactions

The process of identifying and often mitigating when and where humans and wildlife interact and the outcomes of those interactions.



### *Desired Key Results*

- ACA is a recognized leader in wildlife conservation in Alberta.
- Our projects are known for their scientific rigor and excellence.
- ACA has developed relationships and formalized agreements with key partners.
- A clear focus and direction for ACA's Wildlife Program is developed and provides direction to ACA's Habitat Program.
- ACA has a well trained, respected group of wildlife professionals.



## ***Our Conservation Fund***

*At ACA, we believe it is our responsibility to support the collective effort to conserve, protect and enhance Alberta's natural biological resources. Our two major business areas consist of "on the ground" project delivery, and administering a grant fund that has been awarding environmental conservation grants since 1997. Funded by the province's anglers, hunters and other conservationists, ACA's Grant Eligible Conservation Fund supports programs that benefit Alberta's wildlife and fish populations, and the habitat that they depend on. The grants are designed to enhance ACA activities and align with ACA's priorities.*



# Our Conservation Fund

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## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1**

Expand the financial base of the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund to enhance our ability to support the collective conservation effort.

#### **Strategy**

- Market the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund as a potential recipient of annual fundraising activities that includes a balance of revenue from industry and corporate partners, foundation solicitations, and planned gift giving combined with shorter term fundraising projects.

### **Goal 2**

Enhance awareness of the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund to attract quality funding applications that will positively impact conservation efforts aligned with ACA's major program areas.

#### **Strategy**

- Enhance the promotion of the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund to reach a broader audience of both individuals and organizations.

### **Goal 3**

Improve the accountability of each project funded through the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.

#### **Strategy**

- Funding recipients are provided with a clear expectation of funding terms, tracking of deliverables and efficient accounting practices.



### **Strategic Initiatives**

- Approach a variety of businesses and industrial sectors with the intent of securing funding dollars to augment the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.
- Provide Alberta's media with current news releases and an ongoing awareness of the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.
- Explore ways to better use ACA's website to promote the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.
- Focus administrative efforts on project tracking and fund recipient accountability to ensure conservation needs are being achieved.

### **Desired Key Results**

- Grow the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund both in available financial resources and positive effect on conservation efforts in Alberta.
- An informed and supportive public and stakeholder base with respect to the projects and activities of the Grant Eligible Conservation Fund.
- Attract the best proposals that forward conservation efforts in Alberta.
- Provide perspective funding partners with clear funding guidelines and priorities for action.



## Financial Resources

*The majority of ACA funding is generated from various levies on angling and hunting licences. Although statistically, the number of anglers and hunters is remaining constant, there is a general impression that the number of hunters is declining. This could have a direct impact on ACA revenue.*

*The levy revenue is forecast to remain constant at approximately \$7 million per year over the next three years. Expenditures however are forecast to increase at a rate of approximately 5% per year. This "flat lining" of revenue offset by an increase in expenditures could have a significant impact on the level of ACA programming.*

*Consideration should be given to reviewing and potentially adjusting the levy on all or specific licences, but it is also recognized that significant time would be required to enact any levy increase. The impact of any levy increase would probably not be reflected in ACA revenue for the next three years.*

*To maintain and enhance the level of programming and to continue the growth of ACA, specific attention must be paid to growing the revenue base of the organization.*

# Financial Resources

*Enhance the diversity of ACA's financial base and continually improve organizational performance.*

## GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES

### Goal 1

To increase alternate sources of revenue and reduce the dependency on levy revenue.

#### Strategy

- Enhance the level of partner contributions by developing new strategic partnerships.
- Investigate non-traditional sources of funding.
- Increase the ability of ACA to leverage partner dollars by increasing profile and awareness.

### Goal 2

To maximize the use of available financial resources.

#### Strategy

- Continue to refine the budgeting and funding allocation process to allow reallocation of financial resources throughout the year .
- Enhance the accountability and financial reporting processes to ensure timely, accurate financial information is available for decision making.
- Practice effective cost containment strategies.



### Strategic Initiatives

- Train employees in "financial management for the non-financial manager."
- Reward and recognize employees who measureable exceed goals.
- Quarterly operational reporting will involve financial reporting in all business areas.

### Desired Key Results

- Increase the amount of other (non-levy) revenue in each of the three years with the overall goal of reducing the ratio of levy revenue versus other revenue by 15% by the end of 2006.
- Identify and acquire non-traditional sources of revenue.



## ***Monitoring and Implementation***

*We are committed to our focus and strategies and translating them into action. We monitor the efficiency of our programs by communicating with other conservation groups to avoid duplication of effort. ACA is dedicated to acquiring feedback around both internal business processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results. By being committed to a balanced scorecard approach, emphasizing the achievement of results and implementing strategy, it is our intention to drive organizational change toward creating a high performance culture.*

# Monitoring and Implementation

*We are committed to ensuring our entire organization understands our strategies, our plans, and is devoted to optimizing our performance.*

## GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES

### Goal 1

Ensure that our focus, objectives, workflows and personal performance are aligned.

#### Strategies

- Development of a comprehensive, integrated performance management process.
- Link our Focus and Objective to all decision frameworks.
- Ensure all ACA employees understand and are aware of desired key results.
- Develop a culture where coaching and feedback are regularly used.

### Goal 2

Development and implementation of a process where meaningful performance measures and outcomes are used to gauge the Association's overall success.

#### Strategies

- Development of a comprehensive customized Balanced Scorecard System that evaluates success based on a variety of relevant indicators.

### Goal 3

Continually improve upon our Strategic Business Plan and direction by maintaining a dynamic, "three year rolling" business plan process.

#### Strategies

- Business plans are constantly re-assessed and updated.



#### Strategic Initiatives

- Acquire feedback from employees on their understanding of our strategies, and their role in contributing to these strategies through regular staff surveys.
- Acquire regular feedback from our stakeholders on their impression of our performance.
- Develop a quarterly reporting mechanism that will allow for timely decision making or changes in strategy where required.
- Refine our Performance Management Process to reflect our strategic direction.
- Refine and clearly communicate our Business Planning Process.

#### Desired Key Results

- All employees understand how their workplan fits with the Association's Focus and Objective.
- Increased amount of internal coordination across teams and business units, eliminating duplication.
- Ability to demonstrate the value of ACA to our stakeholders.
- The Association's culture further evolves toward a high performing organization.

# Summary



Special thanks to all Alberta Conservation Association employees who participated in the development of this plan and their ongoing contributions.

ACA's Strategic Business Plan outlines the exciting challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. By identifying long term goals, objectives and priorities, this three year plan provides general focus and direction upon which to base our annual operating decisions through 2003 to 2006.

The Strategic Business Plan is the first step in a dynamic business process that now sets the guidelines for ACA's Annual Operating Plan. This document identifies WHAT we will be doing and WHY. The Annual Operating Plan is then developed to identify HOW we will achieve these goals, complete with funding and resource allocations, work plans, operating details, and evaluation systems to ensure we remain within the direction specified in the Strategic Business Plan and approved by ACA's Board of Directors.

A Strategic Business Plan is not created in isolation. The new goals identified within would not be possible without the foundation built by significant steps that have already taken place in 2001/2002. We acknowledge and thank ACA employees, managers, program partners, and Board of Directors for their valuable guidance and input into this important document.



Alberta Conservation  
Association