

Strategic Business Plan 2009 - 2019



Alberta Conservation
Association

Conserving Alberta's Wild Side



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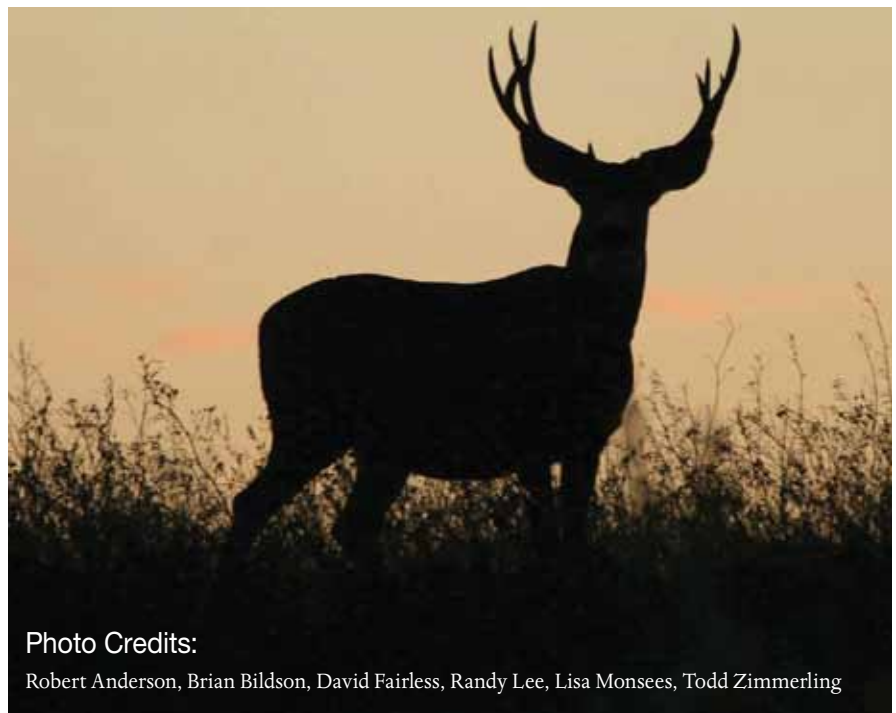


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This Year's Strategic Business Plan



Strategic business planning is an important process that ensures employees, stakeholders and partners have a clear understanding of the future direction of Alberta Conservation Association. This year's strategic plan includes both a ten- and three-year plan, which provides Alberta Conservation Association management with the information they require to determine specific actions that must be taken on a yearly basis to ensure goals within the Strategic Business Plan are met.

In the 2009-2019, ten-year Strategic Business Goals section, twelve general, long-term strategic goals are identified in contrast to the more specific short-term objectives highlighted in the 2009-2012, three-year Strategic Business Plan section on page ten. The short-term objectives relate directly to the long-term goals and provide us with the details we need to determine if the objective has been achieved by 2012. The number associated with each of the twelve, long-term goals corresponds directly to the same number shown for the short-term objectives, and as a result the short-term objectives can be seen as a subset of the long-term goal.

This Strategic Business Plan lays the foundation for our long- and short-term direction. The three-year objectives are enhanced by the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), which is produced yearly based on the objectives outlined in this plan. The AOP provides information on projects that Alberta Conservation Association will undertake, along with the proposed budgets for individual projects and program areas.

All strategic goals and objectives are aimed at meeting our Mission and Vision statements and all activities are undertaken with our Core Values in mind.

Chairman of the Board Message

Once again I am honoured to deliver this year's Chairman's message. In fact I'm very pleased to share our good news with all Albertans. I have been involved with Alberta Conservation Association for many years, and never have I felt better about where we stand today and where we're heading. As I look back over the past year, Alberta Conservation Association has made significant progress in cementing its relationship with its member group founders, as well as delivering effective conservation programs to our other main stakeholders, namely those who hold a WINcard.

Alberta Conservation Association has also nurtured and developed a corporate culture that values the knowledge and

recognizes the passion of its staff. We realize that they bring high-quality talents and abilities to the organization, and we could not survive and thrive without them. Of equal importance are the partnerships we've entered into with other conservation groups, NGOs, government and industry. World-class conservation projects happen on the Alberta landscape and Alberta Conservation Association is a proud partner in many of them. You can check out our website or *Conservation Magazine* for additional project information.

I would be remiss to not mention our Board of Directors. This widely diverse group of dedicated conservationists is a knowledgeable group. Most of our board members have risen through

the ranks of their own member groups and come to Alberta Conservation Association well grounded. The discussion around our board table is always informed, often educational and sometimes passionate, but in the end, conservation in Alberta comes first when making our decisions.


Looking forward over the next year, it looks like we will be facing challenges here in Alberta. But with those challenges also come opportunities, and that is what Alberta Conservation Association will be focusing on. We encourage all our neighbours throughout Alberta to take a moment to think about our wild Alberta and consider what small action they could take to make it a better place.



Happy trails.

Brian Bildson, Chairman
Alberta Trappers' Association

Brian Bildson operates a Registered Fur Management Area in Northern Alberta. He is the Chairman of the Board of Directors, representing the Alberta Trappers' Association.



President & CEO's Message

Over the last two years, Alberta Conservation Association has taken great strides in improving our relationship with partner groups, communicating better with our stakeholders and setting well-defined objectives on a year-to-year basis. Based on the changes we have made and relationships we have built and strengthened, it is my belief and that of the Board of Directors, that Alberta Conservation Association is in a position to consider longer-term goals with respect to our strategic planning. To this end, this strategic plan provides a three-year vision of what Alberta Conservation Association intends to accomplish, as well as a ten-year strategic plan. While it is recognized that a ten-year time horizon is difficult to plan for, it is important that as an organization we do consider our long-term goals and the actions we may need to undertake today to ensure we meet those goals ten years from now.

Alberta Conservation Association has an excellent future ahead, and it is my sincere belief that with a proper plan in place Alberta Conservation Association can move in any direction we desire and can achieve anything we put our efforts towards. This year's strategic plan, with both a three and ten-year plan, is the first step toward meeting what at first glance appears to be lofty goals over the long-term. For those of you who may feel that we are shooting too high over the next ten years, keep in mind how much we have accomplished and how much Alberta Conservation Association has changed in the first 11 years. With the hard working and dedicated employees that form the backbone of Alberta Conservation Association, I have no doubts that Alberta Conservation Association will continue to improve and evolve as a leader in conservation. I am confident that in 2019, we will find that we have achieved and exceed the goals that we have laid out this year.



Todd Zimmerling



Conserving Alberta's Wild Side

Board of Directors

Alberta Conservation Association Board of Directors meets quarterly and consists of nine member group representatives, one Provincial Government representative, two appointed Public at Large representatives, and the chairholder of the ACA/ University of Alberta Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife.

Executive

Brian Bildson, Chairman
Alberta Trappers' Association

Randy Collins, Vice Chairman
Alberta Fish & Game Association

Patrick Long, Secretary
Foundation for North American Wild Sheep

Ward McLean, Treasurer
Pheasants Forever Alberta Council

Don Pike, Past Chair
Trout Unlimited Canada

Directors

Tom Bateman - Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

Dr. Mark Boyce - ACA University of Alberta Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife

Bob Byers - Alberta Professional Outfitters Society

Randy Collins - Alberta Fish and Game Association

Ken Crutchfield - Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Minister's Representative

Dr. Lee Foote - Public At Large, Academic Representative

Sandra Foss - Federation of Alberta Naturalists

J.R. Giroux - Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

Colin Gosselin - Public At Large, Northeast Region

Ward McLean - Pheasants Forever Alberta Council

Calvin Rakach - Public At Large, Eastern Region

Layne Seward - Public At Large, Northwest Region

Jeff Smith - Public At Large, Southern Region

Dr. Roger Smith - Public At Large, Industry Representative

Alberta Conservation Association

Formed in 1997, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) is a not-for-profit, registered charity largely funded by Alberta's hunters and anglers through licence levies, and a growing number of corporate partners. We are governed by a multi-stakeholder Board of Directors represented by hunting, fishing, trapping and naturalist groups; government, First Nations, Public at Large, industry and academic representatives.

Annually, Alberta Conservation Association directs more than \$10 million towards conservation efforts, delivering a wide variety of projects, programs and services across the province. Key conservation programs that we deliver include Wildlife, Fisheries, Land Management and Communications.

Alberta Conservation Association Member Groups:

Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association
Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
Alberta Trappers' Association
Federation of Alberta Naturalists
Foundation for North American Wild Sheep
Pheasants Forever Alberta Council
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
Trout Unlimited Canada





Our Mission

Alberta Conservation Association 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.

Our Core Values

Collaboration - We look for every opportunity to work closely with each other as well as with our partners to positively impact Alberta's fish, wildlife and habitat.

Integrity - We maintain high ethical standards in everything we do. We are truthful, keep our promises and deliver on our commitments. We always remember we are working for the resource.

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 goals.

Accountability - We are all responsible for our actions and we are willing to accept the consequences of our actions. We recognize that accountability includes being accountable to each other, our stakeholders and the resource we are working for.

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.

Our Culture

Alberta Conservation Association is committed to managing its operations in a business-like manner, ensuring all employees are accountable for their actions. This means that employees are responsible for completing tasks on time, on budget, to the highest quality and in a safe manner. Our employees are empowered to make decisions and 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, Alberta Conservation Association values direct communication among employees and between employees and senior management. The office of the President and CEO is always open for discussions with employees.



Our goal is to maintain a corporate culture where employees feel involved in determining the direction of the organization, feel proud of the work they do and the programs Alberta Conservation Association takes on, and have the tools to talk to any of our stakeholders and provide examples of how we operate in an effective and efficient manner. This is achieved while carrying out valuable work to conserve and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fisheries and land resources.




Stakeholders and Partners

We view our member groups as our primary stakeholders, followed by all WIN cardholders (hunters and anglers) and then Alberta's general public. By using this approach we believe we are serving the public interest in the most effective way.

Alberta Conservation Association has a unique relationship with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD), whereby we work closely with ASRD staff at all levels throughout the year to determine conservation priorities, delivery methods, clarify protocols and promote conservation activities in the province. As a result, ASRD is our largest conservation partner. As such, it is always a priority to ensure an honest and open relationship with ASRD to allow for smooth operation of our conservation programming and effective use of resources.

Wherever possible, we strive to have our member groups as key partners in conservation. This commitment has already seen the development of new initiatives, which have resulted in an enhanced working relationship with our member groups, and a number of new partnerships are being explored for the upcoming fiscal year.





Ten Year Strategic Goals
2009 - 2019

Long-term goals for the 2009-2019 planning period:

1. Continue to improve as an organization that our member groups can be proud of. We will strive to become an “umbrella organization” that coordinates programs with member groups, facilitates partnerships between member groups, and aids member groups wherever and whenever possible.
2. Increase the number of corporate partners that Alberta Conservation Association has as donors to a wide range of conservation related projects.
3. Increase the level of non-levy revenue to the point that levy funds make up 25 % or less of total revenue for Alberta Conservation Association.
4. Work towards a clearer distinction between Alberta Conservation Association and the Alberta Government.
5. Increase the general public’s recognition of Alberta Conservation Association and its member groups.
6. Increase the acceptance of hunting, fishing and trapping within the general public.
7. Increase the recognition of the positive role hunters, anglers and trappers play in the conservation of wildlife, fish and habitat in Alberta.
8. Work closely with member groups to increase hunter, angler and trapper retention and recruitment.
9. Enhance our working relationship with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development through effective delivery of our Program Agreements, fostering collaboration and open communication.
10. Maintain “on-time, on-budget, high quality and done safely” as the cornerstones of all Alberta Conservation Association projects.
11. Foster a working environment where employees feel pride in where they work; where employees feel engaged; where employees know the direction the organization is moving and where employees have an overall high level of satisfaction with Alberta Conservation Association as a place to work.
12. Continue to grow the reputation of Alberta Conservation Association as a world-class conservation organization known for integrating high-quality research and on-the-ground conservation projects.

Three Year Strategic Objectives 2009 - 2012



Short-term objectives for the 2009-2012 planning period:

- 1a. Develop a yearly planning process that involves meetings with member groups to discuss direction and priorities. This process should be initiated in 2009/10 and should be tested during Alberta Conservation Association's annual planning cycle in the fall of 2009 and 2010. By the fall of 2011 the process of involving member groups in the yearly planning cycle should be refined and permanently incorporated in Alberta Conservation Association's planning process.
- 1b. Complete at least two land purchases per year that include partnerships with member groups. By March 31, 2012, Alberta Conservation Association should be able to identify the purchase of at least six properties purchased in partnership with a member group over the past three years.





- 1c. Provide services for member groups such as promotion, design and/or accounting. Alberta Conservation Association has significant expertise in areas that many of our member groups do not and as such should strive to aid our member groups. By March 31, 2012, Alberta Conservation Association should be able to identify at least three member groups to which we have provided support in promotion/advertising, design of printed material, website development, bookkeeping, biological expertise and/or other areas of expertise that can be beneficial to a member group. This objective does not imply that Alberta Conservation Association will provide these services for free; however, because the services are provided to a member group the services would be offered at a lower cost (lower than a member group could find elsewhere).
- 2a. Increase the number of corporate partners on a yearly basis by at least five so that by March 31, 2012, Alberta Conservation Association has at least 24 corporate partners (including current partners).
- 3a. By March 31, 2012 levy revenue should comprise 62.5% or less of total revenue. This objective should be achieved in four key areas; 1) increasing partner funding, 2) increasing donations, 3) providing services to member groups and others, and 4) advertising revenue.
- 4a. Build a new Alberta Conservation Association office in Lethbridge and take on preliminary planning for offices in Peace River, Rocky Mountain House and Blairmore by March 31, 2012.
- 4b. Ensure all internal and external communications prepared by Alberta Conservation Association are branded appropriately to increase public recognition of Alberta Conservation Association as a non-profit registered charity, distinct from ASRD.
- 5a. Increase general public recognition of Alberta Conservation Association from 1.7% to at least 5.0% In June 2008, a survey was conducted by Leger Marketing that provided information on the public's awareness of, and feelings towards Alberta Conservation Association, its member groups and conservation issues. In June 2011, a second survey will be conducted to determine if recognition rates or attitudes of the general public have been changed in three years.



- 6a. Increase the number of people who say they support or strongly support hunting, angling, and/or trapping by 10 percentage points as compared to the 2008 survey results. This result will be achieved through developing ad campaigns that portray the positive social and conservation benefits of hunting, angling and trapping.
- 7a. Establish a partnership with a Canadian celebrity that promotes hunting/fishing/trapping to the general public. The effectiveness of this objective will be measured with the general public survey.
- 7b. Ensure communications materials such as signage and the conservation site guide continue to be produced and distributed in a manner that ensures the general public is aware of the work hunters, anglers and trappers are doing for conservation.
- 8a. Establish a retention and recruitment program that is funded with internal funds and delivered by our member groups. This process began with initiation meetings between Alberta Conservation Association and its member groups. In 2009/10, the first year of this new retention and recruitment program model will roll out. This objective will be measured over the first three years by tracking the number of partnerships between member groups that arise from this initiative and the number of students that are reached through the program.
- 9a. Develop a mutually agreed-to schedule with ASRD for senior management of Alberta Conservation Association to meet with ASRD Area Managers throughout the year to discuss issues/concerns and ways of improving communication. This schedule should be developed immediately with the format and process worked out in the next three years (by March 31, 2012).
- 10a. Attain a Certificate of Recognition for our Health and Safety program. This objective should be achieved by March 31, 2012 and will ensure safety is maintained as a cornerstone of all Alberta Conservation Association operations.
- 10b. Implement a new accounting system, which will allow for a more detailed level of tracking individual projects for on-time and on-budget results. By March 31, 2012, the new accounting system will be installed and 90% of all Alberta Conservation Association projects should be completed on-time and on-budget.



- 11a. Establish policies with respect to environmentally friendly resource use within Alberta Conservation Association offices and on all projects, and ensure employees are engaged in the development of the policies. These policies should be complete before March 31, 2012.
- 11b. Minimize employee turnover rate to 5% or less for full-time permanent employees (excluding maternity leaves and retirement). This objective will be achieved through a wide range of initiatives including appropriate compensation and benefit packages, ensuring opportunities for employee growth and professional development, etc.
- 11c. Maintain 85% or more employees indicating they agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with Alberta Conservation Association as a place to work. This objective will be measured with employee surveys and will be achieved by ensuring clear and open lines of communication exist between staff and management; the work environment is friendly, fun and professional; and employees feel pride in what they do and how they do it.
- 12a. Ensure staff are attending professional conferences and presenting papers on the conservation work undertaken by Alberta Conservation Association. By March 31, 2012, at least four papers per year should be presented at professional conferences.
- 12b. Ensure the larger scientific community is aware of the work that Alberta Conservation Association is doing by ensuring at least some of our project results are published in peer reviewed journals. By March 31, 2012, Alberta Conservation Association should have at least two papers published in a peer reviewed journal.

Summary



This document represents a shift in Alberta Conservation Association's strategic planning process. As a result, this plan is the first to provide both three- and ten-year strategic direction, including targets by which to measure our performance over a three-year period. The ten-year goals are broad in scope; however, we strongly believe that this kind of long-term vision is necessary to help guide Alberta Conservation Association's detailed, three-year objectives that have been traditionally presented.

This plan is a critical and invaluable document that provides the framework, the direction and the clarification that Alberta Conservation Association's employees, stakeholders and partners require and expect.

The creation of this Strategic Business Plan is a result of the valuable guidance and input from our employees, member groups, partners and Board of Directors.

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