

2008/2011



Strategic Business Plan



Strategic Business Plan 2008-2011

Formed in 1997, the Alberta Conservation Association is a non-profit association that conserves, protects and enhances wildlife, fish and habitat for all Albertans to enjoy, value and use.

ACA Member Groups:

- Alberta Fish and Game Association
- Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association
- Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Alberta Trappers' Association
- Federation of Alberta Naturalists
- Pheasants Forever Alberta Council
- Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
- Trout Unlimited Canada

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Message from the Chairman

We live in a province of opportunity. Alberta is experiencing robust economic conditions and our province is rapidly changing. What was once a largely rural, agriculture-based economy has dramatically changed in just one generation. Today, our province has the highest percentage of urban dwellers in the country.

This is progress with no returning to earlier times. The challenge for all conservation groups is how to adapt and have a positive impact on conservation in Alberta. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) recognizes both the challenges and opportunities that exist in our present economic climate; this strategic business plan deals with the realities of today's world.

ACA is fortunate in that our staff has both the vision and the knowledge to plot an effective course of action for the future, as reflected in this strategic business plan. Another one of our strengths is our Board of Directors. Each Board Member brings a unique perspective to the table and assists with the important task of forwarding conservation in Alberta.

This strategic business plan is a blueprint for the future. The entire ACA organization is committed to implementing these strategies and measuring their effectiveness as we move forward. Our vision remains “An Alberta with an abundance and diversity of fish, wildlife and their habitat; where future generations continue to use, enjoy and value our rich outdoor heritage”.

Brian Bildson

Message from the President & CEO

In April of 2007, I took over as the President & CEO of ACA. One of the first things I did was travel to all of our offices and met with as many employees as possible. One key question I asked every employee was “why do you work as ACA?” The number one response I got from employees was “I work here because I enjoy the work and I believe in what we are doing.” The level of dedication and desire exhibited by ACA’s staff is something I have never observed in any other organization. ACA is successful because of the hard work and dedication of our employees, and I believe ACA has a bright future ahead because of these individuals.

This strategic business plan outlines some ambitious actions that will be taken by ACA over the course of the next three years. With the hard work and dedication that has been exhibited by our employees in the past, I am confident that we will be able to achieve our objectives and move the ACA forward as a leader in conservation, and an organization that is looked upon by its stakeholders as providing an excellent service to hunter, anglers and other conservationists.

Todd Zimmerling





Our Mission

ACA conserves, protects and enhances fish, wildlife and habitat for all Albertans to enjoy, value and use.

Our Vision

An Alberta with an abundance and diversity of fish, wildlife and their habitat; where future generations continue to use, enjoy and value our rich outdoor heritage.

Core Values

At ACA we Model and Promote

Collaboration

We work closely with each other, as well as with our partners to positively impact Alberta's fish, wildlife and habitat. Collaboration includes establishing and maintaining partner and client relations.

Integrity

We maintain high ethical standards in everything we do. We are truthful, keep our promises and deliver on our commitments.

Excellence

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

Innovation

We overcome challenges and continually find new ways to improve. Innovation includes problem solving, taking advantage of opportunities and embracing change to achieve strategic goals.

Accountability

We are all responsible for our results and effectiveness toward conservation in Alberta and accept responsibility for our actions. Accountability means making appropriate decisions by understanding and using the workings, structure, climate and culture of our organization.

Respect

We value the differences and similarities of our employees, partners and stakeholders. We treat both our people and the resource with a high level of dignity.



A quail with brown and white speckled feathers is perched on a weathered wooden fence post. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The image is part of a document page with a yellow and blue wavy border at the bottom.

Why a Strategic Business Plan?

The strategic business planning process is part of a continuous 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 annually. Strategic business planning is a dynamic business process that sets the guidelines for ACA's Annual Operating Plan.

The Annual Operating Plan identifies how we will achieve the objectives contained in the Strategic Business Plan in the current year. ACA's Strategic Business Plan was developed with input from ACA's Board of Directors, conservation partners and ACA employees. The strategies and success measures contained in this plan are designed to move us toward achieving our Mission and Vision.

Focal Areas

As part of the strategic planning process, we annually review the challenges facing ACA, our progress to date, and look for opportunities these challenges create for ACA that result in refined strategies.

For this 2008-2011 planning period, our focus is on the following areas:

- 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. The economic power created by this abundance provides an opportunity to coordinate significant financial and political resources involved in conservation efforts in Alberta.
- A significant number of conservation entities and initiatives are already established in the conservation movement in Alberta. This poses a challenge and an opportunity for ACA to play an active role in ensuring our efforts are coordinated, by fostering a collaborative approach to conservation.
- Increase the level of awareness and understanding of conservation issues within Alberta that will promote the use, protection and enhancement of natural habitats and biological populations.
- Take every opportunity to work closely with other like-minded groups to improve hunter and angler recruitment and retention.
- Enhance and promote the image of hunters and anglers as conservationists and the driving force behind conservation programs within Alberta and throughout North America.
- Rigorously monitor and manage ACA's performance by identifying specific success measures and targets in each of our programs, thereby enhancing our accountability and improving our impact on conservation.
- Continue to enhance our working relationship with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development through effective delivery of our Program Agreements, fostering collaboration and mutual support.
- Enhance the financial resources available to ACA, increasing our ability to work towards our Vision.
- Embrace and maintain a high performance organizational culture where learning, continuous improvement and employee engagement are paramount.
- Engage in collaborative efforts to encourage and increase public access on private lands.
- Increase ACA's public profile so that our stakeholders know what ACA is and what we are doing for them.
- Increase scientific credibility of our projects through continuous critical evaluation and update of experimental design, field protocols and analytical methods.
- Ensure all projects result in a high-quality reports (summary report, report series or published paper) produced on time and on budget.
- Continue to grow the reputation of ACA as a world-class conservation organization by developing a corporate culture that attracts and retains employees that are the "best of the best" in their field.

Our Operating Environment

ACA is committed to managing its operations in a business-like manner, ensuring that all employees are accountable for their actions. This means that employees are responsible for completing tasks on time, on budget and in a safe manner. Our employees are empowered to make decisions, but are also responsible for those decisions. We recognize that effective and open communication is a cornerstone to a healthy work environment where employees see an opportunity to grow in their careers and feel ownership of the organization and the direction we take. To this end, ACA promotes direct communication among employees and between employees and senior management. The office of the President & CEO is always open for discussions with employees. Our goal is to develop a corporate culture where employees feel involved in determining the direction of the organization, feel proud of the work they do and the programs ACA undertakes, and have the tools to talk to any of our stakeholders and provide examples of how ACA operates in an effective and efficient manner while undertaking valuable work to conserve and enhance Alberta's fish, wildlife and habitat resources.

Our Partners and 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 and other like-minded conservationists, the Alberta government, the federal government, local governments, academia, industry, landowners, other conservation organizations and the citizens of Alberta. ACA believes in collaboration, where mutually agreed priorities are developed within the framework of our Strategic Business Plan.



Conservation Programs

Conservation programs delivered by ACA include three major areas: Fisheries, Land Management and Wildlife. Providing conservation services in these areas is our core business. Responsibilities delegated to ACA by the Government of Alberta are also delivered through these three program areas. Within these three focal areas, we report on the results and achievements towards the “bottom line” – impacting conservation of Alberta’s fish, wildlife and habitat resources.

ACA’s operations are committed to achieving scientific excellence. We will achieve this goal by applying the highest standards of scientific rigor, transparency and accountability to all our programs. As a result, ACA will continue to:

- (i) develop and apply rigorous processes to review and prioritize focal program areas and project reports;
- (ii) promote the use of stringent study designs and methods; and
- (iii) communicate study findings to a broad suite of stakeholders, including the scientific community.

Our continued commitment to scientific excellence, collaboration, accountability, credibility and innovation will foster an improved understanding of, and respect for, ACA as a world-class conservation organization known for high-quality scientific research and on-the-ground conservation projects.



Several key strategies are applicable to all of our conservation programs.

Strategic Actions:

- Analyze data to provide a defensible scientific base for conservation actions.
- Use collected data to focus discussions on conservation issues and management options.
- Adopt or create decision support resources to identify trends in the abundance and distribution of Alberta's wildlife and fish resources.
- Review focal wildlife and fish inventory methods and study designs.
- Develop innovative archiving and retrieval systems for ACA reports.
- Improve the flow of scientific information to policy makers, resource managers and other stakeholders.
- Maintain an internal Project Review Team to critically review select ACA projects.
- Enhance employee training and development to strengthen our scientific knowledge base and capabilities.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Continue to implement project planning and review processes to ensure that ACA projects are scientifically rigorous and that they deliver key results.
- Complete reviews of select study designs and inventory methods used within ACA's three program areas.
- Develop and apply ecological criteria and indicators to guide ACA's habitat securement initiatives.
- Complete and distribute ACA conservation reports to policy makers, resource managers and other stakeholders within 90 days of project completion.
- Publish the results of at least one ACA conservation project in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Implement ACA's conservation report review and archiving processes.



Delegated Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities delegated to ACA by the Government of Alberta are delivered through program areas. ACA has special status as a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO), which means that ACA has accepted responsibilities to support the enhancement and management of Alberta's wildlife and fish resources as outlined in legislation and defined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD/ASRD). ACA works with the Ministry, particularly the Fish and Wildlife Division, in developing program priorities that best serve Alberta's fish, wildlife and habitat. ACA is committed to providing resource managers with the most relevant, credible and timely information possible, thereby contributing to the success of the Ministry..

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities for Alberta Conservation Association and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development in relation to a number of common activities and includes a process for the development of specific program agreements. These program agreements were renegotiated in 2006 to further define the role of ACA and the Minister's expectations. The following program and operational agreements specify each organization's roles and responsibilities with respect to program planning, implementation and reporting.

- Fisheries Program Agreement

The Fisheries Program supports and enhances conservation activities that retain the diversity and abundance of fish populations and communities, and the biological communities and habitats that support them. The Fisheries Program supports fishing as a recreational use in the interests of Alberta's anglers.

- Wildlife Program Agreement

The Wildlife Program supports and enhances conservation activities that retain the diversity and abundance of populations and communities of wildlife in Alberta. It includes consideration of all non-fish taxa, but has a strong focus on harvested species. The Wildlife Program includes components related to wildlife populations, their habitats, and the ecosystems that support them.

- Land Management Program Agreement

The Land Management Program involves the effective management of wildlife and fisheries habitat resources (on public and private lands) for conservation, protection and enhancement. This program agreement applies to the acquisition, stewardship and divestiture of properties under the management of Alberta Conservation Association. Activities relating to specific species and their habitat located on these properties are governed by the Wildlife Program Agreement and the Fisheries Program Agreement.



- Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program Agreement

The Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program (WCDPP) provides assistance to agricultural producers throughout the province in preventing depredation losses to unharvested crops caused by waterfowl. Activities carried out under the WCDPP are complementary to federal and provincial waterfowl damage compensation programs. The two programs, in combination, highlight the value of waterfowl in the eyes of the producers and contribute to producer willingness to participate in waterfowl habitat initiatives undertaken by ACA, ASRD, and entities such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

- Report A Poacher and Compensation Program Priorities

The Report A Poacher and Compensation Program Priorities (formerly the Human Interaction Program Agreement) is comprised of three components: Report A Poacher, Wildlife Predator Compensation and Shot Livestock Compensation. These programs work to maintain relationships between resource users and others affected by their activities. It aims to balance wildlife management interests and the interests of livestock producers who are negatively affected by wildlife. These programs are established to promote recreational opportunities for hunting on private lands, and to involve the public in taking responsibility for conservation of Alberta's resources.

- Public Information, Education and Communications Operational Agreement

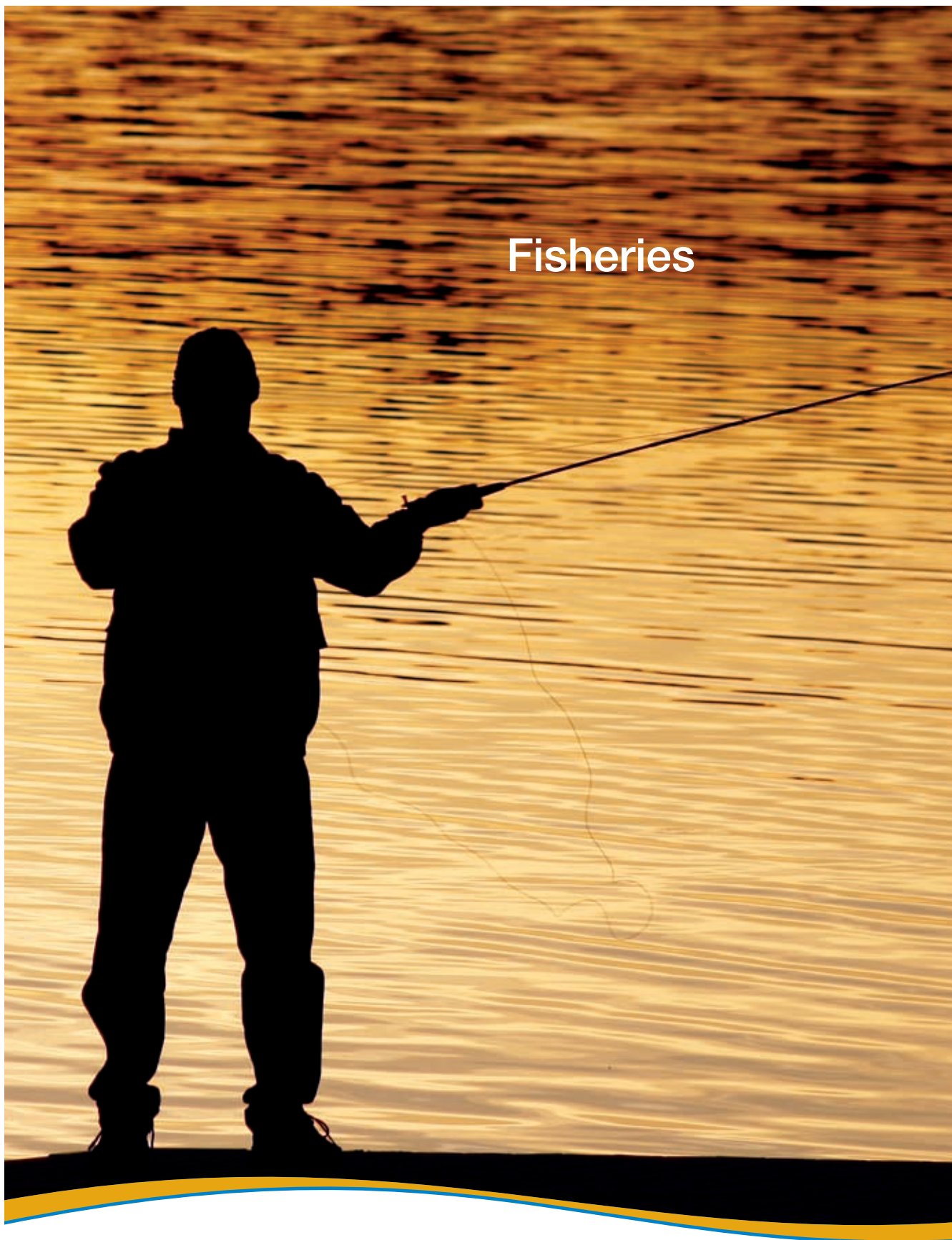
This operational agreement outlines the activities, roles and responsibilities required for ACA and ASRD to work together to provide our stakeholders with effective and current information and communications related to conservation. It also defines the inter-organizational communications necessary for achieving the outcomes defined in this and other program agreements. ACA and ASRD aim to increase the profile and awareness of programs and projects jointly facilitated by ACA and ASRD by identifying strategic alliances; delivering communications, public education and outreach messages; and identifying opportunities to distribute materials.

- Shared Services Operational Agreement

This agreement outlines the processes required to ensure the co-operative sharing of resources as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which the Minister has agreed to assist ACA with facilities, equipment, training, telecommunications, information technology (hardware, software, server access) and data as specified by the terms and conditions of this agreement. The Shared Services Operational Agreement exists to maximize efficiency in the sharing of facilities, equipment, data and support; to streamline business processes and enhance program delivery.



Fisheries



ACA's Fisheries Program views conservation as the sustainable and responsible participation in the social and consumptive use of fish and aquatic resources, while recognizing the importance of protecting healthy ecosystems. Our fisheries program is designed to implement fish conservation efforts in an effective, credible and collaborative manner that will sustain or improve Alberta's fish populations.

The fisheries program supports and enhances conservation activities that retain the diversity and abundance of fish populations and communities, and the biological communities and habitats that support them. The program supports fishing as a recreational use in the interest of Alberta anglers.

ACA's fisheries program supports ASRD in the determination of stocks and populations status, the development and implementation of management plans, and management of consumptive and non-consumptive use and users. The fisheries program includes the inventory and monitoring of priority species and their habitats to determine distribution, abundance, status and trends. An essential element for all program components is the monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of activities. Activities in this program support and inform an adaptive fisheries management program in Alberta.

The following strategies, strategic actions and effectiveness measures describe the activities of the fisheries program required to meet the responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1: Fish Stock Assessment and Monitoring

Provide timely and accurate information regarding the abundance, structure and use of aquatic habitats by priority fish populations.

Strategy: Describe abundance, structure and use of aquatic habitats by priority fish populations.

Strategic Actions:

- Collect data, analyze and report on population health of focal species in priority water bodies annually using existing protocols, or developing new protocols when necessary.
- Develop reporting standards for stock assessments.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Identify and apply the suite of metrics to quantify the health of fish populations in priority water bodies by 2009.
- Information is provided to appropriate resource managers or land-use planners on a timely basis.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program Agreement – plan development and implementation, data and reporting, fish stock and angler assessment and monitoring.



Objective 2: Sport Fishery Monitoring

Describe and monitor levels of angler use, harvest and demographics of priority fisheries.

Strategy: Define angler use, harvest and angler demographics of priority fisheries.

Strategic Actions:

- Collect and provide information quantifying angler use and harvest at priority fisheries annually.
- Provide information to support innovative strategies to minimize the effects of angler use.
- Develop reporting standards for angler-use surveys (e.g. creel surveys).

Effectiveness Measures:

- Levels of angler use and harvest are quantified at priority fisheries, and reported to resource managers and other stakeholders.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries program – plan development and implementation, data and reporting, fish stock and angler assessment and monitoring.



Objective 3: Stream Crossing Evaluation

Determine the level of watershed fragmentation caused by stream crossings in priority drainages, and collaboratively develop remediation plans to diminish fragmentation.

Strategy: Identify and evaluate fragmentation associated with road-stream crossings.

Strategic Actions:

- Determine the percentage of linear watershed fragmented by road stream crossings in priority watersheds.
- Facilitate the collaborative development and implementation of remediation plans for the identified barriers with external stakeholders.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Report crossing density, locations, percentage linear fragmentation and sedimentation risk in priority watersheds.
- Participate in meetings between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Alberta Environment, Environment Canada, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and other regulatory organizations to facilitate restoration of watershed connectivity.
- Provide watershed crossing information to resource managers and other stakeholders.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program – plan development and implementation, data and reporting, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring.

Objective 4: Lake Aeration

Develop and maintain lentic habitats for the increased survival of sport fish, creating recreational angling opportunities for Albertans.

Strategy: Maintain and expand lake aeration activities using established standards.

Strategic Actions:

- Maintain existing aeration infrastructure and partnerships.
- Pursue additional aeration projects at candidate lakes.
- Evaluate angler use and stock status at priority aerated lakes.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Successfully over-winter fish at aerated lakes.
- Select candidate lakes using established selection criteria.
- Evaluate angler satisfaction in conjunction with ACA Communications Team.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program – plan development and implementation, data and reporting, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities, fish stocking.
- ACA Communications Team.

Objective 5: Enhanced Fish Stocking

Provide Alberta anglers with increased opportunities to catch and creel more fish where possible, while maintaining the integrity of Alberta's natural waters and fish populations.

Strategy: Perform activities that support maintenance of select stocked rainbow trout ponds for angling. This includes contracting stocking of water bodies and may include assessment and monitoring.

Strategic Actions:

- Lead, administer and monitor contract processes to ensure that rainbow trout are stocked in designated water bodies by private rainbow trout growers.
- Assess and monitor select stocked populations to assess population status and angler satisfaction.
- Identify opportunities for aeration.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Successful stocking of 20 cm rainbow trout in the number and size set out over 10 contracts.
- Determine angler satisfaction and population status of stocked rainbow trout in priority water bodies.
- Identify candidate water bodies for aeration annually.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program – data and reporting, plan development and implementation, fish stock and angler assessments and monitoring, and fish habitat enhancement and monitoring.
- ACA Communications Team.



Objective 6: Riparian Conservation Planning

Enhance, maintain and protect priority riparian habitats in Alberta.

Strategy: Collaborate with private landowners, government, industry and other community-based stakeholders to conserve and enhance priority riparian habitats.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop a provincially standardized Riparian Conservation Program that identifies priority areas, effective conservation tools and monitoring protocols.
- Implement regional components of the provincial Riparian Conservation Program within priority areas across the province.
- Collaborate with land managers and key stakeholders to develop alliances.
- Support watershed groups and community led riparian initiatives on priority water bodies.

Effectiveness Measures:

- A provincial Riparian Conservation Program framework is reviewed, endorsed and adhered to within ACA by March 2009.
- Deliver riparian protection and enhancement projects across the province annually.
- Increase collaborative partnerships with riparian conservation groups by March 2009.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program – data and reporting, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities.



Land Management

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1: Strategic and Operational Planning

Identify and prioritize land management needs in Alberta to provide input into the future direction of ACA's Land Management Program.

Strategy: Facilitate the identification of land management programs that are essential to the needs of Alberta through collaboration with ASRD, conservation partners, working groups and our stakeholders.

Strategic Actions:

- Annually review and update the Strategic Business Plan based on consultation with ASRD, conservation partners, stakeholders and working groups.
- Foster knowledge transfer from other conservation partners by participating in working groups and other trans-boundary initiatives.
- Obtain input from ACA's stakeholders (hunters and anglers) regarding land management program initiatives through personal communication, website, sport tradeshow, etc.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Strategic Business Plan is updated and stakeholder input has been addressed.
- Participation and membership in at least one working group or trans-boundary initiative.
- Collaboration with other conservation organizations to enhance land management initiatives.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.
- ACA Communications Team.

The Land Management Program (LMP) encompasses activities intended to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and to increase consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities including angling and hunting. The three major activities of this program are habitat securement, maintenance and management of ACA Conservation Sites, and recreational opportunity initiatives.

Habitat securement identifies and prioritizes important habitats as well as land that increases or enhances recreational opportunities, both consumptive and non-consumptive. Securement may occur through direct purchase, conservation easements, donations, term lease or protective notation.

Maintenance and management of ACA Conservation Sites on Crown and privately owned lands are completed in compliance with location-specific management plans, habitat type, or stewardship agreements that are developed by ACA in collaboration with ASRD and other conservation partners.

Recreational opportunity initiatives focus on communication tools and activities required to promote and increase public access to wildlife and fisheries resources where stewardship of conservation-rich habitat is recognized.

The following strategies, strategic actions and effectiveness measures describe the three core activities of the Land Management Program required to meet the responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.



Objective 2: Habitat Securement

Conserve and protect priority wildlife and fish habitats, and increase recreational opportunities through land securement.

Strategy: Identify, prioritize and secure priority habitats, and undertake securement activities that will increase and enhance recreational opportunities.

Strategic Actions:

- Review the ACA Habitat Securement Fund document annually and update priority habitat focus areas.
- Actively pursue land securement activities within ACA's priority habitat focal areas identified in the Habitat Securement Fund document and process complementary proposals from other conservation groups.
- Integrate land securement priorities from the Fisheries and Wildlife Programs that increase or enhance recreational opportunities.
- Collaborate with partners representing other habitat conservation organizations having similar habitat conservation priorities.

Effectiveness Measures:

- ACA Habitat Securement Fund document is updated annually.
- Four priority habitats are secured in focal areas. Additionally, appropriate management plans or agreements are completed for each new habitat securement activity.
- Partners provide 50 per cent or greater of the funds required to finance 75 per cent of the habitat securement activities.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Land Management Program Agreement – securement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement – habitat inventory and enhancement, recreational opportunities.
- Fisheries Program Agreement – fish stocking, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, and recreational access opportunities.

Objective 3: ACA Conservation Site Management

Manage and maintain ACA habitat conservation assets.

Strategy 1: Manage, maintain and enhance ACA Conservation Sites.

Strategic Actions:

- Continue collaboration with ASRD on Crown properties and landowner agreements (any outstanding issues).
- Manage habitat on ACA conservation sites to enhance populations of game species.
- Clarify respective resource and land management roles between ACA and ASRD including referral requirements for ACA managed properties.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Outstanding issues related to Crown properties is completed.
- Habitat enhancement plans are developed for properties that have the potential to be enhanced for game species.
- Referral process is clarified between ACA and ASRD.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Land Management Program Agreement – securement, Buck For Wildlife properties.
- Wildlife Program Agreement – habitat inventory and enhancement, recreational opportunities.
- Fisheries Program Agreement – fish stocking, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities.





Strategy 2: Develop Management Plans for ACA Conservation Sites.

Strategic Actions:

- Collaborate with ASRD to develop a habitat management plan template for priority ACA Conservation Sites on Crown land.
- Develop ACA Conservation Site management plans for Crown and titled lands for ACA Conservation Sites.
- Develop a process to consolidate all completed ACA Conservation Site management plans into a provincial or central location.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Management plan template is developed in collaboration with ASRD for ACA Conservation Sites on Crown land by April 2007. Should this be 2009?
- 50 per cent of management plans are completed on Crown lands in collaboration with ASRD and other conservation partners for all ACA Conservation Sites on Crown land by March 2009.
- 100 per cent of management plans for titled lands are completed.
- A provincial or central location is identified along with the process for compilation of ACA Conservation Site management plans by August 2009.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Land Management Program Agreement – securement, Buck For Wildlife properties.
- Wildlife Program Agreement – habitat inventory and enhancement, recreational opportunities.
- Fisheries Program Agreement – fish stocking, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities.

Strategy 3: Install signage on ACA Conservation Sites

Strategic Actions:

- Prioritize and install project and boundary signs on ACA Conservation Sites.
- Work with the ACA Communications Team to promote properties, and assess potential fundraising initiatives that can be developed to assist with sign cost.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Standardized signage is used on ACA conservation sites.
- New signage (project and boundary signs) are installed on 50 per cent of ACA conservation sites.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Land Management Program Agreement – securement, Buck For Wildlife properties.
- Wildlife Program Agreement – habitat inventory and enhancement, recreational opportunities.
- Fisheries Program Agreement – fish stocking, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities.





Objective 4: Recreational Opportunities

Develop and promote stewardship of habitat resources on public and private land that ensures access and recreational opportunities are recognized, developed and enhanced.

Strategy 1: Maintain an ACA Conservation Site website and field guide that publicizes site locations, facilities, recreational opportunities and restrictions.

Strategic Actions:

- Maintain and update ACA Conservation Sites website in collaboration with the ACA Communications Team and other conservation partners.
- Upload and enter new ACA and partner properties on ACA's website.
- Provide project information for ACA Conservation Sites field guide in collaboration with the ACA Communications Team.
- Develop and maintain strategic partnerships to highlight other conservation organization properties.

Effectiveness Measures:

- A web-based directory that facilitates public access to all ACA Conservation Sites, and associated information is maintained and updated on a regular basis.
- An ACA Conservation Sites field guide is completed and distributed to ACA's stakeholders.
- Partner properties are highlighted on ACA's Conservation Site Website and Field Guide.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Land Management Program Agreement – securement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement – habitat inventory and enhancement, recreational opportunities.
- Fisheries Program Agreement – fish stocking, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities.
- ACA Communications Team.

Strategy 2: Promote public access initiatives that enhance habitat and recreational opportunities on privately owned lands.

Strategic Actions:

- Participate and support working groups in the development and implementation of a strategy that enhances wildlife values and recreational access on privately owned lands.
- Support habitat stewardship and public access for wildlife and fish-related recreational opportunities on privately owned lands. i.e. Use Respect Program, Landowner Habitat/Hunter Access Program.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Public access to wildlife-related recreational opportunities on private lands has been provided i.e. *Use Respect* Program.
- Landowner Habitat/Access Program implemented at a provincial level.
- Participate with working groups regarding wildlife values and recreational access.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Land Management Program Agreement – securement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement – habitat inventory and enhancement, recreational opportunities.
- Fisheries Program Agreement – fish stocking, fish habitat enhancement and monitoring, recreational access opportunities.

Objective 5: Fisheries Access Sites

Maintain fisheries access sites to ensure access to priority fisheries, and develop new sites at priority water bodies.

Strategy: Maintain and develop priority fish access sites.

Strategic Actions:

- Evaluate and maintain existing fish access sites.
- Pursue new priority fisheries access sites.

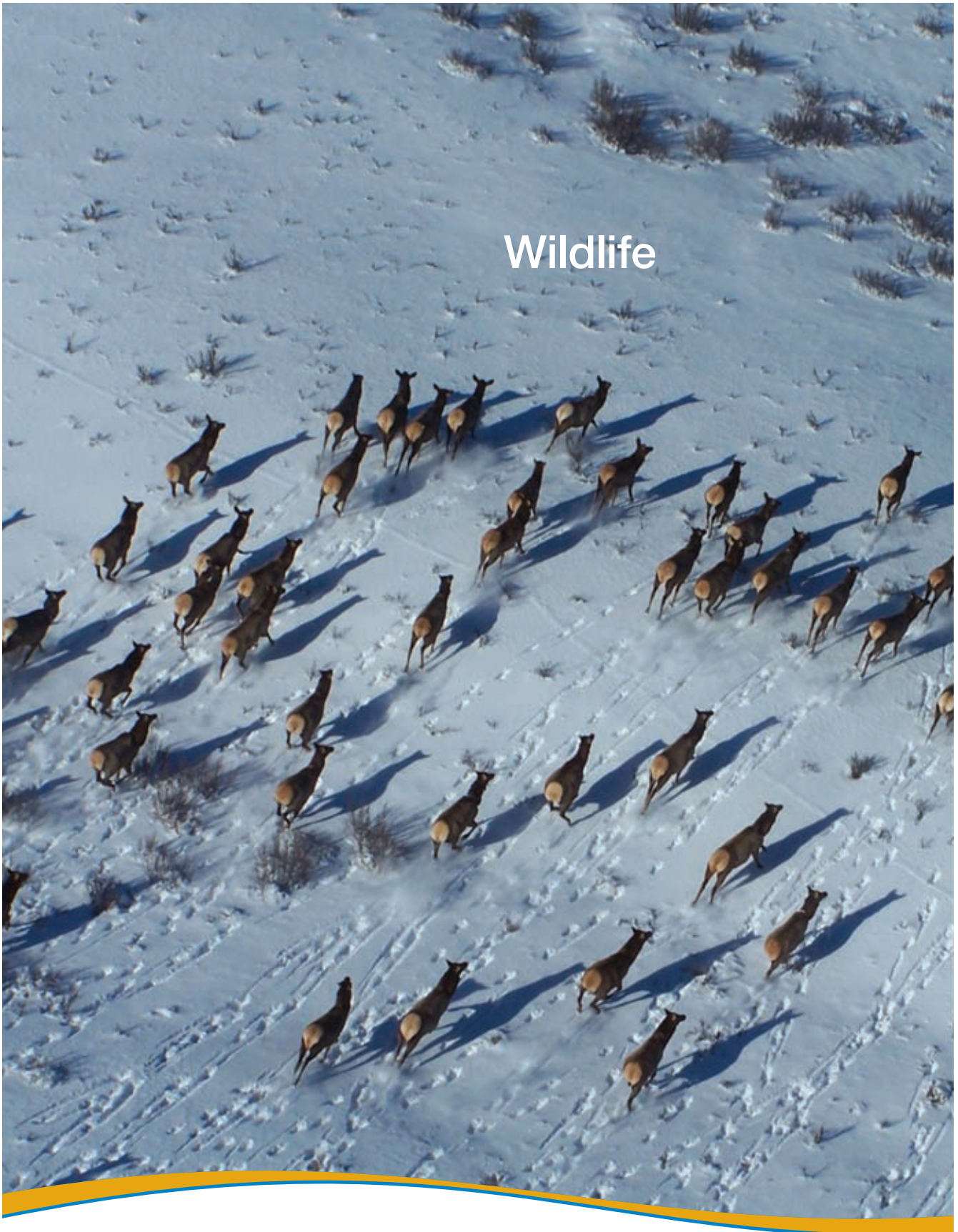
Effectiveness Measures:

- Existing sites are maintained and evaluated annually
- Additional access sites are developed.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program – recreational access opportunities.

Wildlife



ACA strives to enhance the sustainability of wildlife species through science-based conservation. The program has a strong focus on harvested species, with objectives prioritized at the provincial scale. Program initiatives fall within the following 10 activities: (1) Strategic and operational planning, (2) Species/Population Inventory, (3) Plan Development and Implementation, (4) Species Management and Enhancement, (5) Aerial Ungulate Surveys, (6) Applied Research / Ecological Studies, (7) Status Assessment, (8) Habitat Inventory and Enhancement, (9) Recreation Opportunities and (10) Education and Outreach. A pivotal step in program development is ongoing discussion with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) and other external experts and stakeholders to gain insight and build opportunities for collaboration.

For 2008-2010, the focus will be on implementing habitat restoration activities, delivering aerial ungulate surveys, monitoring the response of species and habitat indicators, continued delivery of applied ecological studies, as well as input toward the Land Management program.

The following are objectives, strategies, strategic actions and effectiveness measures that make up the core of the ACA wildlife program. These actions are deemed important for the delivery of a wildlife program that meets our responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1: Strategic and Operational Planning

Identify and prioritize wildlife knowledge gaps and conservation needs in Alberta to guide the future direction of ACA's Wildlife Program.

Strategy 1: Facilitate the identification and prioritization of wildlife knowledge gaps and conservation needs in Alberta through collaboration with ASRD, other experts, stakeholders and working groups.

Strategic Actions:

- Annually review and update the Wildlife Conservation Planning Document based on consultation with ASRD, other experts, member groups, stakeholders and working groups.
- Participate on recovery teams for species at both the provincial and federal level.
- Foster knowledge transfer from jurisdictions and experts around the world by participating in transboundary working groups and symposiums focused on ACA wildlife focal themes.
- Facilitate the Alberta Grouse Technical Council, which will identify key information needs for grouse, provide recommendations for grouse conservation, and provide an avenue for collaboration among organizations.
- Facilitate the pronghorn antelope working group (ACA, University of Calgary, and Alberta Fish and Wildlife) to identify and prioritize knowledge gaps associated with pronghorn antelope in Alberta.
- Investigate process for gaining annual expert and stakeholder feedback on ungulate knowledge gaps in Alberta by 2010.



Effectiveness Measures:

- Participation and membership in at least one working group or recovery team for each focal theme (upland game birds, ungulates, waterfowl and species at risk).
- Continuation of a focused and scientifically credible wildlife program, through which the ACA collaborates with other conservation organizations to enhance the sustainability of wildlife species in Alberta.

Objective 2: Species/Population Inventory

Identify and/or monitor population size, trends and distribution for priority wildlife species.

Strategy 1: Collect and interpret population data on select species using systematic monitoring methods.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop systematic inventory tool for sharp-tailed grouse that can be applied at regional scales.
- Expand sharp-tailed grouse inventory tool to one or more additional priority regions by 2009.
- Continue waterfowl population surveys on the Hay-Zama wetland complex.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Develop systematic monitoring tool for sharp-tailed grouse.
- Monitor waterfowl population annually.



Objective 3: Plan Development and Implementation

Support the development of plans for priority wildlife species that will assist in species recovery and management. Implement select components of plans (i.e. species at risk recovery plans, management plans, landscape plans).

Strategy 1: Assist with the delivery of recovery actions for species with approved provincial recovery plans by March 2010.

Strategic Actions:

- Lead the delivery of several actions outlined in the Alberta Piping Plover Recovery Plan 2005-2010 including population monitoring and enhancement, habitat enhancement, and education and outreach.
- Participate on the Alberta Piping Plover Recovery Team.

- Lead the delivery of several recovery actions outlined in the Alberta Northern Leopard Frog Recovery Plan 2005-2010 including population monitoring, population enhancement, reintroductions, habitat enhancement, and education and outreach initiatives.
- Participate on the Alberta Northern Leopard Frog Recovery Team.
- Implement habitat conservation recommendations for recovery plans through the MULTISAR program initiative. Develop and implement habitat conservation strategies for multiple species for 25 per cent of the high priority areas within the MULTISAR program area.
- Participate on ferruginous hawk recovery team.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Implementation of recovery actions for at least three recovery plans.



Objective 4: Species Management and Enhancement

Carry out activities to support priority population management, and measure and monitor responses to those activities (i.e. productivity enhancement and reintroductions).

Strategy 1: Monitor and evaluate the occupancy and nest success of waterfowl nesting structures.

Strategic Actions:

- Install, monitor and evaluate occupancy and nest success of artificial cavity nest structures and nesting tunnels.
- Conduct annual maintenance on 20 per cent of artificial structures annually.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Priority populations in target areas are enhanced and maintained.

Objective 5: Aerial Ungulate Surveys

Work co-operatively with ASRD to conduct aerial surveys in support of population management and allocation of ungulate/game species.

Strategy 1: Ensure the completion of delegated aerial ungulate surveys.

Strategic Actions:

- ACA and ASRD will each provide a provincial contact to prioritize and coordinate the annual delivery of the program.
- Conduct annual surveys in high priority wildlife management units.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Data entered in to FWMIS load forms and annual report produced.
- Survey results are posted on ACA's webpage before the start of the hunting season each year.



Objective 6: Applied Ecological Studies

Facilitate applied studies to address ecological knowledge gaps for priority species, their landscapes and human use to aid in conservation. Projects focus on answering questions that support, evaluate and/or improve the delivery of wildlife programs.

Strategy 1: Conduct applied conservation studies on the status, movement patterns and ecology of priority species.

Strategic Actions:

- Design, implement and evaluate the restoration of winter range habitat for bighorn sheep in the Yarrow Castle study area.
- Determine the resource selection patterns for pronghorn antelope within agricultural, native prairie and mixed habitat environment of the Grassland Natural Region. Pronghorn RSF developed by March 2008 and finalized by March 2009.

Strategy 2: Enhance the scientific credibility of ACA through publication of peer-reviewed journal papers, conference presentations and hosting of conferences.

Strategic Actions:

- Complete and submit manuscripts on the results of applied studies to applicable peer-reviewed journals.
- Complete edits to manuscripts based on comments and suggestions from external reviewers.
- Present results (oral and poster) of applied studies at conferences and workshops.
- Co-host, along with the University of Calgary and Alberta Fish and Wildlife, the 23rd Biennial Pronghorn Workshop in May 2008.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Development of one RSF.
- Hosting of one conference.
- Three presentations (oral and/or poster) annually.
- Submission of two scientific papers annually.



Objective 7: Status Assessment

Inform and support the assessment and designation of the status of priority wildlife species.

Strategy 1: Collect and interpret data that will assist with the designation of legal status for species at risk.

Strategic Actions:

- Assist with the annual prioritization of species for which detailed status assessments will be carried out.
- Through the development of detailed status reports, provide information to the Endangered Species Conservation Committee that will assist with legal status designation.

Strategy 2: Collect scientifically credible data on the distribution and abundance of data deficient species to support their management.

Strategic Actions:

- Identify *data deficient* species based on the *General Status of Alberta Wildlife Species 2005*.
- Develop inventories on priority *data deficient* species to assist in their status determination by 2010.

Effectiveness Measures:

- The Endangered Species Conservation Committee reviews status reports and assigns legal designations to at least nine species by March 2010.
- Scientifically credible inventories are conducted for at least one *data deficient* species by 2011.

Objective 8: Habitat Inventory and Enhancement

Identify priority habitats for enhancement activities.
Implement activities to support the enhancement of identified habitats.

Strategy 1: Maintain and restore the health of priority ungulate winter range through habitat treatments.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop ecosystem management plans that identify habitat restoration objectives for provincially prioritized ecosystems.
- Work with ASRD to develop individual treatment plans that address ecosystem management objectives.
- Support implementation of treatments through cost sharing and staff time.
- Collect relevant baseline and post-treatment monitoring information.
- Adaptively manage planning and implementation activities based on monitoring results.

Strategy 2: Develop monitoring and evaluation tools that ensure habitat enhancement activities produce measurable benefits for wildlife.

Strategic Actions:

- Initiate study on the effectiveness of using fecal nutrient and hormone levels as an indicator of ungulate population condition. The objective is to develop an efficient monitoring tool to measure the response of ungulate populations to winter range restoration activities.

Strategy 3: Support for habitat securement initiatives.

Strategic Actions:

- Work with Land Management team to determine priority habitats and, where necessary, assess wildlife values through field inventories and synthesis of current knowledge.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Maintain up-to-date ecosystem management plans and update or refine as required.
- GIS-produced baseline information is collected and analyzed for all treatments.
- Field-based baseline information is collected for one-third of all proposed treatments.



Objective 9: Recreational Opportunities

To develop and support opportunities that enhance or maintain recreational use, habitat integrity, and user interest while encouraging current and future generations to value, enjoy, and use our biological natural resources.

Strategy 1: Provide support for development of access management to sustain habitat integrity, while encouraging current and future generations to value, enjoy, and use our biological natural resources.

Strategic Actions:

- Participate on working group for development of program for public access on private land project.
- Scope opportunity for ACA hosting novice hunting program.

Strategy 2: Identify consumptive use preferences in Alberta through consultation with WIN cardholders.

Strategic Actions:

- By 2010, design and implement a program to engage Alberta WIN cardholders in a discussion about their consumptive use preferences.

Effectiveness measures:

- Support development of one access policy that benefits wildlife conservation.
- Conduct a pilot survey with WIN cardholders.
- Two or more treatments are implemented each year.
- Engage student in fecal hormone study in 2008.
- The results of the fecal hormone study are submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal by 2012.
- Priority habitats are collaboratively identified and necessary information provided to the Land Management team.

Objective 10: Education and Outreach

Develop and implement programs to inform Albertans of Wildlife Program values and activities to increase their understanding of wildlife needs and provide the tools and materials necessary to achieve priority outcomes.

Develop and provide information/educational materials that promote ACA's land management activities and inform our stakeholders and Albertans of the importance of ACA's land management programs.

Strategy 1: Wildlife team represented on Communications Committee

Strategic Actions:

- Wildlife representative participates with Communications Manager in development of themes for external communication tools.

Effectiveness measures:

- One wildlife theme related article included in each issue of *Conservation Magazine*.
- Themes developed in advance of upcoming magazines.

Strategy 2: Promote ACA's Land Management Programs

Strategic Actions:

- Promote ACA's conservation site website through stakeholder meetings, media and general public contact.
- Develop brochure highlighting ACA's Land Management Program.
- Develop and implement a Land Management Program that is important to ACA's primary stakeholders.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Stakeholders are aware of ACA's land management activities.
- Brochure developed highlighting ACA's Land Management Program.





Report A Poacher and Compensation Program Priorities (formerly Human Interaction Program)

This functional area is comprised of three components: Report A Poacher, Wildlife Predator Compensation and Shot Livestock Compensation. These programs work to maintain relationships between resource users and others affected by their activities. It also functions to balance wildlife management interests and the interests of livestock producers who are negatively affected by wildlife. These programs are established to promote recreational opportunities for hunting on private lands, and to involve the public in taking responsibility for conservation of Alberta's resources.

The Report A Poacher (RAP) Program provides Albertans with an opportunity to participate in the detection and apprehension of resource abusers. In addition, the RAP Program promotes both the value and importance of conserving Alberta's wildlife and fisheries, and a positive image of resource users. The Wildlife Predator Compensation and Shot Livestock Compensation Programs provide compensation to producers for livestock lost or injured to predators, and livestock shot by a person during a big game or bird game season.

The following strategies, strategic actions and effectiveness measures describe the three core activities of the Report A Poacher and Compensation Program Priorities (formerly Human Interaction) Program required to meet the responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1:

Identification of Report A Poacher and Compensation Program Priorities.

- Report A Poacher
Provide Albertans and persons visiting the province with an opportunity to participate in the protection of our wildlife and fisheries by reporting resource violations.
- Wildlife Predator Compensation
Provide Alberta livestock producers reimbursement for losses or injury to specified livestock due to predation by wolf, cougar, grizzly bear, black bear, or eagles.
- Shot Livestock Compensation
Provide Alberta livestock producers reimbursement for losses or injury to specified livestock as a result of being shot by a person during an open big game or bird game hunting season.

Strategic Actions:

- Timely payment of producer compensation upon receipt of approved claims from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.
- Attend trade and sportsman shows throughout the province to increase public awareness of Report A Poacher and the importance of resource users.
- Provide Report A Poacher and resource user information and promotion in articles, radio, and television updates for organizations and member groups.
- Present Alberta initiatives at international and conservation conferences regarding these programs and the image of our resources users.
- Implement province wide promotion of Report A Poacher with displays, promotional items, and educational trailer and information.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Reward approvals made to 125 eligible informants for wildlife and fisheries resource violations.
- Promotional items purchased and distributed provincially under the Report A Poacher Program.
- Compensation payments made to eligible producers for livestock shot during an open big game or bird game hunting season.
- Create annual program budgets for inclusion in our Annual Operating Plan.
- Track 3,000 Report A Poacher occurrences.
- Provide the opportunity to over 100,000 Albertans to learn and obtain information about the Report A Poacher Program delivered by our association.
- Compensation payments made to eligible producers for livestock killed or injured by predators.
- Deliver consistent and accurate reporting.
- Track reward eligibility for over 1,000 enforcement actions arising from Report A Poacher calls.
- Pay \$38,000 in rewards to eligible informants.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Report A Poacher and Compensation Program Priorities (formerly the Human Interaction Program Agreement) – RAP, Shot Livestock, Wildlife Predator Compensation.
- ACA Communications Team



Our Conservation Funds

Grant Eligible Conservation Fund

At ACA, we believe it is our responsibility to support the collective effort to conserve, protect and enhance Alberta's fish, wildlife and habitat. In addition to delivering conservation programs throughout the province, we administer a fund that has been awarding conservation grants since 1997. Funded by the province's anglers, hunters and other conservationists, ACA's Grant Eligible Conservation Fund (GECF) supports programs that benefit Alberta's wildlife and fish populations, and the habitat they depend on. The grants are designed to enhance and support ACA activities. Any individual or group may apply for funding for projects that support the priorities outlined within ACA's major program areas.

Annually, this fund provides in excess of one million dollars in funding and supports a variety of conservation projects and programs throughout Alberta. Community groups, conservation organizations, leading edge scientific researchers, and Albertans in general champion these projects and programs. This fund has leveraged external dollars to create \$30 million dollars in conservation work since its inception in 2002.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1:

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

Strategic Actions:

- Explore non-traditional alliances with the fund.
- Broaden the influence on conservation by increasing the resources available to this fund through partnerships and strategic alliances.
- Market the GECF 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.

Objective 2:

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

Strategic Actions:

- Develop communication tools and targeted campaigns advertising ACA funds.
- Promote the communication of results and successes of projects the fund supports.
- Provide media with news releases to enhance awareness of the fund.



Objective 3:

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

Strategic Actions:

- Investigate non-traditional sources of funding.
- Identify potential revenue partners from foundations, industry and corporate sectors and submit major multi-year funding proposals to those organizations.
- Leverage financial strength through partnerships and strategic alliances where possible.
- Increase the level of partnership contributions by developing strategic partnerships.

Effectiveness Measures for All objectives:

- The Grant Eligible Conservation Fund has grown by 25 per cent by 2010.
- Our stakeholders 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 using established reporting criteria and processes.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.
- ACA Communications Team.

Habitat Securement Fund

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.

This fund is incorporated into the Land Management Program in the current structure to streamline the administration and delivery of the fund.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Habitat projects are aligned with ACA's Land Management Program's strategic direction.
- Key relationships, formal agreements and strategic alliances have been forged and maintained with key habitat conservation organizations in Alberta.
- A net gain in wildlife and fish recreational opportunities is realized from our Land Management Programs.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.
- ACA Communications Team.

Grants in Biodiversity

The objective of ACA's Grants in Biodiversity Program is to increase our knowledge of Alberta's flora and fauna by providing funds to outstanding graduate students and postdoctoral fellows doing research in Alberta. This collaborative program, funded primarily by ACA, is administered through the Alberta Co-operative Conservation Research Unit, a consortium of researchers working at, or affiliated with the universities of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge.

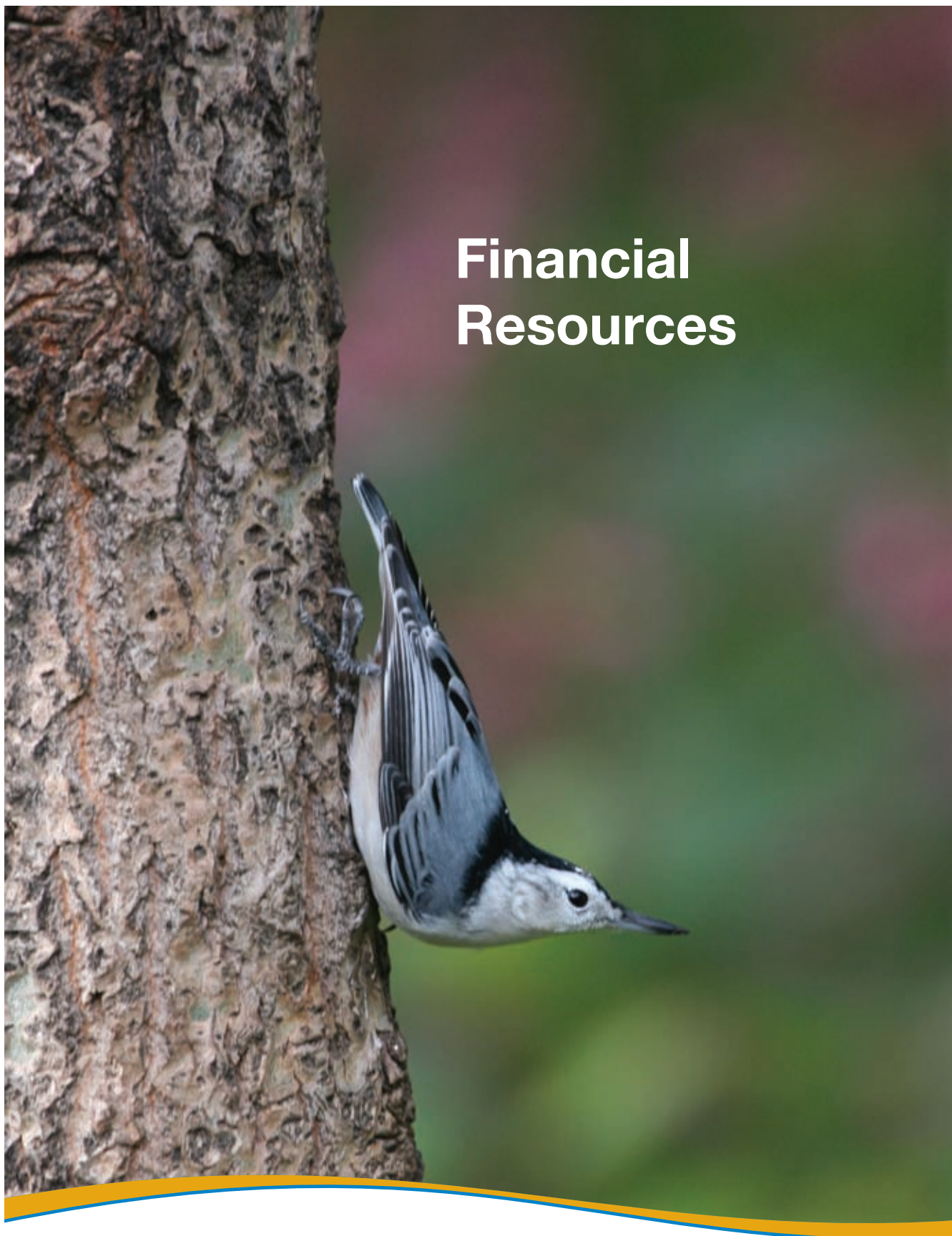
Effectiveness Measures:

- Improved knowledge of the diversity and status of plant and animal communities in Alberta.
- Conservation stakeholders, including the public, resource managers and regulators, and the scientific community have an improved understanding of processes that maintain current levels of biological diversity in Alberta.
- Data collected with provision of the Grants in Biodiversity Fund support other efforts to conserve Alberta's fish, wildlife and habitat.
- Improved numbers of conservation partnerships between ACA and the Alberta Co-operative Conservation Research Unit.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement

Financial Resources



At ACA, we strive to maintain financial strength and continually improve organizational performance. Alberta hunters and anglers are the backbone of a large majority of ACA's conservation initiatives, supplying more than 70 per cent of revenue through levy dollars. Levy revenue is expected to remain constant at approximately seven million dollars per year over the next three years.

Expenditures, however, are forecast to increase at a rate of approximately 5 per cent per year because of inflation. This "flat lining" of revenue, offset by an increase in expenditures, could have a significant impact on the level of ACA's conservation programming in the future. Consideration is given to reviewing and potentially adjusting the levy on all or specific licences, and a recommendation to adjust levies is being pursued with the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development.

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 our revenue base. A comprehensive revenue generation program will develop alternative methods for enhancing ACA's financial sources, while not directly competing with our member organizations.

The following are strategies, strategic actions, and effectiveness measures that constitute the core of the ACA Financial Program. These actions are deemed important in support of resource activities that meet ACA's responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1

To maximize the use of available financial resources.

Strategy 1: Continue to refine the budget and funding allocation processes, and internal business processes to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery.

Strategic Actions:

- Obtain competitive quotes or create partnership opportunities for selected major cost centers.
- Review quarterly performance to ensure optimum efficiency and delivery at the project level.
- Produce quarterly projections to year end and evaluate performance, and reallocate resources if required.
- Review annual plans to ensure alignment with ASRD Program Agreements, ACA Vision and Mission.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Reduce targeted operational costs by 10 per cent of total revenue over three years.
- Operate within a balanced budget.
- Maintain administrative costs at or below 15 per cent of our operational budget.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Efficiency to enhance Fisheries, Wildlife, and Land Management Program Agreements.



Strategy 2: Enhance the accountability of financial reporting process to ensure timely and accurate financial information is available for sound decision making.

Strategic Actions:

- Produce annual documentation that measures anticipated results detailed in the Annual Operating Plan.
- Define and measure accountability of the Management Team for results obtained.
- Maintain and enhance software and hardware systems.
- Increase efficiency of access to information by migrating more internal reporting to an online environment.
- Review internal accounting and reporting processes annually.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Plans and results are published annually, including the Annual Operating Plan, and the Annual Report.
- ACA internally maintains a provincial wide information infrastructure.
- Increased online access to information, including additional data categories, by March 2010.
- Annual internal report on policies, procedures and processes is provided to the President & CEO and external audit providers.
- Clarify management team targets within individual work plans to ensure accountability for results.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Efficiency to enhance Fisheries, Wildlife, and Land Management Program Agreement delivery.



Strategy 3: Ensure resources are allocated effectively to offset increased operating costs.

Strategic Actions:

- Obtain quotes to ensure fair and reasonable costs for all resource acquisitions, including vehicles, equipment and IT hardware.
- Continue to look at lease cost and space options at the regional level, and investigate potential partners that may reduce net space costs.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Resource costs for capital purchases remain within 2 per cent of prior year's budget.
- Document options available for regional space, including cost-benefit analysis.
- Submit two proposals to potential partners for shared space within the ACA building by March 2008.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Efficiency to enhance Fisheries, Wildlife, and Land Management Program Agreement delivery.



Objective 2

ACA employees have the necessary information, infrastructure and assets available in a reliable and timely fashion to achieve organizational objectives.

Strategy: Provide the information, infrastructure and assets to support delivery of programming objectives.

Strategic Actions:

- Maintain and enhance internal communications program including internal web community.
- Develop opportunities to enhance accommodations, warehousing and other areas highlighted in the Shared Services Operational Agreement.
- Internal business processes remain flexible to react to necessary changes in programming and are reviewed for effectiveness and efficiency annually.
- Explore linkages with other organizations where the sharing of assets, accommodations or services may be beneficial to both parties.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Create relationships with Service Alberta to develop opportunities to enhance data access and other shared information related services.
- Internal business processes are reviewed annually; required improvements are communicated and implemented in an effective manner.
- Annual employee survey indicates 65 per cent employee satisfaction with internal reporting methods and information by March 31, 2008.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- ACA Communications Team – internal communications.
- Shared Services Operational Agreement – shared resources.
- ACA Finance Team – financial tracking to evaluate costs and benefits.



Objective 3

Market financial services to our member groups, to provide services that will allow the finance group to operate as cost-neutral to ACA.

Strategy: Create opportunities with other organizations that reduces administrative costs.

Strategic Actions:

Seek partnerships that increase donated goods and services.

- Assist other organizations by providing accounting services.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Provide financial services to at least two other organizations per year.
- Achieve cost-neutrality for ACA financial services by the end of 2011.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Reduction of administrative costs will allow for more funds to flow to other program areas to achieve Program Agreement requirements.

A photograph of a bright, multi-colored rainbow spanning across a twilight sky. The rainbow's colors are vivid, with red, orange, yellow, green, and blue clearly visible. Below the rainbow, a row of tall, dark evergreen trees stands silhouetted against the horizon. The ground in the foreground is dark and appears to be a grassy field. The overall mood is serene and natural.

Communications

At ACA, we are committed to ongoing communication with our partners and stakeholders that promotes awareness and understanding of our role in the conservation community. Our communication plan focuses on the mechanisms necessary to deliver messages to our partners, and internal and external stakeholders.

Our Communications Program is responsible for leading the development and implementation of our communication strategies, which includes internal and external communications, public relations, media relations, member relations and government relations. Communication tools such as promotional items, the website, annual reports, outreach materials, magazines, advertisements and messaging are integral to create program awareness, build our brand and leverage partnerships. These activities contribute to our conservation goals by enhancing partner influence, educating the public, establishing an effective organizational image and ensuring employees understand their contributions to our Vision.

In addition, we are guided by the Public Information, Education and Communication Operations Agreement, which outlines the activities, roles, and responsibilities required for ACA and ASRD to work together to provide our stakeholders with effective and current information and communications related to conservation. It also defines the inter-organizational communications and processes necessary for achieving the outcomes defined in this and other Program Agreements.

The following are strategies, strategic actions, and effectiveness measures that constitute the core of the ACA Communications program. These actions are deemed important in support of resource activities that meet ACA's initiatives and our responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1: Identification of Stakeholder Relations Priorities

Enhance partner relations and stakeholder awareness of our conservation programs and our role in the conservation community.

Strategy 1: Active relationship-building with stakeholders, member groups and business units through the distribution of information, identification of opportunities to cross-promote and increase program awareness.

Strategic Actions:

- Assess requests for attendance and support at outreach activities held by stakeholders, member organizations and business units as they arise.
- Sponsor events that support our mission in the academic, industry, member groups, public and private sectors.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Increase in information requests and positive feedback from member groups and the staff.
- Increase member group awareness of our association and programs through distribution of regular communications.
- External Communications Plan components are phased in by August 2008.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.



Strategy 2: Develop an integrated approach with ASRD to communicating internally and externally with stakeholders.

Strategic Actions:

Increase dialogue between the organizations, leverage communication efforts and maximize efficiencies where possible.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Quarterly meetings of the Joint Communications Committee (ASRD and ACA) are maintained.
- Access to WIN cardholders is approved as agreed upon by ASRD as per MOU program agreement negotiations and the Public Information, Education and Communications Operational Agreement (April 2008)
- WIN cardholder survey is drafted in partnership with ASRD by February 2009.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.
- Public Information, Education and Communications Operational Agreement.
- Memorandum of Understanding

Objective 2: Identification of Public Information and Education Priorities

Identify strategic alliances to deliver communications, public and education outreach messages and identify opportunities to distribute materials.

Strategy: Investigate the possible development of an Education and Outreach Program and work with ACA Program Teams and member groups to coordinate these activities.

Strategic Actions:

- Write a draft document that outlines existing Education and Outreach Programs to identify limitations and potential niches where we can achieve the greatest impact on conservation.
- Identify potential collaborative education and outreach initiatives with other organizations, individuals and government and non-government agencies.
- Continue to administer a separate Education and Outreach Program from ASRD. Through the annual planning cycle, ACA may elect to participate in priority outreach areas identified by ASRD.
- Maintain partnership with the *Robert Bateman Get To Know* Program and investigate areas for expansion.

Effectiveness Measures:

- An increased stakeholder awareness of conservation programs and recreational opportunities.
- Identify ASRD outreach areas that ACA would like to participate in.
- ACA Education and Outreach Program draft is reviewed and direction is given on how to implement plan (May 2008).

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Public Information, Education and Communications Operational Agreement.
- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.





Objective 3: Internal Communications Priorities

Enhance internal communication tools for all ACA staff.

Strategy: Evaluate and enhance internal information sources.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop an internal communications plan.
- Poll staff for specific feedback through the annual staff survey.
- Develop a Corporate Style Guide and reference binder as a tool to enhance branding and messaging consistency.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Annual survey indicates employees understand vision and are satisfied with organizational communication tools and services.
- Incorporate components of Internal Communications Plan by 2007.
- Incorporate the Corporate Style Guide by 2008 and reference binder. (October 2008).
- Internal communications plan developed and approved by June 2008.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- ACA Human Resources.
- IT Department.
- Fisheries Program Agreement.
- Wildlife Program Agreement.
- Land Management Program Agreement.

Objective 4: Identification of External Communications Priorities

Identify areas that improve awareness of ACA, our programs and recreational opportunities both provincially and nationally among potential partners, media, hunters, anglers and like-minded conservationists.

Strategy 1: Enhance visibility of ACA, programs and recreational opportunities through publications (Magazine, Annual Report, SBP, AOP) advertising, the website and branding.

Strategic Actions:

- Improve, update and maintain conservation site database.
- Assist with the implementation of visual brand in all internal and external documents.
- Develop an Integrated Marketing and Communications plan.
- Publish *Conservation Magazine*.
- Produce the Annual Report using new format and information provided at ACA Management meeting.
- Identify opportunities to submit applications for communications and partnership awards.
- Produce the Conservation Site Guide.
- Research, plan and write copy for a marketing campaign using the tagline, “Conserving Alberta’s Wild Side.”

Effectiveness Measures:

- Two magazines with new branding and content criteria are published and distributed (June and November).
- Conservation Site database traffic increases by 300 users per month due to navigational improvements and site additions that attract users.
- Launch new website May 2008.
- Launch and distribute 100,000 copies of the Conservation Site Guide May 2008.
- Marketing campaign concept using “Conserving Alberta’s Wild Side” is drafted and approved by March 2008 and launched internally and externally in conjunction with the website and Conservation Site Guide launch in May 2008.
- *Conservation Magazine* is published bi-annually (June and November) and planning starts for the Spring 2009 issue.
- Annual Report produced and published (October 2008).
- Internal policies, signage, trucks, new promotional merchandise and other materials are all branded by September 2008.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- All ACA Teams.
- Communications Committee.



Strategy 2: Enhance media relations through marketing and partnerships.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop a media kit.

Effectiveness Measures:

- CD and print media kit developed by November 2008. Information includes; backgrounder, partnership opportunities and program information.
- Media tracking indicates a 20 per cent increase by year end in free provincial print, radio and TV coverage due to launch of guide, website and campaign. (Based on current monthly tracking system).

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Internal ACA Teams.

Objective 5: Identify cost-neutral opportunities

Strategy: Secure paid advertising for *Conservation Magazine* and the website.

Strategic Actions:

- Promote and secure advertising space for both the magazine and web to offset production costs.
- Create rate sheet and placement guide for website.

Effective Measures:

- Create advertising target list and secure at least 60 per cent of advertising space by September 2008 in the Fall 2008 issue of *Conservation Magazine*.
- Secure at least 10 web ads by April 2009.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- ACA Communications Team.





Human Resources

Our employees deliver a wide variety of conservation projects and programs in close collaboration with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and other partners throughout the province. ACA is committed to the creation of a high performance workplace and to sustaining an engaged and inspired workforce.

The following objectives and key strategies include strategies, strategic actions, and effectiveness measures that constitute the core of the ACA Human Resources Program, which supports the resource activities that meet ACA's responsibilities as a delegated administrative organization.

Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1:

Provide a work environment that supports the health, safety and well-being of all employees.

Strategic Actions:

- Support a safe workplace by maintaining a comprehensive Health and Safety Program.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Reduction in lost time accidents over the prior year.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Shared Services Operational Agreement – staff training.
- Memorandum of Understanding – Section 8, Program Resourcing and Methodologies.

Objective 2:

Provide a work environment that invests in the future development of all employees.

Strategic Actions:

- Implement a succession planning framework as part of our performance management.
- Ensure all employees have personal development plans linked to their personal performance objectives.
- Embrace learning events focused on leadership or technical skills that build strength, professionalism and flexibility into our workforce.

Effectiveness Measures:

- 35 per cent of employees are acquiring interpersonal skills through professional courses.
- 33 per cent of employees are involved in a succession plan within ACA.
- 5 per cent of employees are pursuing academic upgrading or continuing education that fills an identified skill gap within ACA.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Shared Services Operational Agreement – staff training.
- Memorandum of Understanding – Section 8, Program Resourcing and Methodologies.



Objective 3:

- Employees understand their working environment and how they contribute to ACA's vision and mission.

Strategic Actions:

- Ensure that ACA policies and practices are being applied fairly.
- Ensure that employees are actively involved in improvement of ACA policies, procedures and practices.
- Ensure employees understand how their job contributes to the vision and mission of ACA, including linkages to the delegated administrative responsibilities with ASRD.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Employees view management at ACA as enabling and contributing to organizational objectives.
- Annual employee survey indicates an overall rate of satisfaction and engagement of 85 per cent.
- Online survey of the Management Team at ACA indicates 80 per cent satisfaction with its performance.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- ACA Communications Team – internal communications.
- Internal ACA Resource Teams – direct input to personal development and professional growth.

Objective 4:

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

Strategic Actions:

Maintain individual and team reward and recognition programs.

- Identify and measure key core competencies associated with all positions at ACA.
- Compensation and advancements are based on performance and the exhibition of desired competencies and behaviours.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Training opportunities for all employees within ACA to increase performance and associated behaviors.
- Staff usage and support of online Performance Management System in the 2008 – 2009 fiscal year.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- ACA Communications Team – internal communications.
- Internal ACA Resource Teams – direct input to personal development and professional growth.
- ACA Finance Team – financial tracking to evaluate costs and benefits of proposed improvements.

Objective 5

Provide a unique culture and flexible working environment that increases capacity by retaining and recruiting highly skilled professionals.

Strategic Actions:

- Create a complementary base of highly skilled professionals that offers a challenging and supportive environment for colleagues within ACA.
- Develop an organizational culture with a high level of flexibility for employees related to work schedules and locations.
- Encourage strong professional and personal development of ACA employees to provide long-term career development.
- Provide unique compensation strategies to develop compensation options unique to ACA and review annually.
- Evaluate ACA compensation annually to ensure comparable rates within the industry.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Annual survey results indicate that employees strongly agree they are satisfied with the Benefit and Pension Program by demonstrating a 90 per cent rating.
- Annual survey indicates that 90 per cent of employees have high job satisfaction.
- ACA has a turnover rate less than 15 per cent per year.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- ACA Communications Team – internal communications.
- Internal ACA Resource Teams – direct input to personal development and professional growth.
- ACA Finance Team – financial tracking to evaluate costs and benefits of proposed improvements.



Our Organization

From a corporate perspective there are several important objectives that ACA will strive for in the next three years.

Objective 1:

Increase public profile of ACA.

Strategic Actions:

- Increase the number of presentations made to member groups.
- Increase the number of tradeshow and conferences where ACA attends and makes a presentation
- Increase co-operative projects with other groups to increase the profile of hunters and anglers, and their role as conservationists.
- Maintain a consistent image in all of our branding (trucks, clothing, reports, etc.).

Effectiveness Measures:

- Through surveys of WIN cardholders determine if ACA's profile is improving (i.e. should see an increase in the number of people who know what ACA is and what we do).
- Through surveys of non-WIN cardholders determine if ACA's profile is improving (i.e. should see an increase in the number of people who know what ACA is and what we do).

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- Increasing our profile is key to ensuring effective interaction with our stakeholders; to ensure we are providing the type of service stakeholders are expecting.

Objective 2:

Increase partnership dollars to 50 per cent of overall revenue by the end of 2011.

Strategic Actions:

- Create a strong public profile to ensure potential partners recognize ACA.
- Develop innovative marketing ideas that appeal to partners.
- Make target efforts to gain partners in the corporate community; oil and gas, financial and major retail sectors in particular.
- Develop marketing and business development training for staff so that all employees can aid in gaining increased partnership/donor funding.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Chart a steady annual increase in partnership dollars over the next three years.
- Bring in 10 new partners every year.
- Record partnership dollars as 50 per cent of annual operating revenue (i.e. partnership dollars equal levy dollars) by 2011.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- This objective will allow significant latitude in determining project priorities as projects funded by partnership dollars will not necessarily have to be related to ASRD priorities.
- Increased corporate partnerships will aid in increasing conservation awareness, thereby assisting in the outreach and education component of our program areas.



Objective 3:

Become a world-class conservation organization known for high-quality research and on-the-ground conservation projects.

Strategic Actions:

- Create a strong public profile to ensure people know what ACA does.
- Create a working environment that retains and attracts the “best of the best” in conservation.
- Ensure all projects are undertaken in the most rigorous manner and ensure results are high-quality and published in a timely manner.
- Ensure people maintain up-to-date training and the most advanced techniques are used in everything we do.
- Ensure quality, budget, timeline and safety are the four measures used to assess all project management.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Begin to track timelines and budgets for each project with a goal of 90 per cent of project being completed on time and on budget.
- Move forward with obtaining our Certificate of Recognition for our safety program.
- Be asked to present for at least two conferences/ workshops a year.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams:

- This objective will build a sense of pride within our staff and improve our ability to retain and recruit employees.

Objective 4:

Become an organization that our stakeholders feel they have ownership in.

Strategic Actions:

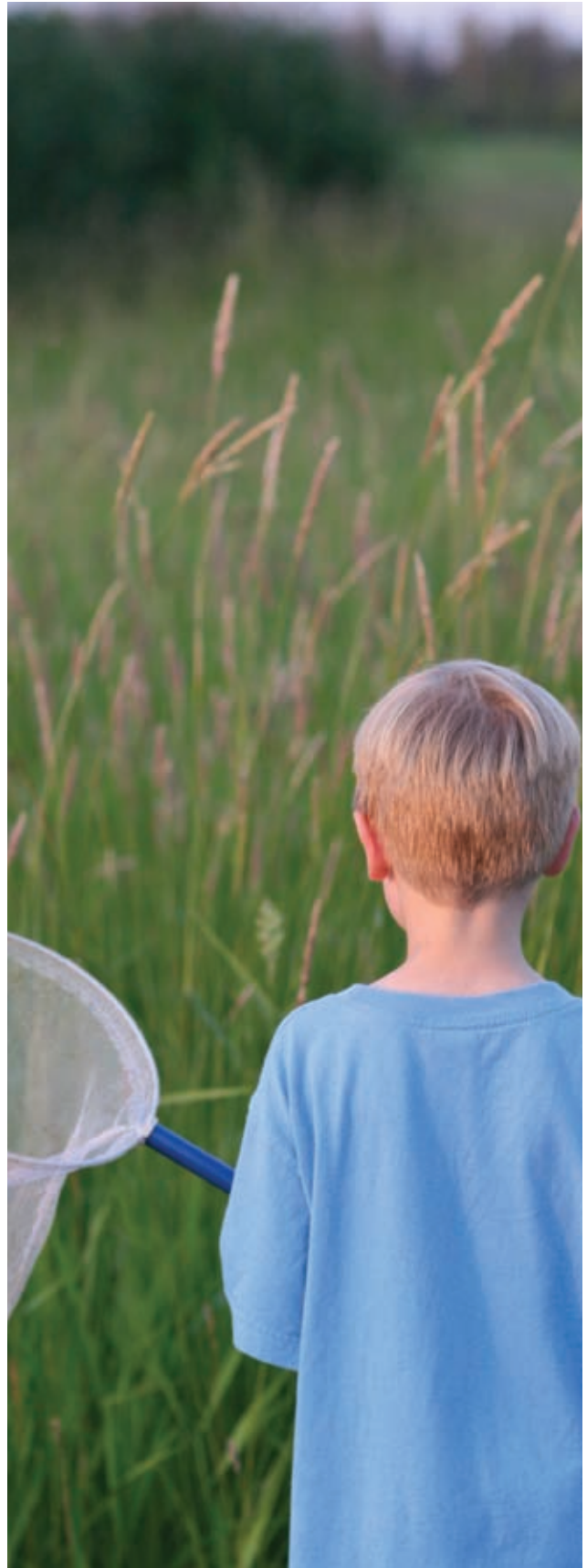
- Create a strong public profile to ensure people know what ACA does.
- Undertake surveys of stakeholders to gain feedback. Participate in more tradeshows where the public can directly interact with ACA staff.
- Improve our communication with stakeholders and member groups.

Effectiveness Measures

- An increase in the number of positive comments provided on surveys.

Linkage to Program Agreement(s) and/or ACA Teams

- This objective will build a sense of pride within our staff and improve our ability to retain and recruit employees.



Summary

This document represents ACA's sixth iteration of our Strategic Business Plan and strategies for the period 2008-2011. Building on past successes, we have updated our direction to continue ACA's evolution. This plan articulates ACA's objectives for the next three years and includes targets by which to measure our performance. This plan is a critical and invaluable document that provides the framework, the direction and the clarification that ACA's various stakeholders require and expect.

By making a significant investment in our employees and our working environment, every employee will understand and be well prepared for their role, share a commitment to excellence and be encouraged to help us achieve our Vision. Also, we must continue to tell our story – letting stakeholders know what we do, how we do it and share in the celebration of our successes.

Strategic planning is a dynamic business process that sets the guidelines for ACA's Annual Operating Plan. This document identifies *what* we will be doing and *why*. The Annual Operating Plan identifies *how* we will achieve these objectives, complete with funding and resource allocations, work plans, operating details and evaluation systems.

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.





Alberta Conservation
Association

Conserving Alberta's Wild Side

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