

ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



Strategic Business Plan
2004-2007



Alberta Conservation
Association®

*Funded by Alberta Anglers, Hunters,
and Other Conservationists*

2004-2007

Strategic Business Plan

Established in 1997, ACA is a non profit, non government association working collaboratively to conserve and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fisheries and habitat.

ACA has been called a catalyst, providing the common fuel for awareness, knowledge, and action. We are proud of the meaningful conservation work acheived by ACA's board, staff, partners and stakeholders. Our goal is to promote the significant conservation work made possible through the financial contribution of Alberta hunters and anglers.

ACA Founding Member Groups:



Alberta Fish and
Game Association



Alberta Professional
Outfitters Society



Alberta Trappers
Association



Federation of Alberta
Naturalists



Treaty 8 Nations of
Alberta



Trout Unlimited
Canada



Western Walleye
Council

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Message from the Chairman

Following the strategies and direction in our 2004 – 2007 Strategic Business Plan, we will be poised to be an integral catalyst in Alberta's conservation community. Our aim is to leverage and focus the energies and resources that exist among the wide variety of partners and stakeholders, allowing Albertans to emerge as winners in the realm of biological resource conservation. The collaboration of our many partners will provide an increased level of public awareness of conservation issues coupled with a steady flow of quality scientific information and data, naturally building widespread support for our biological resources and the issues facing them. The wider the support, the more meaningful the management and use will be. Important habitats will be preserved; species and population levels will persist. The inherent natural beauty of our biological resources and habitats and the diverse array of recreational opportunities it can provide will be there for us, and hopefully all future generations, to enjoy.

Our Mission

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

Our 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.



Terry Birkholz

"ACA is unique, bridging the gap between hunters, anglers and the non consumptive outdoor enthusiasts."

- Terry Birkholz



Steven Hull

"ACA links scientific research with end users, proving that industry and conservation don't have to be on opposite sides of sustainability."

- Steven Hull

Message from the Managing Director

At ACA we recognize the diverse array of conservation challenges in our province and remain dedicated to ensuring the conservation of these precious resources is second to none. We are in a unique position of being able to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development, enhancing their ability to manage these resources. Also, by continuing to work closely with industry, corporate and other government stakeholders we believe that the successful conservation of Alberta's biological natural resources can be realized. A multitude of successful conservation entities and efforts already exist on the Alberta landscape. By acting as a catalyst, ACA will play a role in focusing these efforts toward specific challenges and by facilitating these efforts, have a greater impact on conservation.

Our 2004 – 2007 Strategic Business Plan reflects one fundamental difference from our previous plan: after making significant progress in developing our internal business systems and processes we are now placing a greater emphasis on measuring our external impact on our "bottom-line" of having positive impact on the resource. While continually seeking improvements in the areas of financial resources, stakeholder satisfaction, learning and growth of our employees, and our internal business processes we can be confident in that these areas are all highly functioning and aligned to help us have a tangible impact on the conservation of Alberta's biological natural resources.

Our Focus

To facilitate and support Alberta in emerging as a recognized leader in the conservation of its natural biological resources in Canada and North America.

Our Objective

Through collaboration, innovation and efficiency we develop, support and deliver scientifically credible conservation programs in Alberta.

What is contained in this Strategic Business Plan?

ACA's Strategic Business Plan was developed with direction from ACA's Board of Directors, input from our conservation partners, and employee involvement. It fully utilizes ACA's Focus, Objective, and Core Values as guiding principles. Our commitment to performance and results is governed through five strategic perspectives (The Resource, Financial, Learning and Growth, Internal Business Processes and Customer). ACA will achieve its Vision by pursuing critical success factors in each of these perspectives through a focused team effort.

The strategic business planning process is part of a continuous improvement cycle that involves planning, implementing, assessing results and realigning. While intended to be a three year outlook, ACA's plan will be refined and updated as it is implemented. How well we meet our many challenges will depend on how we address the expectations of our customers and positively impact conservation in Alberta. Only through strengthening our partnerships, our organization and pursuing continuous improvement as we strive for excellence through a comprehensive strategic business plan will we be able to achieve our vision in the future.

Core Values

On behalf of our stakeholders, we model and promote:

Collaboration

We work closely with each other as well as our partners and alliances to positively impact Alberta's biological natural resources.

Integrity

We appreciate and respect Alberta's biological natural resources.

Excellence

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

Innovation

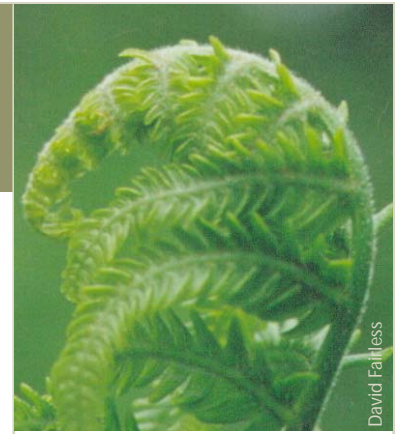
We strive to overcome new challenges and continually find new ways to improve.

Accountability

We are all responsible for our results and effectiveness toward conservation in Alberta.

Respect

We hold each other in high regard for our dedication, expertise, creativity and teamwork.



ACA will realize its focus by achieving success in each of these five areas:

- The Resource
- Financial
- Learning and Growth
- Internal Business Processes
- Customer

ACA stakeholders include:

- Hunters and Anglers
- Our Board and Staff
- Our Member Groups
- Local Governments
- Federal Government
- Industry and Business
- Science and Academia
- Landowners
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Citizens of Alberta



"Good thoughts are no better than good dreams unless they are executed."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Challenges and Opportunities Facing ACA

For this 2004 – 2007 planning period, we will focus on these opportunities and challenges:

- Alberta's globally unique landscape and abundance of natural resources is a challenge in that so many stakeholders have interest on the same land base. Conversely, the economic power created by this abundance also provides an opportunity to coordinate significant financial and political resources involved in conservation efforts in Alberta.
- A myriad of conservation entities and initiatives are already established in the conservation movement in Alberta. This poses a challenge in ensuring that their efforts can be coordinated in a fashion that will produce a synergistic effect.
- Enhance the level of awareness and understanding of conservation issues within Alberta.
- Rigorously monitor and manage ACA's performance by identifying specific success indicators in each of our strategic perspectives thereby enhancing our accountability and improving our impact on conservation.
- Enhance our working relationship with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development fostering collaboration and mutual support.
- Foster a collaborative approach to conservation between our self-directed work teams our board of directors and among our partners and alliances.
- Develop ACA's scientific credibility, profile and identity within Alberta and the conservation community at large.
- Enhance the financial resources available to ACA, reducing our reliance on funds derived from levies.
- Embrace and maintain a high performance organizational culture where learning, continuous improvement and employee engagement are paramount.

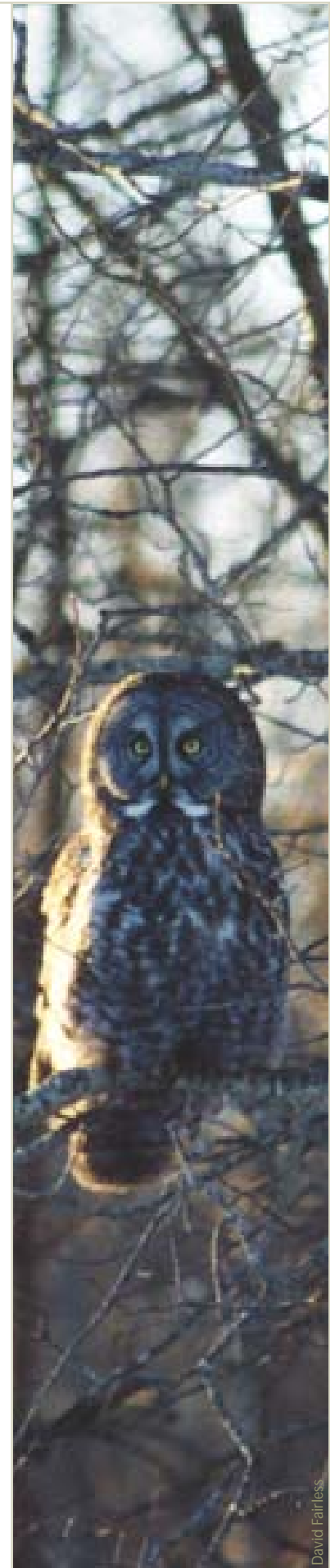
Our Operating Environment

Our Partners and Stakeholders

*Cooperation with Alberta Sustainable
Resource Development*

Employees

ACA is committed to managing its business, selecting a combination of the most efficient and effective practices, utilizing appropriate technologies, self-directed work teams and employee involvement. Our employees are expected to make decisions and be fully accountable for their areas of responsibility rather than relying on central control or being inhibited by apparent constraints. Financially, ACA will diligently manage costs and pursue innovative revenue generating strategies 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.



David Fairless



Rob Corrigan

Strategic Initiatives

- Regularly communicate to our stakeholders our business direction and priorities via our website, public service announcements through radio, television and print media.
- Develop and host conservation forums for the public and for conservation professionals.
- An active customer satisfaction and awareness survey.

Our Partners & 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, the Federal Government, local governments, industry, landowners, conservation organizations and the citizens of Alberta. ACA believes in working collaboratively with any of the above groups where mutually agreed to priorities are developed within the framework of our Strategic Business Plan and helps us improve our ability to positively affect conservation in Alberta.

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

Collaborate with our stakeholders in generating an enhanced level of awareness of conservation issues facing Alberta.

- Facilitate forums that allow us to interact with our partners and stakeholders improving collaboration and understanding of resource issues.
- Communicate priorities and directions outlined in our Strategic Business Plan and our Annual Operating Plan and ensure our stakeholders understand them.
- Develop systems and processes that allow regular and informative communication with our stakeholders.

Goal 2

Continue to improve our stakeholders understanding and satisfaction with our organization and its performance.

- Develop an awareness campaign across Alberta highlighting what our measures of success are and our progress in reaching these targets.
- Engage in two-way communication regarding our priorities and directions outlined in our Strategic Business Plan and our Annual Operating Plan.
- Identify clear and measurable targets and communicate our results to the public.
- Improve our ability to inform our stakeholders of what we do and what our results are.
- Monitor and improve the satisfaction levels of our stakeholders.

Cooperation with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

ACA has agreed to accept certain responsibilities related to the enhancement and management of the wildlife and fish resources and the habitats upon which they depend as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development. ACA is committed to fostering and maintaining a high level of cooperation with the Ministry particularly the Fish and Wildlife Division in the collaborative development of program priorities that will best serve Alberta's biological natural resources. ACA is committed to providing Fish and Wildlife professionals with the most relevant, credible and timely information possible, thereby contributing to the success of the Ministry. Remaining fully integrated with the Ministry's management information systems dramatically improves this mutually beneficial partnership and stands to propel Alberta as a leader in the global conservation community.

Goal 3

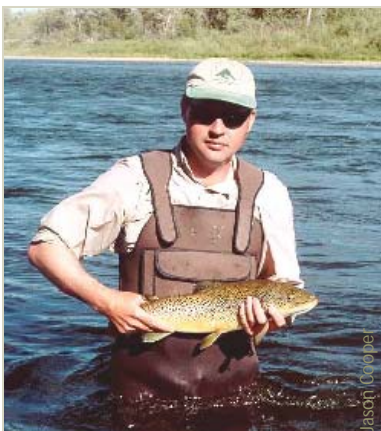
Actively facilitate, support and coordinate our efforts along with the efforts of our stakeholders.

- Act as a catalyst in the conservation community pulling together resources for emerging issues.
- Explore, develop and maintain linkages or areas for collaboration on common conservation issues.



Desired Key Results

- Public participation in our business planning process involves specific feedback from government, industry and other conservation organizations including both consumptive and non-consumptive recreational users.
- Our stakeholders or customers report a minimum of a 75% satisfaction level with our services.
- Our stakeholders are aware of our priorities and our results obtained in working toward the achievement of our goals.
- An ACA publication reaching 75,000 households in Alberta by 2007.
- Our stakeholders are aware of our success measures and specified targets.



Strategic Initiatives

- Conduct bi-annual employee engagement / satisfaction surveys.
- Maintain an effective leadership culture through specific leadership training and coaching.
- Develop succession-planning protocols to ensure organizational knowledge and culture persists.
- Build a stronger culture of safety by developing and implementing a safety manual and policy.
- Identify and measure key core competencies associated with all positions at ACA.
- Maintain healthy relationships between employees and management.
- Maintain internal communications program including regular staff update newsletter and web information community.

Employees

ACA has sixty-one 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 in close collaboration with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and other partners throughout all parts of the province. ACA is committed to the creation of a high-performance workplace and to sustaining an engaged and inspired workforce.

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

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

- Implement a succession planning framework as part of our performance management process.
- Ensure all employees have personal development plans linked to their personal performance objectives.
- Reduce the frequency and severity of injuries by developing a comprehensive safety policy and manual.
- Embrace organization wide learning events focused on leadership or technical skills that builds strength, professionalism and flexibility into our workforce.

Goal 2

Our employees are engaged and satisfied with ACA's policies and practices. In addition to, maintaining a dialogue with our employees about our business and developing strategy for the future.

- Implement a succession planning framework as part of our performance management process.
- Ensure all employees have personal development plans linked to their personal performance objectives.
- Reduce the frequency and severity of injuries by developing a comprehensive safety policy and manual.
- Embrace organization wide learning events focused on leadership or technical skills that builds strength, professionalism and flexibility into our workforce.

Employees

Goal 3

Employees and teams are rewarded and recognized based on their performance as well as their behaviours exhibited.

- Implement an individual and a team reward and recognition program.
- Compensation and advancements are based on performance and the exhibition of desired competencies.

Goal 4

ACA employees have the necessary information, infrastructure and assets available in a reliable and timely fashion in order to achieve our goals.

- Clarify the relationship ACA has with the Alberta Government for shared accommodations, warehousing and the sharing of services.
- Internal business processes remain flexible in order to react to necessary changes in programming.
- 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 is in place between ACA and ASRD outlining a commitment to provide suitable infrastructure to ACA for a discrete period of time.
- Bi-annual employee surveys indicate an overall rate of satisfaction and engagement of 85%.



Science and Research

ACA is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of scientific credibility, transparency and accountability for all of its programs. ACA will continue to apply a rigorous and transparent project review process, design scientifically defensible projects that use stringent experimental designs and study methods, and communicate study findings to a broad suite of stakeholders including the scientific community. These practices will allow ACA to strongly support science-based management decisions. Our continued commitment to scientific excellence, collaboration, accountability, credibility and innovation will foster an improved understanding of, and respect for, ACA as a dedicated group of conservation professionals.

Science and Research

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

Collect relevant and cost effective data to quantify the status of Alberta's fish and wildlife resources.

- Prioritize conservation program strategies and focal program areas.
- Use collected data to focus discussions on conservation issues and management options and decisions.
- Analyze data to provide a defensible scientific base for conservation actions and to critically evaluate the effectiveness of past and current land base practices, standards and guidelines.
- Create decision-support resources to identify trends in the abundance and distribution of Alberta wildlife and fish resources.
- Develop innovative data archiving and retrieval systems.
- Improve the flow of scientific information to policy makers and resource managers.

Goal 2

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

- Develop a formal written project review process for all ACA reports.
- Maintain an internal project review team to scrutinize ACA reports.
- Provide support and coordinate regional program design, implementation and reporting.
- Design scientifically rigorous programs that enhance conservation by identifying and reducing key scientific uncertainties.
- Develop and implement ongoing scientific training of employees to build scientific capacity.
- Protect scientific credibility by ensuring that study findings are available for public review.



Strategic Initiatives

- Give presentations to academic institutions and various public forums on ACA, its mandate and vision and highlight some of our programs.
- Partner with other scientifically credible organizations to deliver conservation-orientated programs.
- Create project planning and review processes to ensure that ACA projects are scientifically rigorous and that they deliver key results.
- Implement an internal peer review process for ACA reports.
- Develop and implement a technical report production and archival system.
- Facilitate ongoing employee training and development to strengthen our scientific knowledge base and capabilities.



Desired Key Results

- The scientific community is aware of and understands ACA's mandate and vision.
- The scientific community views ACA as a deliverer of scientifically credible programs and our employees as leaders in conservation.
- ACA employees have fostered an appreciation for 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 fish and wildlife.

Science and Research

Goal 3

Improve the level of interaction, information exchange and collaboration with other credible conservation specialists.

- Develop processes to foster an open program approach to the dissemination of ACA project results at scientific conferences and public venues.
- Promote awareness and debate on current conservation issues addressed by ACA.
- Encourage comments and critiques from the broad suite of stakeholders on ACA focal programs.
- Participate in multi-disciplinary projects with other innovative research organizations.
- Publish study results in peer-reviewed scientific journals.



Operations

Wildlife

Fisheries

Habitat

Operations at ACA are composed of three major business areas, Fisheries, Habitat and Wildlife. Our delegated responsibilities and additional projects we deliver fit within 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.

ACA works closely with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and other partners in developing and delivering programs within each of our major business areas.

ACA's 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.



David Fairless



Strategic Initiatives

- Promote ongoing professional development for wildlife scientific or technical competencies.
- Ensure results of programs are conveyed to external audiences (scientific conferences and peer reviewed literature).
- Maintain an internal program review and evaluation process.
- Collaborate with researchers on programs through Alberta Cooperative Conservation Resource Unit (ACCRU).
- Contribute to an ACA report series and related tracking and housing system for ACA's Wildlife information.

Wildlife

Alberta's array of ecosystems supports a diversity 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 facilitate the preservation and enhancement of hunting and other recreational opportunities.

Focus

To develop and deliver a wildlife program that positively influences the resource and its users. This is achieved by working collaboratively with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and other partners to establish clearly defined priorities that support wildlife management.

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

Delivery and support of wildlife projects that enhance information on current issues facing wildlife populations in Alberta and measure our results.

- Identify key data gaps in the scientific management of the resource.
- Increase learning opportunities by promoting inter-regional or inter agency collaboration on innovative or scientific projects.
- Ensure all programs have clearly identified success measures.
- Deliver a professional forum aimed at identifying emerging issues.
- Expand funding base to ACA's Wildlife Program.

Goal 2

Enhanced awareness by the public of critical issues facing the wildlife resource in Alberta.

- Communicate regularly with our customers on the topics facing wildlife conservation in Alberta and inform them of what actions ACA is taking to address these issues.
- Regularly feature a wildlife project to the public through a variety of electronic, print and news media.
- Participate in public forums in sharing information.
- Present at technical workshops and scientific conferences.

Wildlife

Goal 3

Enhance the scientific credibility and develop a standard of excellence within our wildlife program and projects.

- Develop regular technical development events for ACA wildlife professionals.
- Promote the production of peer-reviewed articles highlighting ACA projects.
- Work collaboratively with other scientifically credible agencies or institutions.
- Develop scientific standards and protocols for ACA professionals to follow.

Goal 4

To enhance and strengthen the relationship between ACA's wildlife program employees and their counterparts at Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

- Clarify roles and responsibilities at operational and organizational levels for wildlife employees.
- Ensure ACA's wildlife program is focused on conservation and can enhance Alberta Sustainable Resource Development's ability to manage the resource.
- Encourage joint participation on projects to promote learning and knowledge transfer.
- Establish mutual sense of support between ACA and ASRD wildlife professionals.



Desired Key Results

- ACA has an increased level of collaboration with wildlife resource managers in planning processes and project delivery.
- Feedback from articles featuring wildlife projects.
- Regular presentations to customers and wildlife professionals.
- Requests for participation at wildlife conferences.
- Increased number of papers or reports submitted for publication.
- An increase in the number of multi-stakeholder collaborative projects.
- An enhanced level of revenue for the wildlife program of 25% by 2007.
- Annual professional development events are hosted for ACA wildlife professionals.



Wildlife

ACA Wildlife Program Priorities for 2004-2007

1. **Population Assessment and Status Determination**

The execution of surveys to describe the distribution and abundance of a species to aid in the effective management of wildlife by providing accurate trend information. This involves the collection and compilation of data on game and non-game species. Inventories that capture information on priority management issues will be the major focus of this program.

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. **Habitat Inventory Information**

The condition of wildlife populations must be related to the status of the habitats that support them, so that habitat and wildlife management occurs in a synergistic and effective manner.

4. **Compilation, Archival and Management of Information**

A systematic method of archiving and managing the information obtained from ACA wildlife programs. As well as having a system in place to facilitate the retrieval of the information to support the management of the resource.

5. **Human / Wildlife Interactions**

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



Fisheries

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 support efforts that enhance or preserve angling opportunities. ACA's fisheries program views conservation as the sustainable and responsible participation in the social and consumptive use of the fish and aquatic resources, while recognizing that we are part of the ecosystem.

Focus

ACA fisheries program will strive to increase public awareness, understanding and concern for fisheries conservation issues. With our customers, we will collaboratively identify key current and emerging fisheries issues and deliver quality projects orientated toward these issues.

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

Increased public awareness of issues facing the fisheries resource and ACA's role in these issues as well as assist the public in identifying ways they can contribute.

- Development and implementation of a communications plan.
- Design and implement a survey of the public's current awareness and perceptions of issues facing the fisheries resource.
- Delivery of public forums, media and workshops to enhance understanding and awareness of fisheries conservation issues.

Goal 2

Enhance our knowledge of the fisheries resource increasing our ability to facilitate the successful resolution of current and emerging fisheries issues.

- Identify key data gaps in the scientific management of the resource.
- Increase learning opportunities by promoting inter-regional or inter-agency collaboration on innovative or scientific projects.
- Deliver a professional forum aimed at identifying emerging issues.
- Place an emphasis on technical development for all employees where implementation of learnings can be immediately demonstrated.



David Fairless

Strategic Initiatives

- Host an annual forum or workshop to enhance awareness of fisheries issues.
- Ensure results of programs are conveyed to external audiences (scientific conferences and peer reviewed literature).
- Develop and implement annual professional development opportunities for ACA fisheries professionals.
- Collaborate with other researchers on programs.
- Contribute to an ACA report series and related tracking and housing system.



Fisheries

Goal 3

Promote the effective use of information collected, allowing it to contribute positively to conservation in Alberta.

- Our internal processes allow resource managers to readily access and understand our information on a timely basis.
- Fisheries employees are involved in developing and where appropriate in implementing management strategies.
- Information collected assists in guiding ACA's Habitat Program.

Goal 4

To enhance the relationship between ACA's fisheries program employees and their ASRD counterparts.

- Clarify roles and responsibilities at operational and organizational levels for fisheries employees.
- Ensure ACA fisheries program is focused on conservation and can enhance the Ministry's ability to manage the resource.
- Establish mutual sense of support within ACA and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development fisheries programs.

Goal 5

Enhance the level of scientific credibility of ACA's fisheries programs.

- Develop and implement data standards for ACA fisheries programs in collaboration with the Ministry and other partners.
- Ensure technical training opportunities and professional development events are a part of fisheries program employees' work plans.
- Develop and monitor scientific standards and rigour for project design and reporting.
- Foster linkages with the scientific community and other fishery professionals.
- Develop and implement data management processes and improve existing management information systems that enhance our accountability and efficiency.

Fisheries

ACA Fisheries Program Priorities for 2004-2007

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 and make effective comparisons with the past does not exist for all situations and species, especially non-sport fishes. It is necessary to develop and implement such a process.

2. Sport fish harvest and angling effort

Anglers have a primary effect on the sport fish populations they target. 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. Fisheries biologists require information to support the monitoring of sport fisheries and for the development and execution of management strategies aimed at achieving desired objectives.

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. With fish populations, a process needs to be developed and implemented in support of this need.



Desired Key Results

- A formal ACA fisheries report series is developed.
- A working relationship with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is developed.
- ACA hosts a national conference for fisheries professionals.
- Annual technical development events are held for ACA fisheries employees.



Strategic Initiatives

- Ensure results of programs are conveyed to external audiences (public forums and media, scientific conferences and peer reviewed literature).
- Develop and maintain a program review and evaluation process.
- Collaborate with researchers and other organizations on programs.
- Contribute to the development of an ACA report series and related tracking and housing system.
- Host provincial and national level habitat forums.

Habitat

Alberta's fish and wildlife 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.

Focus

ACA's Habitat Program will increase consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities in Alberta by increasing habitat for priority species or populations that are habitat limited.

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

To secure and protect currently identified high priority wildlife and fisheries habitat and habitat that provides recreational opportunities.

- Pursue increased partnership opportunities to acquire land and establish conservation easements and landowner agreements.
- In collaboration with project partners, develop conservation management plans for important wildlife and fisheries habitat.
- Implement habitat components of conservation management plans.
- Establish a Habitat Securement Fund and monitor its effectiveness.

Goal 2

Complete inventories to identify critical wildlife and fish habitat and habitats that provide recreational opportunities.

- Update habitat databases on critical habitats.
- Identify key areas to secure / enhance for wildlife and fish recreational purposes.
- Apply criteria to identify priority habitats.

Goal 3

To maintain, enhance and restore habitats to support priority species and populations that provide recreational opportunities.

Habitat

- Maintain and monitor effects of existing habitat investments to support priority species and populations and recreational activities.
- In collaboration with government, industry and other partners undertake habitat enhancements.
- Develop and test innovative tools to maintain, restore and enhance habitats.
- Provide technical assistance to member organizations and stakeholders with delivery of habitat enhancement projects.

Goal 4

To develop improved linkages between the habitat, fisheries and wildlife program areas.

- Enhance the scientific rigor of habitat programs.
- Integrate priorities of the Biodiversity/Species at Risk Business Unit with habitat programs.
- Improve integration and understanding of habitat programs by improving communication with ASRD and other partners.

ACA Habitat Program Priorities for 2004-2007

- 1. Riparian Habitat:**
These habitats make up four percent of Alberta's land base. Yet, 80% of Alberta's fish and wildlife 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 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 to hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities of Albertans are important for ACA.



Desired Key Results

- Habitat projects are aligned with ACA's Habitat Program Focus.
- Biodiversity / Species at Risk Programs are integrated throughout ACA's Business Units.
- Information from Wildlife and Fish Program areas at ACA are incorporated into ACA's Habitat Programs.
- Key relationships, formal agreements and strategic alliances have been forged and maintained with key habitat conservation organizations in Alberta.
- Our customers support the program and are aware of ACA habitat program activities.
- A net gain in Wildlife and Fish Recreational opportunities is realized from our habitat programs.
- Improved Habitat Program through the update of critical wildlife and fish habitat databases.



Habitat

ACA Habitat Securement Strategy

The Habitat Securement Strategy (HSS) is a document that will guide all aspects relating to the acquisition or securement of critical habitats. This strategy assists ACA in focusing our efforts and our interactions with other conservation organizations in Alberta.

Within the HSS are criteria that identify the suitability of landscapes and site-specific parcels for ACA involvement, ensuring accountability and a positive impact on conservation. These criteria include:

- Confirmed critical habitat is limiting population growth or threatening stability.
- Amount of existing native habitat.
- Potential to restore altered lands to native habitat.
- Partner interest in the long-term management and maintenance of properties.
- Recreational opportunities.
- Negative impact on land through loss of habitat or alteration.
- Connection to other conservation lands and/or other ACA projects.

Our Habitat Securement Strategy

The objective of the Habitat Securement Fund (HSF) is to enable, facilitate, and provide financial support for the purchase and/or the securement of critical natural habitats in Alberta. The Geographic Scope of the Habitat Securement Fund includes all lands within Alberta. All funding requests must meet the established criteria of ACA's Habitat Securement Strategy.

Communications and Marketing

ACA is committed to becoming a recognized leader in the conservation community provincially while building awareness for the Association nationally. By 2007 ACA's internal communications program will be firmly established, providing effective two-way communication with staff in support of our team-based organization. The focus of the communications plan will become externally directed, focusing on stakeholder communications and promoting information and education specific to ACA programs and projects. Our marketing initiatives will continue to build direct access to the conservation community in support of funding proposals directed to foundation and industry partners aligned with ACA goals.



David Fairless



Strategic Initiatives

- ACA's new Conservation Magazine distributed twice a year to a variety of external stakeholders.
- In-house database developed as primary marketing and communications tool.
- ACA Communications Standards Guide becomes the central identity reference resource for both internal and external users.
- Internal extranet online community for ACA staff established including digital library storage of ACA report and documents available for internal staff use.
- External website becomes ACA information hub including a library section referencing location of ACA reports and documents that are available for external use.
- High profile community education partner secured in the south province to complement ACA's partnership of the Provincial Museum of Alberta.

Communications & Marketing

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

Enhance a standardized brand identity and understanding of ACA to internal and external customers.

- Ensure all communications initiatives and tools incorporate ACA's established brand identity guidelines, key messages and recognition requirements.

Goal 2

Increase external awareness and profile for ACA by promoting the positive impact of ACA conservation projects and programs across the province.

- Shift communications messages from general organizational awareness to include project specific information that will educate and influence stakeholders.

Goal 3

Support internal communications by providing ACA employees with the communication tools and information needed to achieve their objectives and promote understanding of ACA's overall focus and direction.

- Develop a central online community to house all information sources and feedback processes required by staff to achieve their team objectives within the organization.

Communications & Marketing

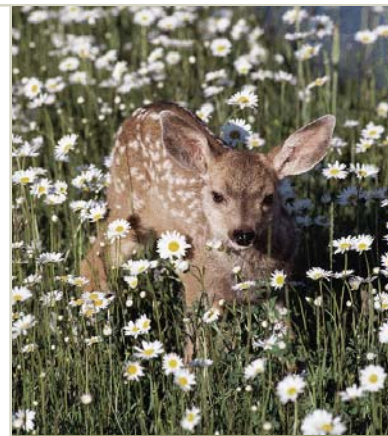
Goal 4

Develop new revenue partners from corporate, industry and foundation partnerships to grow ACA's financial base and decrease reliance on levy revenue.

- Identify potential revenue partners from foundations, industry and corporate sectors and submit major multi year funding proposals to those organizations aligned with ACA's mission.

Desired Key Results

- Increase in ACA's reputation and influence measured by awards, published reports, requests for endorsement, media inquiries, and involvement in conservation community events.
- Measurable increase annually in new revenue from foundations and industry partners.
- Increased exposure and profile for ACA programs and project areas measured through media monitoring.
- Improved staff understanding and satisfaction evident in bi-annual staff engagement surveys.



Strategic Initiatives

- Implementation of an e-communications campaign targetted to priority stakeholders (i.e. government, industry).
- Public consultation campaigns run twice each year to provide stakeholder input into strategic and operational planning.
- Media public awareness campaigns implemented twice annually to raise public awareness of ACA during hunting and fishing seasons.
- Information and Education Program in place that includes promotion material specific to ACA programs and projects, including monthly publicity campaign.
- Event production to support awareness and positioning including one-day information forums, scientific conferences, and the Partners in Conservation Conference to be held in January of 2005 and 2007.



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. In addition to delivering conservation projects throughout the province we take pride in 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 any individual or group may apply for funding if they have a suitable project that falls within priorities outlined within ACA's major program areas.

Annually this fund provides in excess of 1 million dollars in funding and support for a variety of conservation projects and programs throughout Alberta. Ordinary Albertans, community groups, conservation organizations, and leading edge scientific researchers champion these projects and programs. Our conservation fund provides a vehicle to fund an array of projects that benefit all Albertans and most importantly provide direct benefit to Alberta's rich assemblage of biological natural resources.

Our Conservation Fund

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

Expand the financial base of the Conservation Fund to enhance effective program funding and program delivery across the province.

- Market the 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.
- Explore non traditional alliances with the fund.

Goal 2

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

- Include key messages promoting the Conservation Fund in the annual external communications plan including a specific campaign to coincide with January funding applications.
- Promote the communication of results and successes of the projects the fund supports.

Goal 3

Improve the accountability of funding management to support delivery of the highest caliber of conservation projects.

- Ensure best business practices are employed to guarantee maximum efficiency of each funding project including clear communication of funding terms, tracking of deliverables and efficient accounting practices.



Strategic Initiatives

- Broaden the influence on conservation by increasing the resources available to this fund through partnerships and strategic alliances.
- Provide media with news releases to enhance awareness of the fund.
- Develop an online application process.
- Develop annual comprehensive summary reports of progress and successes of grant recipient projects.

Desired Key Results

- The Grant Eligible Conservation Fund has grown by 25% by 2007.
- Our customers are aware of the successes obtained through the fund.
- The fund attracts high quality applicants from all over Alberta.
- All grant recipients are accountable to ACA.



Financial Resources

At ACA we strive to maintain financial strength and continually improve organizational performance for public benefit. By providing financial strength and accountability ACA's Focus can become realized.

The majority of ACA funding is generated from levies on angling and hunting licenses. Although statistically, the number of anglers and hunters is remaining constant, there is a general impression that the number of hunters is declining.

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 through inflation. This "flat lining" of revenue offset by an increase in expenditures could have a significant impact on the level of ACA programming.

To maintain and enhance the level of programming and to improve ACA's ability to have a positive impact on conservation in Alberta specific attention must be paid to growing and diversifying the revenue base of the organization.

Financial Resources

Goals & Key Results

Goal 1

To increase alternate revenue.

- Increase the level of partner contributions by developing 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.

- Continue to refine the budgeting and funding allocation process and internal business processes 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 containments strategies.
- Leverage financial strength through partnerships and strategic alliances where possible.



Strategic Initiatives

- Financial status of all business areas will be reviewed and re-evaluated quarterly.
- Alternate revenue generating mechanisms used to fund conservation initiatives will be explored.
- Strategic alliances with the industrial and the corporate communities will be pursued.
- Develop a partner recognition process that will attract partners that have not previously been involved with conservation in Alberta.

Desired Key Results

- Enhance revenues from levy sources and other revenue generating initiatives by 15% (1.5M) by 2007.
- Increase partnership revenue by 15% (450K per annum) by 2007.
- A proposal to implement two different options for additional revenue generation is developed and implemented.
- Secure two new partners or strategic alliances by 2006.
- Operational costs are reduced by 3 % per year over the three years.
- Receive an unqualified audit annually.
- Obtain a zero balance income statement annually
- Maintain administrative costs at a level at or below 15% of our operational budget.



David Fairless

Monitoring and Implementation

The Resource Perspective

Financial Perspective

Learning and Growth

Internal Business Processes Perspective

Customer Perspective

At ACA, we are committed to ensuring our strategies and initiatives are aligned to help us achieve our Focus, and remain devoted to optimizing our performance. We believe it is important to manage our customer's expectations and evaluate what our employees need in order to meet those expectations. We cannot be successful as an organization until we can prove our stated objectives and measure and document our progress and successes in relation to them.

Monitoring & Implementation

Our teams have developed measures and targets from each of our major program areas to help achieve ACA's FOCUS, OBJECTIVE and improve our "bottom-line"; having a positive impact on the resource. Information on the progress we make toward these targets provide us with critical information on: (1) the efficiency with which resources are used; and (2) the effectiveness of organizational activities and operations in terms of their specific contributions to our strategic goals and Focus.

At ACA performance is measured throughout the year through our Quarterly Operational Reporting Process in conjunction with our Personal Performance Process. Measurements are taken to report the status of performance to management and customers, and the feedback cycle drives corrective or improvement actions as appropriate. The initial step in each area will be to establish a baseline against which future performance will be compared. The objective is to demonstrate continuous improvement trends affecting program performance.

ACA has established performance measures and targets across five different strategic perspectives. These strategic perspectives are:

- The Resource
- Financial
- Learning and Growth
- Internal Business Processes
- Customer

We believe that to achieve our focus and for it to be successful as an organization and have a positive impact on conservation ACA must achieve success in each of these areas.





The Resource Perspective

The Resource Perspective is unique to ACA. Its objective is to ensure the organization is contributing to its "bottom-line". If we are to be successful our primary measure is whether we are having a positive influence on the conservation of Alberta's biological natural resources. Success in this perspective can only be realized if success is obtained in each of the other perspectives. Objectives relating to this perspective must directly contribute to the conservation of fisheries or wildlife populations or the habitat upon which they depend. Success for ACA will be measured by how effectively and efficiently our programs contribute to the conservation of Alberta's biological natural resources.

Critical Success Measures - Wildlife

Measure	Target
Reduce the number of status undetermined species in Alberta	5 species by 2007
Improve the status of species currently listed as Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern under the Wildlife Act	2 species
Information gathered by ACA is utilized by other agencies to implement management, conservation or recovery activities	25 instances
Priority wildlife species inventories on data deficient landscapes or priority habitat areas	24 inventories
Increased abundance and distribution of game species in Alberta	Population density of game species increases in 4 WMU's Increased distribution of game species in 4 WMU's

Critical Success Measures - Fisheries

Measure	Target
Population information on priority water bodies and species	15 lake and 5 river inventories/ assessments per year
Angler effort-harvest information on priority water bodies and species	10 lakes and 1 river surveyed per year
Fish habitat, status, change in relation to fish populations	Strategy and protocol developed (year 1,2). 10 assessments completed (year 2,3) Relationship w/ DFO defined
Standardized index-netting based assessment protocol for lentic systems	Collaboratively developed and accepted protocol by 2005-2006
Effectiveness of province wide inventory programs	CFIP review completed

The Resource Perspective

Critical Success Measures - Habitat

Measure	Target
Establish and implement the Habitat Securement Fund	Obtain Board approval in 2004 Allocate first funds in 2004
Evaluate legal liabilities of all Buck for Wildlife properties and develop strategies to maintain only those that are aligned with the Habitat Program focus	Acceptance of our strategy by ASRD in 2004 Begin developing management plans for BFW properties and other BFW liabilities
Maintain all priority habitat enhancement and securement investments	Maintain all high priority upland investments Maintain all priority BFW investments including stream bank fencing investments Maintain all high use and high priority fish access sites 12 aerated lakes maintained each year
Secure and protect critical wildlife and fish habitat	12 per year
Identify and evaluate potential new lake aeration and recreational sites	10 new sites per year
Implement habitat enhancement, restoration or securement components of recovery or management plans	Minimally one per year
Business units have identified priority habitat limited species and populations	Acceptance of our high priority species and populations by ASRD in 2004. To develop focused habitat programs to enhance and increase habitat for 10 habitat limited species and populations by 2007
Complete inventories to update critical habitat database	All business units complete updates by 2005 Allow the development of strategies to enhance and secure critical habitat areas. Two to three strategies developed for each Business Unit





Financial Perspective

The objective of the Financial Perspective is to strive for optimum efficiency coupled with financial growth and diversity. To achieve that, processes need to be analyzed or developed that facilitate: (1) the determination of cost and performance trends over time; (2) process changes that can be implemented to produce optimum efficiencies; (3) Increased partnership revenues; and (4) The exploration and implementation of innovative revenue generating mechanisms.

This perspective is important because by expanding our revenue base and by optimizing the cost efficiency of ACA's operations ensures that the maximum amount of funds are available for accomplishing the primary mandate of ACA. Business Unit Leaders must ensure that ACA operating costs are optimized in order to meet the challenge of creating programs that work better and cost less.

Critical Success Measures & Targets

Measure	Target
Increase in funds received through levies and alternate revenue generating initiatives	\$1.5M over three years (15%)
Secure financial partners or supporters	\$150K per year (15%)
Growth of ACA Grant Funds	30% increase from 2003-2004 levels after 3 years in each fund
Operate within a balanced budget.	Zero balance – income statement
Reduction in operational costs in identified areas	10% reduction in specific areas
Maintain administrative expenses at the minimum level	15% of total budget

Learning and Growth

Objectives relating to the Learning and Growth Perspective promote organizational and individual growth that will provide long term benefits to ACA. These objectives must be achieved if program performance is going to improve over time. While the objectives in the other perspectives identify where the program must excel to achieve breakthrough performance, the Learning and Growth objectives provide the infrastructure needed to enable the objectives in the other perspectives to be achieved. The Learning and Growth objectives are the drivers for achieving excellence in the other perspectives.

This perspective is important because it promotes individual and organizational growth - factors that are crucial to future success. Support for this perspective equates to recognition of the link between top-level strategic objectives and activities needed to re-skill and motivate employees; supplying information; and aligning individuals, teams, and business units with ACA's strategy and long-term objectives. An analysis of the cause and effect relationships of the measures in this perspective clearly shows that employee satisfaction, employee alignment, and information availability are vital contributors to meeting the objectives stated in the other perspectives.

Critical Success Measures & Targets

Measure	Target
Succession planning process has been implemented	A minimum of 33% of employees have a succession plan
Number of lost time accidents occurring per year	zero lost time accidents
On-line survey of leadership at ACA results indicate a favourable perception	80% of employees
Bi-annual survey results indicate moderate to high employee satisfaction and engagement	85% of employees
Number of employees acquiring interpersonal skills through courses	35% per year
Technical training opportunities for F/H/W employees	1 event is hosted per year for each program area.
Number of staff pursuing academic upgrading - continuing education	5 employees





Internal Business Processes Perspective

The objectives in the Internal Business Processes Perspective collectively assure that an effective array of conservation programming is established to: (1) support customer needs;(2) provide efficient project management (accountability, scientific credibility and innovation); and (3) maintain an oversight of ACA's programs and responsibilities. Key processes in ACA's business and administrative plans must be monitored to ensure that the outcomes satisfy our objectives.

This perspective is important because it not only addresses the internal business processes that must be developed and maintained to meet customer and stakeholder requirements and expectations, but also the process results that lead to financial success and satisfied customers. Within any organization, there are a number of internal business processes that require focused attention and constant improvements to ensure requirements and expectations are met as effectively as possible, while accommodating cost efficiency issues addressed in the Financial Perspective.

Critical Success Measures & Targets

Measure	Target
Employees involved in improving administrative processes	1 non manager will be involved in all process reviews
Employees are clear on criteria used in allocation process	Consensus is achieved
Information collected can be archived and retrieved	Standardized reporting protocol developed
Financial information is produced on time and is understood by all recipients	Reallocations are made quarterly when required.
Collaboration with scientifically credible institutions	3 collaborative ventures developed with academic institutions.
Scientific credibility of ACA programs – journal articles, conference presentations	2 and 6 per year respectively
Alignment of programs with ACA's Focus and direction – employee engagement	Business Unit BSC's are developed, online survey results report employee engagement in excess of 85%
Implement best practices for financial management	Receive unqualified audit - annually

Customer Perspective

The Customer Perspective enables organizations to align the core measure (customer satisfaction) to targeted customers. For this perspective, the primary objectives are to provide effective service to and establish effective partnerships with external and internal customers. Effective service and partnerships are key ingredients in assessing the health of any of ACA's conservation programs.

Critical Success Measures & Targets

Measure	Target
Number of occasions where ACA acts as a catalyst within the conservation community	A minimum of 2 events hosted per year
Level of interaction with the public in our business planning process – categories of respondents	Feedback received from government, industry and a diversity of conservation organizations
Customer survey - % customers satisfied, awareness level	Minimum of 75%
Regular communication vehicle reaching a number of households	Distribution 75,000 households annually by 2007
Number of awards received or nominated for	2 per year
Number of media inquiries, requests for endorsement, and involvement in conservation community events	120 per year
ASRD involvement in ACA business planning processes	Obtain consensus
ASRD supports ACA with clear communication to ASRD employees	Joint communications involving ACA and ASRD leadership on important issues





David Fairless

Summary

This document represents ACA's second iteration of its Strategic Plan and its tactics for the period of 2004 to 2007. As required by the Memorandum of Understanding with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, the Board of Directors shall adopt a continuing three-year Strategic Plan on an annual basis. Building on the past successes realized in the previous year's plan we have updated our direction in order for ACA to continue its evolution. This plan articulates ACA's goals for the succeeding three years and includes targets by which to measure ACA's performance. At ACA we are committed to using this Plan as a roadmap for the next three years. Regular reviews and updates are planned, as is an annual process to develop tactics for the new year and to monitor progress against the Plan's goals and strategies. As such, this Plan will become a critical and invaluable document that will provide the framework, the direction, and the clarification that the ACA's various stakeholders require and expect. As we look to implement this Strategic Business Plan, we believe we must realize success in four major perspectives (Financial, Learning and Growth, Internal Business Processes, and Customer) in order for us to realize success in our main perspective – the Resource. We believe one key to our success is in continuing to perform our work at a consistently high level that responds to the needs of our customers and ensure that we are effective and accountable in everything we do. Additionally, by making a significant investment in our employees and our working environment, every employee will understand and be well prepared for his or her role, share a commitment to excellence, and be encouraged to help us achieve our focus. Also, we must do a better job of telling our story – letting our stakeholders know what we do, how we do it, and where we have been successful. We must be able to make a strong case for their support and earn their trust and confidence. ACA must be a leader in assisting Alberta move and remain at the forefront of natural biological resource conservation. This Plan will position us to achieve that focus.

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 in greater detail 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.

Our Strategic Business Plan is not created in isolation. We acknowledge and thank ACA employees, managers, program partners, and Board of Directors for their valuable guidance and input into this important document.

*Conservation
Through
Collaboration*

