



Alberta Conservation  
Association

wildlife | fish | habitat

# Strategic Business Plan 2019 - 2029



2019 - 2021 UPDATE





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This report is located on our website:  
[www.ab-conservation.com/publications](http://www.ab-conservation.com/publications)

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Cover Photo: ACA, Garret McKen  
Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)



Letourneau Conservation Site  
Photo: ACA



## Chair of the Board's Message

Greetings,

I don't think it is an overstatement when I say that the past three years have been some of the most challenging times in the history of our province for everyone. Certainly, the conservation community and ACA was no exception. But when I review the *Strategic Business Plan* and what was accomplished over the past three years, I am inspired by the dedication of the ACA team and our partners in conservation who were able to accomplish so much under difficult circumstances.

Most member groups and many other conservation organizations were negatively affected by the pandemic in some fashion, a few seriously. The efforts of ACA to ramp up its capability to increase partnership opportunities and provide additional services and support to member groups and other conservation organizations was very timely. In particular communications, financial, logistical and project support services not only increased the awareness of outdoor opportunities at a time when they were sorely needed by Albertans but took the pressure off of many organizations struggling to meet their commitments and obligations.

Over the past 3 years, ACA has made a concerted effort to raise the profile of the organization and its member groups through targeted media campaigns and joint promotional opportunities to raise awareness of both the conservation community and outdoor recreational opportunities. As a result, both recognition of ACA and public support for hunting, fishing, and trapping has increased. In addition, levies from licence sales have increased steadily, and the support of our corporate partners has helped despite economic and social shortcomings.

Certainly, our retention and recruitment opportunities to engage with the public during the pandemic were severely hampered. But as we shake off the shackles' of COVID-19 in the coming spring and summer, I believe that the success of our engagement process over the past 3 years will provide an unprecedented opportunity for us to promote hunting, fishing, and trapping in Alberta. I believe that the hardship of the past few years has brought the conservation community closer together and with invigorated optimism and resolve. Many companies and institutions are having post-pandemic difficulties in re-engaging staff and workers back into productivity. ACA continues to enjoy very strong ratings from its employees as a safe, enjoyable, and productive workplace with no worker retention issues. This says a lot to me about the culture and leadership in the organization and its potential to move forward in the future.

I very much look forward to a more in-person version of myself in the coming months as we reconnect and continue to work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Abercrombie'.

Bill Abercrombie, Chair of the Board of Directors  
Alberta Conservation Association



Todd Zimmerling, at Waterfowl Warmup  
Photo: ACA, Charmaine Brunes

## President & CEO's Message

This report provides the scorecard for the first three years of ACA's 2019 – 2029 Strategic Business Plan. Obviously the COVID-19 pandemic heavily impacted businesses starting in March 2020, and ACA was no exception. Despite the trying times that we have all endured over the past 2 years, ACA staff have worked hard to accomplish the objectives we had laid out and have continued to drive towards our ten-year goals. Although we were able to meet the majority of our stated objectives between 2019 and 2021, there were several objectives that were directly impacted by COVID-related restrictions. We are hopeful that as we roll into our next three-year cycle of our Strategic Business Plan COVID concerns will start to wane, and we will have a greater opportunity to meet our 19 objectives identified for 2022 – 2024.

As always, it is important to recognize that many of our objectives could not, and would not, be achieved without the support we receive from our conservation partners. Whether it be other conservation groups, dedicated individuals, or corporate sponsors, all of our partnerships are important and vital to our ability to achieve both our short-term objectives and our long-term goals for conservation in this province. Thank you to all of you who have and continue to work with us. Also, thank you to ACA staff for all the hard work they have put in during the past three years, and their dedication going into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Zimmerling', written in a cursive style.

Todd Zimmerling, M.Sc., PhD., P. Biol.

President and CEO  
Alberta Conservation Association



# OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the results of the first three years (2019 – 2021) of Alberta Conservation Association’s (ACA’s) 2019 – 2029 Strategic Business Plan. It is broken down into the long-term 10-year goals established in 2019, followed by a scorecard of the short-term objectives that were developed for fiscal years 2019 – 2021. Each of the short-term objectives in 2019 – 2021, relate directly to the corresponding numbered long-term goal.

MULTISAR, habitat assessment  
Photo: ACA, Mike Verhage

This scorecard is used to help determine what has worked well and where improvement is needed within the organization. In addition, the scorecard has formed part of the information used in developing the last section of this report, Alberta Conservation Association’s next 3-year Strategic Business Plan (2022 – 2024). The 2022 – 2024 Strategic Objectives provides the overarching direction for ACA staff for the next 3 years and helps staff continue toward achieving the longer-term goals identified in the 10-year plan. As always, our strategic goals and objectives lead to ACA fulfilling our Mission and Vision statements, and all activities are undertaken with our Core Values front of mind.

## Mission

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

## Vision

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

# 2019 - 2029 TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS

The following were established in 2019 as our long-term goals for the 2019 – 2029 Strategic Business Plan. From each of these long-term goals, we developed the shorter-term objectives that will be discussed in the following section. All our strategic goals are developed to support our Mission and Vision statements, with conservation of Alberta's wildlife, fish, and habitats being our ultimate goal.

1. Strive to be 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 in Conservation contributing to a wide range of conservation-related projects.
3. Increase the level of non-levy revenue, where the levy funds make up 50% or less of total revenue for Alberta Conservation Association.
4. Increase the general public's recognition of Alberta Conservation Association and its member groups.
5. Increase the acceptance of hunting, fishing, and trapping within the general public.
6. Increase the recognition of the positive role hunters, anglers, and trappers play in the conservation of wildlife, fish, and habitat in Alberta.
7. Work closely with member groups to increase hunter, angler, and trapper retention and recruitment.
8. Enhance our working relationship with the Government of Alberta, including, but not limited to Environment, Parks, Forestry, Agriculture, Tourism, Economic Development, Education, and Health.
9. Continue to work closely with Alberta Environment and Parks to ensure alignment of Alberta Conservation Association's *Annual Operating Plan* with Alberta Environment and Parks' annual priorities.
10. 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.
11. Continue to grow the reputation of Alberta Conservation Association as a world-class conservation organization known for supporting and undertaking high-quality research and on-the-ground conservation projects.
12. Ensure Alberta Conservation Association continues to provide complete transparency with respect to all activities we undertake.



Figure Eight Lake Conservation Site, drilling holes for aeration fencing  
Photo: ACA, Garret Mcken

# 2019 – 2021 SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES SCORECARD

## Scorecard Summary

We identified 19 objectives in the 2019 – 2029 Strategic Business Plan; we achieved 15 objectives (1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 4a, 4b, 6a, 6b, 8a, 9a, 10b, 11a, 11b, 12a, and 12b). We partially achieved one objective (5a) and failed to achieve three objectives (3a, 7a, and 10a).

Based on these results, for the next three years, we will assess and make changes to help achieve the objectives that we were unable to attain in 2019 – 2021.

**1a.** Engage member groups in the yearly planning cycle. Using the formalized process we have developed, we are aware of the priority conservation concerns of our stakeholders. Member groups are using the process to bring forward their priorities. We do not guarantee to take on these priorities; however, we will assess them during the yearly planning cycle along with priority items brought forward from other stakeholders. This process determines our Annual Operating Plan.

### Results:

Our Wildlife, Fish, Land Management, and Communications programs established a formalized internal process to consult with our member groups on priority areas. Through this process, we have been engaging member groups and AEP staff to ensure we have a clear understanding of priority conservation concerns, and stakeholders understand our proposed activities for the year.

**1b.** Complete at least two habitat conservation purchases per year that include partnerships with member groups. ACA will identify at least six purchases in partnership with a member group by March 31, 2022.

### Results:

From April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2022, ACA has completed four habitat acquisitions and received two habitat donations and one habitat bequest, all in partnership with Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA).

**1c.** Provide services for member groups. ACA has significant expertise in areas where many of our member groups do not. As a result, we will strive to aid member groups when possible. We will identify at least three member groups to which we have provided support or advice in promotion/advertising, design, website development, bookkeeping, biological expertise, and/or other areas of expertise by March 2022. This does not imply that we will provide these services for free; however, because the services are provided to a member group, we will offer them at a lower cost (lower than a member group could find elsewhere).

### Results:

Over the past three years, ACA has provided expertise in information technology, accounting, advertising/promotion (including materials such as photographs and film footage) or biological expertise to AFGA, Alberta Trappers' Association (ATA), and Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta (WSFA).

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**2a.** Increase the number of Corporate Partners in Conservation, annually. ACA should have 55 corporate partners (including current partners) by March 31, 2022.

**Results:**

As of March 31, 2022, ACA has an ongoing working relationship with 74 corporate partners, all of which can be viewed on our website ([www.ab-conservation.com/cpic](http://www.ab-conservation.com/cpic)).

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**3a.** Levy revenue should comprise 60% or less of total revenue by March 31, 2022. There are five key areas in which to achieve this objective: 1) increasing partner funding, 2) increasing donations, 3) providing services to member groups and others, 4) advertising revenue, and 5) land donations (we will continue to work with corporate partners and AEP to develop conservation offset system for Alberta).

**Results:**

Over the past three years, levy revenues have continued to rise while non-levy revenues have remained relatively constants. As a result, as of March 31, 2022, levy revenue comprised approximately 80% of total revenue.

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**4a.** Ensure all internal and external communications prepared by ACA continue to be branded appropriately to increase public recognition of ACA as a non-profit registered charity, distinct from AEP.

**Result:**

All messaging produced by our communications department has had consistent branding for the past three years.

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**4b.** Increase the general public's unprompted recognition of ACA to at least five percent. We will conduct a survey in the fall of 2021 to determine if recognition rates or attitudes have changed in three years.

**Result:**

A public survey was conducted in summer of 2020. When asked to name an active conservation organization group operating in Alberta, 5.2% of Albertans identified ACA. When asked if they had heard of ACA, 53.0% of Albertans indicated yes.

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**5a.** By fall of 2021, increase the percentage of people who say they support or strongly support hunting, angling, and/or trapping by 10% as compared to the 2017 survey results.

**Result:**

A public survey was conducted in summer of 2020. Of the 1,200 respondents in the survey, 87% supported catch-and-release fishing (82% in 2017), 83% supported catch-and-keep fishing (76% in 2017), 59% supported trapping (52% in 2017), 68% supported game bird hunting (59% in 2017), and 63% supported big game hunting (59% in 2017).

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**6a.** Initiate targeted media campaigns. These campaigns will concentrate on improving the recognition of the positive role hunting, angling, and trapping plays in conservation and in society. The effectiveness of this objective will be measured with the general public survey in the fall of 2021.

**Result:**

Based on the results of the Public Opinion Survey conducted in the summer of 2020, the general public's support for hunting, angling, and trapping has increased relative to 2017. Health restrictions and regulations concerning COVID-19 reduced our ability to undertake many of the public events that had been planned; however, Harvest Your Own continues to grow with the addition of a podcast and increased user interaction. In addition, ACA's social media pages continue to see increased traffic compared to previous years.

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**6b.** Produce and increase the distribution of communications materials in a manner that maximizes the general public's awareness of the work hunters, anglers, and trappers do for conservation.

**Result:**

ACA continues to increase the distribution of communications materials and engagement with the public through digital media. Over the past 12 months, ACA's website had 651,408 page views (54,285/month) and 190,150 unique visitors (15,849/month); and Harvest Your Own's website had 107,958 page views (8,959/month) and 61,035 unique visitors (5,210/month).

Cumulative statistics of ACA's digital media include the following:

- 69,897 app downloads
- 77,245 e-newsletter subscribers
- 66,232 followers on all of ACA's social media platforms:
  - 50,818 Facebook followers
  - 6,235 Instagram followers
  - 7,049 Twitter followers
  - 2,130 LinkedIn followers
- 4,548 followers on all of Harvest Your Own's social media platforms:
  - 3,373 Facebook followers
  - 1,175 Instagram followers
- In addition, ACA continues to distribute hard copies of our publications:
- 35,000 copies of the Alberta Discover Guide annually
- 15,000 copies per biannual issue of Conservation Magazine

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**7a.** Continue to work with member groups to increase the number of retention and recruitment events, such as Kids Can Catch and Taber Pheasant Festivals, that occur across the province. We will measure this objective over the next three years by tracking how many partnerships arise between member groups and how many students these activities reach.

**Result:**

Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the cancellation of most retention and recruitment activities in 2020 and 2021. The Taber Pheasant Festival was able to run the novice shoots and regular hunts in 2020, but the novice shoots were cancelled in 2021. Only a handful of Kids Can Catch events happened in 2020 or 2021.

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**8a.** Continue meet on a regular basis with AEP to discuss issues, identify opportunities to work in collaboration, and ensure a healthy and respectful working relationship between our organizations.

**Result:**

Over the past three years, we have continued to work closely with AEP.

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**9a.** Look for opportunities to engage with government departments that ACA has not traditionally interacted with, such as Health regarding promoting wild game, Culture and Tourism regarding promotion of hunting and angling opportunities, and Economic Development and Trade regarding benefits of hunting and angling.

**Result:**

We continue to attempt to engage with Alberta Health to identify opportunities of promoting wild game as food; however, COVID restrictions made planning potential events difficult. We hope to reengage in the coming years. In addition, we have engaged with Service Alberta to try launching a conservation licence plate program to raise funds for conservation activities.

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**10a.** Minimize our employee turnover rate to 5% or less for full-time permanent employees (excluding maternity/paternity leaves and retirement). We will achieve this objective through a wide range of initiatives including appropriate compensation and benefit packages, ensuring opportunities for employee growth and professional development, etc.

**Result:**

For each of the last three years, we have had a turnover rate of 7.1%, 6.3% and 9.4%.

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**10b.** Maintain 85% or more employees indicating they agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with ACA as a place to work. We will measure this objective with yearly employee surveys. We will ensure that 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.

**Result:**

Over the past three years, employees indicating they agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with ACA as a place to work have been 97.5%, 98.5%, and 89%.

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**11a. Ensure employees attend professional conferences and present papers on the conservation work ACA does. Four papers per year should be presented at professional conferences.**

**Result:**

Over the past three years, ACA staff have provided 11 presentations at professional conferences.

**2019**

- Downey, B. Alberta Conservation Association's MULTISAR and SHARP Projects. Society of Range Management. Online. November 2019.
- Schmidt, B. Using eDNA to document the distribution of Prussian carp in Alberta. 67th Great Plains Fisheries Workers Association Conference. Lethbridge. January 28 – 30, 2019.
- Fitzsimmons, K. Wading in: Evaluation of a Put-And-Take Stocking Program in Alberta – Perspectives from a province with high angling demand. Great Plains Fisheries Workers Association Conference. Lethbridge. January 28 – 30, 2019.
- Verhage, M. Enhancing Habitat Conservation Strategies with GIS solutions: Applying ArcGIS Model Builder and Grassland Vegetation Inventory (GVI) to Expedite Wildlife Surveys for Species at Risk and Management Plans for Producers in Southern Alberta. 12th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference. Winnipeg, Manitoba. February 20, 2019.

**2020**

- Downey, B. "Weathering the Storm: Value of Relationships and Partnerships." Transboundary Workshop/Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop. Regina, Saskatchewan. February 2020.
- Downey, B. and N. Mackintosh. Alberta Conservation Association's MULTISAR and SHARP Projects. British Columbia Institute of Agrology. Online. November 2020.
- Downey, B. and P. Rose. Native grassland restoration and insect study at Silver Sage Conservation Site. Partners in Flight. Online. November 2020.

**2021**

- Downey, B. Listen, Learn, Liaise: Replacing the three S's with the three L's for successful multispecies conservation programs. American and Canadian Joint Ornithological Conference. Online. August 2021.

- Fitzsimmons, K., B. Schmidt, A. Paul, and L. Makowecki. Testing resource selection functions for water management planning – Are Mountain Whitefish Alberta's winter Olympians? 2021 Alberta Native Trout Workshop – Session 3 Research and Tools. Hosted by the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society. Online. March 24, 2021.
- MacDonald, A. Evaluating the effectiveness of fence modifications to create permeable fences for pronghorn. Scaling Up Camera Trap Surveys to Inform Regional Wildlife Conservation Columbia Mountain Institute of Applied Ecology Workshop. Online. May 18, 2021.
- Spence, Z., C. Judd, and M. Rodtka. Video monitoring of spawning bull trout in Fall Creek, Alberta. 2021 Alberta Native Trout Workshop - Session 3 Research and Tools. Hosted by the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society. Online. March 24, 2021.

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**11b. Publish project results in peer-reviewed journals to ensure the larger scientific community knows about ACA's work. ACA should have at least two papers published by March 31, 2022.**

**Result:**

Over the past three years, ACA staff have published 15 papers in peer-reviewed journals.

**2019**

- Jokinen, M., S.M. Webb, D. Manzer, and R. Anderson. 2019. Characteristics of Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) dens in the lowland boreal forest of north-central Alberta. *Canadian Field Naturalist* 133(1):1-15.
- Joly, K., E. Gurarie, M. S. Sorum, P. Kaczensky, M. D. Cameron, A. F. Jakes, B. L. Borg, D. Nandintsetseg, J. G. C. Hopcraft, B. Buuveibaatar, P. F. Jones, T. Mueller, C. Walzer, K. A. Olson, J. C. Payne, A. Yadamsuren, and M. Hebblewhite. 2019. Longest terrestrial migrations and movements around the world. *Scientific Reports* 9:15333.
- Jones, P.F., B. A. Downey, B. L. Downey, K. Taylor, A. J. Miller, and C. Demaree. 2019. Listen, Learn, Liaise: Taking the Species Out of Species-at-Risk through Engagement. *Rangelands* 41(4):169-177.
- Jones, P. F., A. F. Jakes, A. C. Telander, H. Sawyer, B. H. Martin, and M. Hebblewhite. 2019. Fences reduce habitat for a partially migratory ungulate in the Northern Sagebrush Steppe. *Ecosphere* 10:e02782.

- Tack, J. D., A. F. Jakes, P. F. Jones, J. T. Smith, R. E. Newton, B. H. Martin, M. Hebblewhite, and D. E. Naugle. 2019. Beyond protected areas: private lands and public policy anchor intact pathways for multi-species wildlife migration. *Biological Conservation* 234:18-27.
- Webb, S.M., R. Anderson, M. Jokinen, B. Abercrombie, B. Bildson, and D. Manzer. 2019. Incorporating local ecological knowledge to explore wolverine distribution in Alberta, Canada, *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 43(3):414-424.

## 2020

- Jakes, A. F., N. J. DeCesare, P. F. Jones, C. C. Gates, S. J. Story, S. K. Olimb, K. E. Kunkel, and M. Hebblewhite. 2020. Multi-scale habitat assessment of pronghorn migration routes. *PLoS ONE* 15:e0241042.
- Jones, P. F., A. F. Jakes, A. M. MacDonald, J. A. Hanlon, D. R. Eacker, B. H. Martin, and M. Hebblewhite. 2020. Evaluating responses by sympatric ungulates to fence modifications across the Northern Great Plains. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 44:130-141.
- Jones, P. F., A. F. Jakes, D. R. Eacker, and M. Hebblewhite. 2020. Annual pronghorn survival of a partially migratory population. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 84:1114-1126.
- Lee, T.S., T.G. Creech, A. Martinson, S.E. Neilson, A.F. Jakes, P.F. Jones, K. Sanderson, and A.T. Ford. 2020. Prioritizing human safety and multispecies connectivity across a regional road network. *Conservation Science and Practice* 3:e327.

## 2021

- Lee, T.S.; N.L. Kahal, H.L. Kinas, L.A. Randall, T.M. Baker, V.A. Carney, K. Kendell, K. Sanderson, and D. Duke. 2021. Advancing Amphibian Conservation through Citizen Science in Urban Municipalities. *Diversity* 2021, 13, 211. <https://doi.org/10.3390/d13050211>
- Foote, L., T. Zimmerling, M. Besko, and N. Krogman. 2022. So you want to work for a conservation organization? Here are 12 recommendations for hiring success. *The Wildlife Professional* January/February 50-55.
- E. W. Smith, H.W. Harshaw, and D. L. Manzer. In Review. Recreation specialization among prairie upland game bird hunters. *Journal of Human Dimensions of Wildlife*.

- Jones, P. F., A. K. Reinking, A. F. Jakes, M. M. Miller, T. Creekmore, and R. Guenzel. In Review. Chapter 19: Pronghorn. *Rangeland Wildlife Ecology and Conservation*, Springer.
- Peters, S., A. Rezanoff, L. Engley, D. Prescott, and P.F. Jones. In Review. The effectiveness of different predator exclosure designs to increase piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) nest and fledging success in Alberta, Canada. *Conservation Science and Practice*.

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**12a.** Upload a progress report for every project undertaken in a fiscal year to ACA's external website by April 30 each year (30 days after our year-end of March 31).

### Result:

All projects have had progress reports uploaded to our external website by April 30 of each year.

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**12b.** Ensure the most up-to-date financial statements, Annual Operating Plan, and Annual Report are available on ACA's external website, at all times.

### Result:

Over the past three years, the most up-to-date information has always been available on ACA's external website.



# 2022 – 2024 UPDATE THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been established as a result of the evaluation of our first three years of this strategic business plan (2019-2021). Based on the scorecard for our first three years, we have maintained our original short-term objectives into the 2022 – 2024 fiscal years:

**1a.** Engage member groups in the yearly planning cycle. Using the formalized process we have developed, we are aware of the priority conservation concerns of our stakeholders. Member groups are using the process to bring forward their priorities. We do not guarantee to take on these priorities; however, we will assess them during the yearly planning cycle along with priority items brought forward from other stakeholders. This process helps determine our Annual Operating Plan.

**1b.** Complete at least two habitat conservation purchases per year that include partnerships with member groups. Alberta Conservation Association will identify at least six purchases in partnership with a member group by March 31, 2025.

**1c.** Provide services for member groups. Alberta Conservation Association has significant expertise in areas where many of our member groups do not and strives to aid member groups when possible. We will

identify at least three member groups to which we have provided support or advice in promotion/advertising, design, website development, bookkeeping, biological expertise, and/or other areas of expertise by March 2025. This does not imply that we will provide these services for free; however, because the services are provided to a member group, we will offer them at a lower cost (lower than a member group could find elsewhere).

**2a.** Increase the number of Corporate Partners in Conservation, annually. Alberta Conservation Association should have 100 corporate partners (including current partners) by March 31, 2025.

**3a.** Levy revenue should comprise 60% or less of total revenue by March 31, 2025. There are five key areas in which to achieve this objective:

1) increasing partner funding, 2) increasing donations, 3) providing services to member groups and others, 4) advertising revenue, and 5) land donations (we will continue to work with corporate partners and Alberta Environment and Parks to develop a conservation offset system for Alberta).

**4a.** Ensure all internal and external communications prepared by Alberta Conservation Association continue to be branded appropriately to increase public recognition of Alberta Conservation Association as a non-profit registered charity, distinct from Alberta Environment and Parks.

**4b.** Increase the general public's unprompted recognition of Alberta Conservation Association to at least 5.0%. We will conduct a survey in the summer/fall of 2023 to determine if recognition rates or attitudes have changed in three years.

**5a.** By fall of 2023, increase the percentage of people who say they support or strongly support hunting, angling, and/or trapping by 10% as compared to the 2020 survey results.



**6a.** Initiate targeted media campaigns. These campaigns will concentrate on improving the recognition of the positive role hunting, angling, and trapping plays in conservation and in society. The effectiveness of this objective will be measured with the general public survey in the fall of 2023.

**6b.** Produce and increase the distribution of communications materials in a manner that maximizes the general public's awareness of the work hunters, anglers, and trappers do for conservation.

**7a.** Continue to work with member groups to increase the number of retention and recruitment events, such as Kids Can Catch and the Taber Pheasant Festival, that occur across the province. We will measure this objective over the next three years by tracking how many partnerships arise between member groups and how many students these activities reach.

**8a.** Look for opportunities to engage with government departments that ACA has not traditionally interacted with, such as Health regarding promoting wild game, Tourism regarding promotion of hunting and angling opportunities, and Economic Development regarding benefits of hunting and angling.

**9a.** Continue meeting on a regular basis with AEP to discuss issues, identify opportunities to work in collaboration, and ensure a healthy and respectful working relationship between our organizations.

**10a.** Minimize our employee turnover rate to 5% or less for full-time permanent employees (excluding maternity/paternity leaves and retirement). We will achieve this objective through a wide range of initiatives, including appropriate compensation and benefit packages, ensuring opportunities for employee growth and professional development, etc.

**10b.** Maintain 85% or more employees indicating they agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with ACA as a place to work. We will measure this objective with yearly employee surveys. We will ensure that 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.

**11a.** Ensure employees attend professional conferences and present papers on the conservation work ACA does. Four papers per year should be presented at professional conferences.

**11b.** Publish project results in peer reviewed journals to ensure the larger scientific community knows about ACA's work. ACA should have at least three papers published by March 31, 2025.

**12a.** Upload a progress report for every project undertaken in a fiscal year to ACA's external website by April 30 each year (30 days after our year-end of March 31).

**12b.** Ensure the most up-to-date financial statements, Annual Operating Plan, and Annual Report are available on ACA's external website, at all times.

Cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*)  
Photo: ACA, Mike Jokinen

# SUMMARY

This document represents a shift in Alberta Conservation Association’s strategic planning process. As a result, this plan is the first to provide a scorecard update on our three- and ten-year strategic direction. After the first three years of this strategic plan, we have found no need to change any of our ten-year goals as we believe our strategic direction is still appropriate.

With respect to the next three years (2021 – 2024), we have maintained many of our original objectives, and we are building directly on the success of our first three years (2019 – 2021). As we continue to move forward with our ten-year strategic business plan (2019 – 2029), we will track and evaluate our progress every three years.

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. It is this document, along with our Mission and Vision statements, that guide our day-to-day activities and the development of the *Annual Operating Plan*. Together, they ensure that Alberta Conservation Association works towards conserving, protecting, and enhancing wildlife, fish, and habitat for all Albertans to enjoy, value, and use—for generations to come.



Kids Can Catch, Wabamun lake  
Photo: ACA, Charmaine Brunes





Taber Pheasant Festival, pheasant release  
Photo: ACA, Samuel Vriend



Formed in 1997, Alberta Conservation Association is a not-for-profit, registered charity funded by Alberta's hunters and anglers through licence levies, and a growing number of corporate partners. We are governed by a multistakeholder Board of Directors represented by hunting, fishing, trapping and naturalist groups; government; First Nations; public at large; industry; and Alberta Conservation Association 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.

## 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 wildlife, fish, 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. Employees are responsible for completing tasks safely, on time, on budget, and to the highest quality. While our employees are empowered to make decisions, they are also responsible for those decisions.

Effective and open communication is a cornerstone of a healthy work environment. We value direct communication among employees and senior management at Alberta Conservation Association. This includes the President and CEO, whose door is always open.

Our goal is to maintain a corporate culture where employees:

- have ownership of the organization and its direction
- see opportunities for career growth
- remain proud of the work they do and the projects we take on
- possess the tools to talk to any of our stakeholders and provide examples of how we operate in an effective and efficient manner

We uphold this culture while carrying out valuable work to conserve and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fisheries, and land resources.

## 2021 Board of Directors

Alberta Conservation Association's Board of Directors meet quarterly and consists of eleven member group representatives, one provincial government representative, five Public At Large representatives, one academic representative, one industry representative, and the ACA/University of Alberta Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife.

### Executive

Bill Abercrombie, Chairman – Alberta Trappers' Association

Robert Gruszecki - Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

Sandra Mellon, Treasurer - Public At Large, Northwest Region

Chuck Priestley, Secretary - Public At Large, Northeast Region

### Directors

Vince Aiello – Public At Large, Central Region

Tom Bateman – Director Emeritus

Tony Blake – Nature Alberta

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

Fred Calverley – Trout Unlimited Canada

Randy Collins – Alberta Fish & Game Association

Dr. Brian Joubert – Public At Large, Academic Representative

Neil Keown – Backcountry Hunters & Anglers – Alberta Chapter

Patrick Long – Director Emeritus

Perry McCormick – Pheasants Forever

Richard Mellon – Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta

Travis Ripley – Minister's Representative, Alberta Environment and Parks

Jeana Schuurman – Alberta Professional Outfitters Society

Richard Stamp – Public At Large, Southern Region

Brent Watson – Alberta Bowhunters Association

Vacant – Public At Large, Business Representative

Vacant – Public At Large, Indigenous Board Liaison

Vacant – Treaty 8



## Member Groups:

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Alberta Bowhunters Association

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Alberta Fish & Game Association

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Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

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Alberta Professional Outfitters Society

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Alberta Trappers' Association

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Backcountry Hunters & Anglers – Alberta Chapter

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Nature Alberta

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Pheasants Forever, Alberta Council

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Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

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Trout Unlimited Canada

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Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta

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## Our Stakeholders and Partners

Our member groups are our primary stakeholders, followed by all Wildlife Identification Number (WIN) cardholders (hunters and anglers), and then Alberta's general public. We believe that this approach effectively serves public interests.

Alberta Conservation Association works with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) staff at all levels throughout the year to determine priority projects and delivery of those projects; clarify protocols; and promote conservation activities in the province. As a result, we consider AEP our largest conservation partner. As such, it is always a priority to ensure an honest and open relationship with AEP to allow for smooth operation of projects and effective use of resources.

Wherever possible, we strive to have our member groups as key partners in conservation. New initiatives have grown from our commitment, and it has resulted in an enhanced working relationship with our member groups. New partnerships are constantly being explored.



