



The Alberta Fish & Game Association is your voice in conservation

Dear Honourable Minister Nixon,

On behalf of the AFGA, I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing both recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers, as well as common-sense conservation initiatives that will ensure all Albertans will be able to continue to enjoy and help protect the landscapes we are so blessed to have access to.

Your Department is currently engaged in the needed work to review and optimize important areas of conservation and recreation that deeply affect our membership. In addition to our support for the Fisheries and Wildlife Program reviews that are underway, the AFGA is supportive of your plan to improve user experiences by offering partnership opportunities with non-government organizations (NGOs) like the AFGA. The AFGA supports the opportunity for other organizations, such as First Nations, Municipalities, and other NGOs to partner with AEP on stewardship of our public lands. The AFGA supports the in-depth review of our Parks system with an aim to develop a financially and operationally prudent path forward that involves many local groups and organizations.

Founded in 1908, the AFGA represents over 24,000 members representing 83 affiliated Fish and Game clubs in over 450 cities, towns and villages throughout the province. The AFGA has a long standing reputation for advocating for conservation, environmental protection, stewardship, educational awareness of our public lands. In accordance with our values, mission statement, and objects, the AFGA is supportive of this direction to increase the user experience in these locations, while maintaining a commitment to sustainable use and conservation of our lands and wildlife.

Our position on the 164 partnership sites is multifaceted. Our overall objective is to ensure Albertans have continued access to the sites and facilities they offer which include camping, day use, docks, and boat launches. We are interested in exploring opportunities where the AFGA and our Clubs may be a good fit for partnering on some of these sites. Furthermore, it is of importance that these areas are monitored by AEP, law enforcement, and their partners, to ensure that the intended outcome of increased user experience and continued land stewardship is achieved.

As you know, in partnership with the ACA, we have a proven track record of adopting and taking care of many properties with our AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund Program. Some of our clubs already operate recreational facilities including campgrounds at the same time ensuring the necessary land stewardship is in place. With our experience, love, and dedication to the conservation areas we steward, we are confident that we can offer a strong partnership that will achieve net benefits for recreational users, while easing financial constraints on the government in a time of severe economic uncertainty.

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Many groups and some media outlets have focused on the potential for negative impacts. Instead of arguing that this model is not a good fit for our public lands, which ultimately will lead to degradation and other negative effects, the AFGA and groups you have mentioned like *Friends of the Eastern Slopes* are proof that these types of partnerships are not only doable, but they are extremely valuable, as they increase the dedication and attachment of Albertans to their treasured public lands. By increasing the opportunities for groups like ours to partner with AEP, you are providing the framework to facilitate long lasting citizen engagement initiatives that establish a sense of value, pride and ownership of our public lands. This results in long term, boots on the ground land stewards who continue to dedicate their volunteer effort to our shared legacy of a beautiful province, offering a multitude of opportunities for all recreation users.

We look forward to discussing this plan and the opportunities it entails in detail, and to working with you on this new direction, whether as stakeholder input or formal partner. Please feel free to contact us anytime, and we will be happy to meet with you and your team.

Sincerely,

Brian Dingreville, President

Alberta Fish and Game Association

cc: Mr. Todd Zimmerling, President and CEO, Alberta Conservation Association
AFGA Executive

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