



NEWS FROM ALBERTA

President's Report

Brian Dingreville

President

The Christmas season is upon us, and my wife and I would like to extend best wishes to everyone. 2020 will be remembered as a year like no other! The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us. Organizations, including the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA), have not been immune from the out-fall of the pandemic, which is impacting all of society. We all hear about the negatives, but often forget the positives and the opportunity. Recent announcements, that successful stage-three trials of several vaccines have taken place, give everyone hope that they will soon be available to vulnerable Canadians and, indeed, all the world. While we will face challenges in the coming year, these will be overcome by working together.

It seems like only yesterday we were all enjoying the AFGA Annual Conference, hosted by the Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association, in February 2020. Then the pandemic hit, and it has not been the same since.



AFGA and its Zones and Clubs have adapted, and in-person meetings were moved to online platforms such as Zoom. How to make the most of technology is a learning curve for all of us and there will be hiccups along the way. In the end, we will be better connected, which should lead to improved communication channels with our members, particularly those in the under-50 crowd and youth who already embrace technology; they are the future of our organization.

Quarterly in-person Executive meetings moved to monthly meet-

ings facilitated through Zoom. Our Annual Wildlife Awards moved online, which included a special tribute to Jack Graham, recognizing all he gave back to our association and the wildlife in this province. AFGA introduced the monthly Hook and Bullet-in and the Social Media Weekly Wrap-Up to keep members informed, whether through e-mail, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. These forums provide news from across the outdoor community, or that which relates directly to our organization and its members.

We continue with traditional communication channels as well, such as through *Outdoor Canada West* magazine.

The COVID-19 pandemic has identified existing weaknesses in our organization, particularly financially. Fundraising and membership sales at a Club level are largely driven by in-person contacts or events. Clubs that had already embraced technology for purchase of memberships were less impacted or have even seen increases. Everyone, though, has seen event-driven revenue fall, as public health ▶

MOVING?

Please send your change of address to : 13045 156 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5V 0A2

Ph: (780) 437-2342 Email: membership@afga.org

*Please note that \$15 of your annual membership dues are allocated to *Outdoor Canada West Magazine*



orders make this type of fundraising difficult.

Provincially, AFGA has been hit hard due to a sudden dry up of grant/AGLC gaming revenue and falling membership numbers. Factors at play include the COVID-19 pandemic, but also issues from the past. The organization was faced with hard choices to survive a financial crisis with limited options during a pandemic. To tackle this, the Executive of AFGA struck a Financial Planning Advisory Committee, which I, three other members of the Executive and two staff sit on. This committee has been in touch with each other constantly since June, and reports to the Executive monthly at a minimum. Understanding our past financial situation and adopting a modern area/project/program-based accounting system that could provide monthly reporting of the financial health of the organization was step one. Fortunately, our new Executive Director, with support from the Senior Executive, had already embarked on this project with help provided by the Alberta Conservation Association.

What was identified proved to be complex and required much evaluation of our financial processes. This led to the ability to develop a business plan that was forward thinking and considered many options and paths. A provisional budget was developed, and various scenarios related to funding were modelled. Through a combination of major expenditure reductions, membership affiliation fee increases and borrowing to fund restructuring costs and meet operational cash flow, the Executive identified that restructuring was possible. This, however, would require the support of Clubs and their members. The first step involving the membership was through the Call of a Special General Meeting (SGM) on Oct. 15, 2020,

where the vote showed an 87.6% support for a membership affiliation fee increase. Another SGM for Nov. 23, 2020, related to "authorization to borrow" will take place, which is the next cog in moving ahead with restructuring. Provided the vote is in favour of borrowing on Nov. 23, 2020, five committees have been struck with members from across the organization that will help with the focus and priorities of a restructured organization.

One of the positive outfalls of the COVID-19 pandemic is the renewed interest and involvement of society in outdoor pastimes, including hunting and fishing. Hunting and sportfishing licence sales are up significantly, which includes many of those new to these sports. This is a great opportunity for AFGA to not only increase its membership base, but also gain support for its many endeavours, including such programs as the Wildlife Trust Fund, which benefits all Albertans.

While there has been criticism that there was a lack of communication to the membership through this time frame, without understanding our financial situation, creating a business plan and being able to present a plan supported by a provisional budget that could move us forward, it would have led to even further confusion. How to communicate effectively with a diverse membership will be one of the major tasks that the Association will need to tackle as part of restructuring. One must recognize that steps had to be taken that began near the start of the pandemic to reduce expenditures.

Today, the organization has only two staff, down from five only a few short months ago. This does create capacity issues and your support and understanding are needed if the organization is to emerge on the other side, both stronger and with a renewed

focus and vision. This is paramount so that the AFGA can meet the challenges of the future and continue to be the voice for the next generation of anglers, hunters and responsible firearm owners.

Representing the AFGA on the Livingstone Porcupine Hills, Bob Creek and Castle Management Plans and the Lease Holder's Association, meetings have been ongoing despite the pandemic and this information has been shared with the Executive, as well as Zone Directors. Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to attend a few Club meetings in the south, as well as a Zone 1 and Zone 3 meeting. I have spoken to Travis Ripley with AEP and, at this time, we are in the process of setting up a Zoom meeting to take place in the early part of December, which I will fill everyone in on in the next issue. The Senior Executive did meet in the latter part of October to go over issues related to communications that some members have identified, and this highlights why positive change in a restructured AFGA is essential.

While there is no immediate end to the pandemic that is gripping the entire country and world, this does not mean there is not hope. The same goes for the future of the AFGA, which relies on the support and volunteer commitment of its members across the province. We are in this together and will come out the other side renewed and better!

I do hope everyone is keeping healthy and are able to continue to be involved with family and many other day-to-day activities. We are fortunate as so much of our lives revolve around the great outdoors where so many activities can take place in a relatively safe manner during the pandemic. 🐦



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your AFGA!

Delinda Ryerson

Executive Director

Before a year ends and a new one begins, I like to spend time reflecting on accomplishments and lessons learned from the past year, as well as my intentions for the upcoming year, both personally and professionally.

This past year has certainly had its fair share of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with camps, fundraising events, banquets, conferences and meetings having to be cancelled. I am proud to declare that when the going gets tough, the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) meets it head on and keeps going strong!

The AFGA accomplished a great deal this year, despite the pandemic. The Executive struck a Financial Planning Committee that did the work necessary to obtain a better understanding of our financials, and we've implemented a much more modern and professional accounting system. We have drafted a forward-thinking business plan, and we are working toward a sustainable revenue model.

I'm also happy to tell you of the monumental enhancements we have made to our membership program. We are now at a point that if the membership submission process is adhered to and the Club rosters are completed properly, what used to take weeks now takes minutes for us to upload into our membership database.

Our communications with our membership and society as a whole has improved dramatically. We have a monthly e-mail newsletter that goes out to all AFGA members, that we recently named the Hook & Bullet-in; we post on all three of our social media



networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) daily, and we collate the previous weeks' social media posts into the Social Media Weekly Wrap-up for those Clubs and Life Members that are not on social media, so they don't miss out. Additionally, we are seen as a significant stakeholder by the Government of Alberta, as we have been asked for input and quotes on press releases more now than ever before.

Our Wildlife Trust Fund Program is going strong, as we have acquired several properties in 2020 and have plans already in place to acquire more in 2021. The AFGA Environment Chair has been busy with some of our other partner organizations to protect the Raven River from threats of gravel development. Our Pronghorn Corridor Enhancement Program, complete with COVID-19 protocols, continued to work hard replacing traditional barbed wire fencing with pronghorn-friendly fencing, thereby removing pronghorn movement barriers from many parts of the southern Alberta landscape.

Like many other in-person events,

the AFGA Wildlife Awards banquet had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, so we adapted by creating a video celebrating the diversity and excellence of the wildlife in Alberta, and all of the 2019 award winner's accomplishments. We have been told by numerous award recipients that the photographic award plaques they received this year are the nicest plaques they have ever seen. This special commemorative video also celebrates the life and importance of Mr. Jack Graham to the AFGA. You can view this video on our website from the Wildlife Awards tab.

Many of the recent changes made to hunting and fishing regulations were the result of resolutions made by AFGA members. Due in large part to AFGA recommendations, there is now a Sandhill Crane hunt in Alberta, the use of pack dogs is now permitted in some areas, wider implementation of Sunday hunting, and off-highway vehicle restrictions have been lifted in some areas. Other examples of AFGA-supported changes include upgrades to fish hatcheries, increases in fish stocking rates and youth being able to hunt game birds at 10 years of age and big game at 12.

For me, the most rewarding milestone from 2020 was the amazing support we received from our membership during the two Special General Meetings and Special Resolution votes! I look forward to the increased involvement by our membership in 2021, through the five volunteer committees that have been struck, as we continue to be the voice of hunters and anglers in Alberta.

I hope you and your family enjoy a wonderful Christmas season and an even better new year! 🐦



Past President's Report

Doug Butler

Past President

As much as I hate to see time go by, I'm sure we're all glad 2020 is ending and can only hope for an end to the pandemic in this upcoming year. A seemingly endless amount of free time this year did allow for many to enjoy the outdoors and, hopefully, most realized how valuable the freedom we have to hunt and fish is, and basically see how great nature really is.

Your Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) endured its hardships with the lockdown, as we just couldn't get out to the functions that we are accustomed to. We will thrive again, but we really need the support of our membership and all outdoor enthusiasts. The Clubs out there must work hard to renew and increase memberships. To all the members, please make a point of renewing for yourself and encourage others to do so.

The price of a membership is small potatoes for the value you get. It compares to a box of ammo or bait, and the work done by AFGA allows you to use that ammo or bait in many ways that wouldn't be there without the work done by your organization. We haven't sold ourselves very well, but your membership has allowed us to complete many conservation projects and to lobby our governments to the benefit of the outdoor community.

Many of our resolutions, which we take to government, have changed regulations to benefit us all. Some examples are the Sandhill Crane season, the use of pack dogs in WMU 400 series and the OHV firearm restriction removal in WMU 300 series. Then there's our push for the Drummond Trail, the Raven River, and the list goes



on. We were instrumental behind the improvement and expansion of the fish hatcheries, the fish stocking expansion, not to mention the walleye harvest now allowed. Being able to take our youth, as young as 10 years old, hunting, and to even hunt on Sundays is because of the AFGA. We have representation on over 30 wildlife committees in Alberta and the Fish and Wildlife department take us very seriously simply because of our membership.

This list could go on and on, but I just want to enforce the point that our use of the outdoors is strongly improved because of our conservation organization. Our antelope corridor project has greatly improved our prairie areas for wildlife, and of course our Wildlife Trust Fund habitat program gives you thousands of acres of prime habitat for your outdoor use. Our youth programs and camps, and our Outdoor Women camps and Ladies Leagues, open many opportunities for new users of the outdoors.

From birdhouses to tree planting, our projects are too numerous to include all, but my point is that we need you, the member! Another benefit is the endless friendships developed by being a member, as we all know the outdoor community is made of the best people there are. This photo shows a couple of your past Presidents helping with the snow goose population problem we have!

With still so many unknowns, we don't know what this upcoming year will bring. However, life in the outdoor community will go on and always needs our guidance. I hope you had a very enjoyable fall season and are ready for some hardwater fishing. There are activities year-round to enjoy and I'm positive your nature experience has been enhanced by the work of the AFGA. Even in these times, your AFGA Executive has your back and continues to work on your behalf.

So, until next time, straight shooting and tight lines! 🦅



1st Vice-President's Report

Ian Stuart

1st Vice-president

As this is written in November, one has to try and look ahead, as well as report on the last couple of months. Ratification of the motion to increase affiliation fees at a Special General Meeting held on Oct. 15, combined with borrowing against the building while we absorb restructuring costs, provides a path to survival if members and clubs continue to support the efforts of AFGA for "the conservation and utilization of fish and wildlife and to protect and enhance the habitat they depend on." (AFGA's mission statement.) In the future, we should (and need to!) have many more members than we do. Going forward, we have to find ways of attracting more outdoors enthusiasts to hold up the AFGA umbrella, ideally through existing or new affiliated clubs. We also have to consider how to capitalize on the opportunity to grow direct memberships in the large areas of the province where there are currently no active affiliated clubs. Hopefully, some creative ideas will come forth from the recently announced Governance and Membership Committees, and the Focus and Priorities Committee will help us become more focused and therefore more effective.

Speaking of "holding up the AFGA umbrella," AFGA affiliated clubs that have in the past or might consider a two-tier membership, whereby they have club members (by whatever terminology) that are not AFGA members, need to consider the risk this places the club, its directors and officers, and by extension the AFGA as a whole. It is very clear from correspondence received from our insurance carrier that



AMMO	
WIN 243/100 PPSP	38.45 G
Sub Total	38.45
GST	1.92
NRA	0.00
Total	40.37
Cash Total	40.35
Credit	40.37

in event of a claim, the insurance company would have a very valid argument to deny the claim based on being exposed to more risk than premiums had been paid for. Over and above that, such a practice amounts to full AFGA members subsidising other club members, and it confers a disadvantage on the members that do pay their way when it comes to voting delegate numbers. Per (existing) AFGA bylaw 6.6, clubs are entitled to two voting delegates for the first 100 (AFGA) members or fraction thereof. Thus, a club with only 20 members paying AFGA affiliation fees would have the same voting power as

a club with 100 members paying their way, and this is further escalated to the disadvantage of larger clubs due to the sliding scale of voting delegates.

No one likes price escalation, certainly me included. As explained extensively in the materials that have been provided, the recently approved affiliation fee increase is necessary (on top of the significant staff and other spending reductions that have already been implemented) due to a combination of unforeseen circumstances and our failure to sustainably fund the organization over several years. I am fully responsible for my part in accepting the prior funding status quo for too long.

However, the value of the AFGA is still clear to me, based on what we have been able to achieve, and it is a small price to pay to have an organization that has a seat at the table with government. While I always encourage all of us as individuals to write to our MLAs and MPs when we have concerns, as individuals we have significantly less influence than we do collectively as Alberta's largest conservation organization, and that is the single biggest value. As bonuses, the affiliation fee is less than the newsstand price of this magazine, and the 10% Marks discount by itself often covers my AFGA and local club fee. When one considers other costs such as fuel, gear, licences, etc., AFGA membership is a small fraction. The attached image is a recent purchase of inexpensive ammunition. While I do not shoot that particular rifle much, the price increase from the last box I bought pales in comparison to the necessary AFGA affiliate fee increase!

As I mentioned in my last report, the financial pressures faced by the pro- ▶



2nd Vice-President's Report

Matt Zazula

2nd Vice-president

vincial government will tempt economic development over habitat protection, and there are already renewed rumblings of cervid harvest preserves, increased coal development, etc., that will require close scrutiny. While we all recognize the need for jobs, AFGA needs to be there to provide balance and advocate for the habitat that wildlife depends on.

A number of wildlife management plans are up for renewal, and I recently sat in on workshops for the bighorn sheep and mule deer management plans. Hunting Chair, Jim Clarke, is our lead on these and will report further; I am there in an alternate role. It is a slow process that is just getting started in both cases, but I will give the government credit for trying to use structured decision making and listening to various perspectives rather than the loudest voice in the room. I am a bit concerned with heavy reliance on modeling of complex ecosystems, but, as much as possible, they appear to be at least trying to put fact over emotion.

I'm hearing a lot of anecdotal reports of higher-than-usual moose and elk harvest, and being fortunate enough to require the services of a wild game processor due to warm weather and distance from home, where I usually do all of my own processing, I can attest that there was a steady stream of intakes on different occasions. Perhaps the COVID-19 situation enabled higher-than-usual effort, but the data that is yielded from mandatory harvest reporting, which also captures effort to some degree, will be superior to speculation and will enable better wildlife management decisions. 🐾

I hope everyone had a good Christmas, and you were able to get together with family and friends as much as possible.

The various committees formed to help restructure the AFGA have been hard at work. Building on the work initially done by your AFGA Executive, these committees are made up of a wide representation from AFGA membership. Everyone on the committees brings with them a range of experience and ideas. Topics being discussed include bylaw and policy changes, annual general meeting (AGM) planning, finances, focus and priorities and membership. Feedback from the club and individual level is always welcome. It will, of course, take time for the various recommendations to be finalized and ratified by the membership. We really hope the results from the committee work will give the AFGA a new look and a healthy future.

Working through some of our challenges at the AFGA, one thing that struck me is that any club's objects and bylaws should be reviewed on a regular basis. Most bylaws state that they can only be changed by members at the AGM. Since most clubs hold their AGMs early in the new year, this might be a good time to review your own club bylaws to ensure they are current and relevant. Bylaws need to stay current as things change. If they get stale, it can lead to problems when new situations arise. For example, do your bylaws state that AGMs must be held in person, or do they allow for electronic or



virtual meetings? This is especially important in today's world, with in-person meetings being difficult to hold. When are membership fees discussed? If they are determined at the AGM, and the AGM is in the new

year, it might be difficult to change fees in time for that current year. Are your bylaws in step with the requirements of the *Societies Act*, or do they need revising? Club bylaw review comes up on the agenda at a club AGM, but I think often it is just given a quick look over without much thought. I highly recommend that if you are on your club or Zone Executive or a long-time member, look over your bylaws to see if they need any updating. It might save you some problems later.

How was your hunting season? I've heard that elk and deer hunters, especially on the prairies, had some good luck last fall. I haven't heard much about moose hunter success, and I am curious if people have found populations recovering in some areas.

I spent five days in the mountains on my first sheep hunt last fall. Timing wasn't great for hunting, as those days at the end of September were unseasonably hot. It was a great experience. Sheep hunters are a tough lot! We camped at an elevation of 6,700 feet above sea level. Our hikes regularly took us to over 8,000 feet. Lots of it was climbing up to a ridge, glassing for a while, down to the creek bottom, across and up the next ridge to glass some more, and so on. We put around 10 to 12 kilometres a day on foot. We spotted a sub-legal ram early the first




day, so our hopes were very high. However, that was the last sheep we saw, until the drive out. Why does that figure! We did see lots of evidence of bear activity, but no bears.

We camped 20 kilometres from the staging area. On the trail out after breaking camp, we experienced some mechanical problems with one of the OHVs. Our day would have been a lot more challenging had it not been for a group of passing OHV enthusiasts. They distributed some of our load onto their machines, one pulled a quad trailer back to the staging area for us, and gave one of us a ride as well. In the end, they would accept nothing but our thanks and a handshake. "We're all outdoorspeople and hunters, and it could happen to any of us. We're glad to help out." It goes to show the bond of brotherhood that outdoorspeople share.

We saw some beautiful country, and the whole sheep hunt experience was well worth the effort, even if tags weren't filled. Thank you to AFGA 1st Vice-President Ian Stuart for taking me under his wing and introducing me to a mountain hunt. Much appreciated!

I managed to put some deer in my freezer in November, and still have a late-season cow elk draw to look after in January.

And on that note, don't forget to complete your harvest reports. These harvest and effort reports help us understand the total harvest and help gauge the animal populations. AFGA has supported implementing these reports. They are a useful tool for game management, so we should all support it. And, if you forget, it will cost you a penalty of some extra money for your wildlife certificate next year! Most reports are due by mid-March, so get them done. (There's one for walleye draws too!)

As much as anyone, I am happy to turn the last page on the 2020 calendar. I wish you and yours the best of everything in 2021. Renew your AFGA memberships. Talk a friend or two into joining. Continue to enjoy the outdoors as much as possible (ice fishing isn't so bad!) And, whatever you do, don't forget to give back to the resource whenever you can. 

Hunting Chair Report

Jim Clarke

Hunting Chair


As you read this, we've likely wrapped up most of the hunting seasons, with only the really late seasons still going. I hope everyone has found some time to get out and enjoy some time afield and add some future, fantastic meals to your table! It sure has been a different year due to all that is going on and the wacky weather!

First off, I was fortunate to be drawn for the first time ever in the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)-partnered Taber Pheasant Festival. I can't say enough good things about this event. From a very well-run registration process, the town's offer of a free bagged lunch on the Monday, hunter courtesy at sites and, of course, the ACA and the Town of Taber for their hosting, planning and execution of this event. I know it is not a small feat, especially this year. All of the extra activities were cancelled of course, but I can't help but wonder how they could even hold the event in light of the cancellation of their major fundraiser dinner. All I can say is thanks.

Meetings are continuing in the online format for now, for the sheep and mule deer groups.

For the next set of meetings, we should have some initial thoughts and proposals to review as a group. Possible plans are in place now to have a two-day meeting in December, but we'll see how that progresses.

ACA continues their effort on the wild turkey project, and we should soon know if we have the OK to proceed with some major projects on it.

Some items coming up and of concern are public access through third-party access programs, outfitter future sales of hunts to residents, and shoot farms. The AFGA Executive is still at work representing the AFGA perspectives on many issues! 





Environment Chair Report

Victor Benz

Environment Chair

It's time to update everyone on my biggest file, the North Raven River. Alberta's largest white zone, spring-fed river is facing possible long-term damage due to potential below-water-table aggregate extraction. The AFGA, in partnership with the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC), co-operatively own and/or manage seven conservation areas along the North Raven River alone. This AFGA initiative has always been in consultation with all our partners.

It all started with an invitation to an information session last year at the Butte Community Centre, just above the North Raven River. About 30 people gathered to discuss the upcoming Border Paving Open House, its background and action we might take. A greater broadcast of the open house to our own networks was the primary action taken.

The Border Paving Open House was held at the end of November 2019. Some 140 people attended, mainly concerned citizens, representatives of various organizations such as ACA, TUC, AFGA and area watershed alliances. Representatives of the region's other gravel companies were also there.

The project plans that Border Paving presented, along with their consultants, were extremely general with very few specifics. Facts were few and far between. The only thing that was quite clear was that Border Paving intended to pursue below-water-table gravel extraction. The meeting attendees expressed many opinions and raised many concerns, to which Border Paving had no real answers.

Your AFGA's response was immediate. A formal AFGA letter was sent to the county in early December, concluding with, "Should Border Paving pro-

ceed with a development application, we are formally identifying the AFGA as a directly and adversely affected party and expect to be notified accordingly."

In parallel, a small group was struck to develop a report clearly stating the economic and scientific bases for our concerns. The final revised version was issued on Feb. 24, 2020: <https://www.afga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/North-Raven-River-A-World-Class-Treasure-R1.pdf>.

Our initial intent was to make a presentation to Clearwater County council in early February. That proposed presentation can be found here: <https://www.afga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/North-Raven-River-A-Treasure.pdf>.



In late January, the county replied to our request to appear before Council, denying the request on the basis that it "... is not the proper forum or context for addressing your proposed presentation..."

As we reviewed our options, we felt that the best one was to pursue a Land Use Bylaw Amendment, as per the county's own bylaws. The COVID-19 pandemic broke upon us just as we were finalizing our initial draft and preparing to begin the landowner consultation process. All in-person meetings were off until the country developed an understanding of what it was that we were facing.

In the meantime, we fine-tuned our proposal documentation.

By early August, it was obvious that the initial pandemic impact in rural Alberta was small, very localized and primarily an urban issue. Clearwater County had not seen a new case in months. We resumed our landowner consultation process. By mid-September, we had met with representatives of 26 of the 29 landowners affected by our proposal, several of them multiple times. Over 70 % supported the concept of our proposal, as long as their specific concerns were addressed.

On Sept. 23, we made our Land Use Bylaw Amendment submission to the Clearwater County Planning Department. Here is a summary of that document: <https://www.afga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-0924-Basic-Public-Submission.pdf>.

Clearwater County was also in the final stages of initial public input to their Municipal Plan Review Process, to which we also contributed.

Through October we worked with the Clearwater County Planning Department to ensure our Land Use Bylaw Amendment submission met the requirements as laid out in their Land Use Bylaw.

We expect to be able to formally submit a finished document sometime in the first week of November 2020.

Watch the AFGA website to stay up to date on this topic: <https://www.afga.org/north-raven-river-project/>.

In summary, our position is clear. Clearwater County needs to prioritize the long-term interests of the stakeholders, all Albertans, over the short-term interests of a few shareholders.

In closing, I wish to extend special thank-yous to Michael Short of Let's Go Outdoors, Marcel Gour and Randy McGhee of the Lazy M Lodge, AFGA member Dean Baayens and the Friends of the Raven River Facebook page, and to my erstwhile partner through all this process, Kevin Gardiner of the Alberta Conservation Association. 🐦



Fishing Chair Report

Darryl Smith

Fishing Chair

Our daily lives continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. There appears to be hope on the horizon, as effective vaccines may become available in the first half of 2021. The pandemic has changed the world, and while we adjust to a “new normality” in our lives, what we have learned will mean the future will not mirror the past. A reconnection with the outdoors is one positive outcome. I hear all the time how lives have been disrupted and the difficulties and challenges this creates. For those struggling, it is up to us collectively to give and help where possible.

One way is to introduce our friends and neighbours to the great outdoors. Most in our communities today were never fortunate enough to have parents or grandparents that took them hunting or fishing at an early age. The ability to pass down these traditions and pastimes is difficult when it is no longer part of the fabric of society that has grown culturally diverse and is largely urban.

My wife and I have had our lives altered less than most because of the love of the great outdoors we share together, made even more exciting by adding a Labrador puppy to our family in July. Now that is another story! The foundation for an outdoor lifestyle was because my parents introduced me to a host of activities such as birdwatching, camping, skiing, fishing and hunting at an early age. Similarly, I was able to pass these pastimes down to my family. Think of those that live in our cities, where life centres on organized events and cultural activities that largely take place in group settings and indoors. Hunting and fishing can be pursued safely during this time by taking a few



basic precautions. There is not an easier or better way to introduce our neighbours and friends to the great outdoors than to take them ice fishing.

After years of stagnant or declining participation, this period during the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a resurgence in hunting and angling across North America. The dividend is that this should lead to fish and wildlife management remaining a priority within government as it is important socially, economically and environmentally. This also bodes well for the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA), where growing our membership base is critical if we are to remain the voice of anglers, hunters and responsible firearm owners in the province. When you take your neighbours ice fishing, remember to ask them to become involved and support your local club. If we all did this, we could double our membership in a few months!

I recognize it is a confusing world and find the angling community does not generally understand the roles and focus of the various organizations out there, or even government play in relation to our fish and wildlife resource. When talking with an angler casting

from a dock on East Dollar Lake, I asked if he was a member of the AFGA. He replied no, but that he was a member of the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA). He then queried me, was the AFGA not government? While I recognize that our members know the difference, this does not extend as far as one might think. This is a critical challenge that must be addressed if we are to grow our membership base within the angling community.

In 2017, the ACA conducted an *Outdoor Recreational Activity Public Survey*. One of the major findings was that “recognition of active conservation groups in Alberta was found to be low, with 61% of Albertans unable to name a single conservation organization active in the province.” Ducks Unlimited Canada was identified by 26% of the respondents whereas the AFGA came in a distant second at 7%.


This highlights why it is important to reinforce the AFGA priorities and focus, related to fisheries in Alberta. On your behalf, we have been advocating on critical issues to ensure the angling community is represented in the many forums where we are often the only voice representing sportfishing. The details can be found in presentations, articles, documents, policies, position statements and resolutions that have formed the cornerstone of our approach to represent you. Unlike many organizations which have a limited focus, such as just habitat, AFGA has a much wider perspective. With a broad focus there can be challenges, as even within our membership there are different opinions. We must individually get past focusing on a single element where we might disagree, as it is the overall collective direction that is the most important. The chart below lays ▶



out AFGA priorities and how they are interrelated.

My biggest concern is how silent the reconfigured Fish and Wildlife department within Alberta Environment and Parks has become since last spring. Does this mean, despite the gains that have been made in the last couple of years related to openness, transparency and meaningful consultations, that internally there are drivers, forces and ideol-

ogy that are moving the pendulum back to the past under the guise of restructuring and the COVID-19 pandemic?

Being active is critical in the winter for many reasons, including our overall health. Time to get out there to get some fresh air and perhaps catch a fish or two for the table! Keep safe and introduce a friend or neighbour to the Alberta Fish and Game Association and all it has to offer. 

Program Chair Report


Ingrid Horner

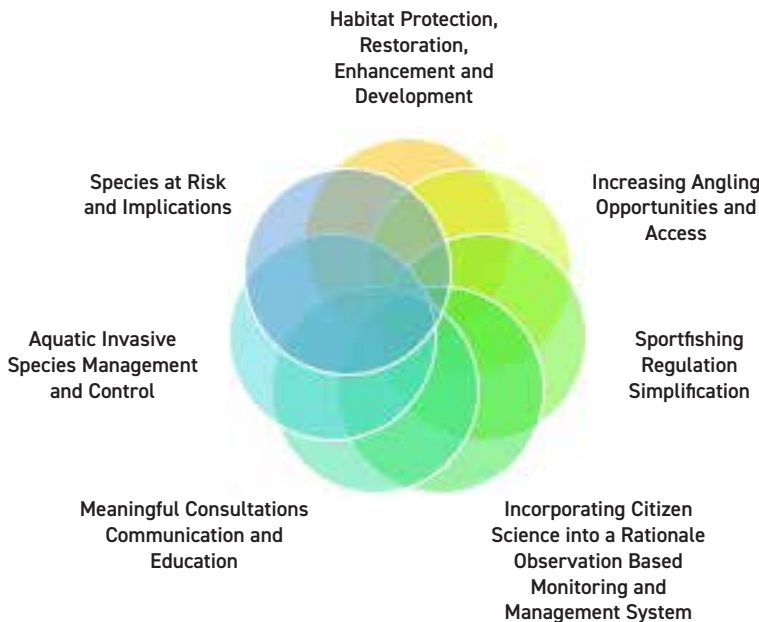
Program Chair



Hello to all of our Alberta Fish and Game members. Due to the restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our programs have been postponed. Although my mom, Annette, has never been busier, keeping our mask challenge alive, with no plans of slowing down! She made so many masks, she had to get her sewing machine tuned up because it just was not used to having to work so hard! Annette and her small crew of volunteers have made more than 2,000 masks, most of which have been donated to schools, a women's shelter and Fish and Game friends.

Annette tells us that sewing the masks have given her a great sense of pride and purpose, and that this project really makes her feel like she is contributing and giving back to the community.

Thanks go out to all of you that have donated fabric and other supplies to this project! 





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ZONE REPORTS

ZONE 1 REPORT

Glenn Heather

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES have been ever-more rewarding; quiet times, peacefully walking in the field hunting for birds and big game. On these days, we can forget this virus called COVID-19. It has been a normal fall for hunting, fishing and outdoor adventures in this world during non-normal times.

Based on some feedback, the hunting and fishing has been quite good in most areas of Zone 1. I'm hoping you all had a very successful, fun-filled fall season.

Now for updates for Zone 1, the antelope fencing project was successful in southern Alberta. This fencing was completed without any issues and many more acres are now antelope friendly.

I know some Zone 1 clubs are starting to hold face-to-face meetings and even the odd gun show. I have spoken to a few clubs and recognize the dilemmas and challenges that clubs will be facing to try to hold their normal events, early in 2021. Right now, we recognize it is complicated to try to hold an event while upholding Alberta Health Services guidelines. I am confident that, thinking outside the box, a few clubs will find a way. With the Zone 1 AGM face-to-face typically being held in August and the requirement that resolutions must be held at a Zone 1 meeting, only one resolution was voted on. Please continue to send me your resolutions, we will look at

them and vote on them in the spring meeting, then submit them in 2021.

Your AFGA, as you know, is going through a major transition. Your vote of acceptance for the required membership fee increase was a big deal. Numerous information sessions, with a few special resolution votes, were required for AFGA to move forward. I truly believe we the membership will have the opportunity to look at AFGA and recalibrate our future, creating an even better AFGA for us Albertans.

With the forming of numerous committees to get feedback and developing focus areas by the membership, there is huge potential to gain momentum and even more members. Please stay tuned for AFGA updates and correspondence and sign up to be part of the solution and our future

ZONE 2 REPORT

Deb Clarke

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Moving to a (more so than not) digital world has happened sooner rather than later for most of us, due to the pandemic. It is amazing how many things a person can do, buy, search, read, learn how to build, etc. via the Internet. Having to embrace technology isn't all bad, as it's opened the door for many to stay connected and converse online with family, friends and others too.

Zone 2 had two virtual meetings this past fall, one on Sept. 27 prior to the Special Resolution Open House to address member questions and con-

cerns, and another on Oct. 25, which was our fall Zone meeting. Both meetings were very successful, we stayed in tune with the health services guidelines, attendees were able to attend from the comfort of their home, time required for the meetings was reduced, no travel and there was still time left in the day for other things. Future meetings may be held in a similar fashion. There are also a number of clubs within the Zone holding meetings using a virtual format.

Fortunately, even with reduced participant numbers, the pronghorn fencing projects were still a go this past summer and a few volunteers from Zone 2 clubs were able to help out.

Seeking project funding? Here are three places to look into:

1. Visit the ACA site and download the appropriate ACA Conservation, Community and Education Grants application form at <http://www.ab-conservation.com/grants/aca-conservation-community-and-education-grants/>. Applications are only accepted between Jan. 1 to 22, 2021. Please ensure that all sections of the application are fully completed.
2. The Minister's Special Licence Grants are administered by the AFGA and a program advisory committee. A 60% portion of funds raised through the special licence sales is designated for management, habitat enhancement, etc. for each of sheep, mule deer and elk. Have a great project proposal? The grant application is available on the AFGA website and the deadline ▶

is the end of January 2021.

3. Cabela's Canada Outdoor Fund – Grants are processed in March and September each year and there could be opportunities to obtain project funding for a variety of requirements. Information is available at <https://www.cabelas.ca/pages/outdoorfund>. If you need assistance or have questions, do not hesitate to contact Cabela's for clarification.

Deadline for fish and wildlife entry form (and photos) submission to the AFGA for the annual provincial

awards is Feb. 28 each year. Forms can be obtained by visiting the AFGA website or contacting Head Office. Forms must be filled in and completed correctly (i.e., where taken, full name, address and phone number of each entrant, contact info of the official measurer, etc.) or the entry will be disqualified. No problem if someone isn't a member, entries are also accepted from non-members too.

2021 Fish and Game Club measuring days may still be a go if health services guidelines permit it. Banquets, however, could be a different story and

some may be postponed or cancelled this year. Search club websites and Facebook pages to find details regarding dates/times or contact me for info.

If you are not receiving the AFGA Social Media Weekly Wrap-up and the AFGA Hook and Bullet-in, send an email to office@afga.org and request to be on the distribution list. Despite the issues the Association has faced, a lot still gets done and those accomplishments are highlighted in the messages. Do you have a good news story, project, event or information you want share? Let the office know so it can be included in the digital bulletins.

As mentioned in my last report, whether you are a hunter, angler, outdoor recreationist or someone who enjoys archery and shooting sports, we all have a common ground and meet somewhere in the middle when it comes to conservation.

Please continue to support your local Fish and Game Club, purchase your annual membership early in the year so you don't miss out on receiving the *Outdoor Canada West* magazine, third-party liability and search/rescue insurance coverage and being part of a great organization. Remember, numbers count when it comes to issues and concerns and dealing with government and other organizations. Your support is welcomed and needed!

ZONE 4 REPORT

Faran Schaber

AS I WRITE this, it is the first week of November; hunting season has been open for months, and I have just finished combining and drying the grain from earlier in the week.

The pandemic is on the rise again, but I can finally make my way out hunting for the last two weeks of November. Hopefully you have had some luck during the season.

On the AFGA front, you are all aware



The AFGA needs YOU - Join the Team!

Have you ever wanted to be more involved with the Alberta Fish and Game Association?

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Fill out the **AFGA Committee Volunteer Application**, on the **Membership** tab of our website (afga.org)

Send your completed forms to office@afga.org today!

of our restructuring. I will not go into this, as I am sure others will be passing on information.

With Tek Coal, there have been trails opened up that have been closed for some time. We will continue to work with them now that the mine is closed.

The AFGA committee representatives continue to work with their respective committees as meetings are planned through an online Zoom format, so please remember that the AFGA is working on many fronts on everyone's behalf.

ZONE 5 REPORT


Robyn Butler

AS WE LEAVE 2020 behind us, I sure hope health and prosperity are with us in 2021.

Life has been more difficult, but we have to find ways to push forward, now even more than ever.

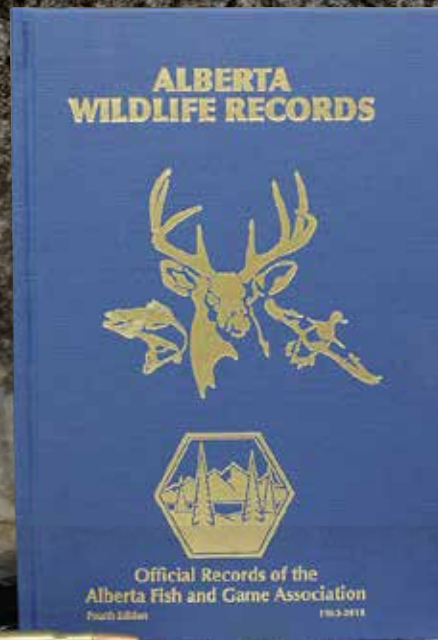
Without club or zone meetings this year, communication has been a problem. It's so important now for our clubs to make it through and to continue to support the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) as best we can. Membership fees have increased, but it's still a small price to pay for our voice with government. I'm urging all clubs, and especially our Zone 5 clubs, to make a big effort to keep your memberships up.

We can get through this dilemma. I realize there are some who have to count their pennies more in this situation, but the cost of a membership in this organization will more than give you your pennies' worth. The great outdoors is not going away, so neither is AFGA, and with your support will flourish again.

I hope you and your families had some great outdoor time this past fall and you plan on getting out there to drop a line through the ice. 

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Alberta Fish and Game Association Annual Wildlife Awards - 2019



SPECIES	SCORE	NAME	SPONSOR
BIG GAME WINNERS - 2019			
Typical Whitetail Deer	176 6/8 inches	Jesse Ahlgrim	Stony Plain Fish & Game/ Wabamun Gun Club
Non-typical Whitetail Deer	202 1/8 inches	Brice Lakevold	Sherwood Park Fish & Game Association
Typical Mule Deer	194 inches	Clayton Smith	Red Deer Fish & Game Association
Non-typical Mule Deer	236 1/8 inches	Chad Smith	Devon Fish & Game Association
Typical American Elk	336 1/8 inches	Trevor Arthur	Rimby Fish & Game Association
Non-typical American Elk	355 inches	Jesse James Knapp	Millet Fish & Game Association
Canada Moose	202 3/8 inches	Mark H Kingdon	Whitecourt Fish & Game Association
Pronghorn Antelope	80 inches	Brad McPhee	Foremost Fish & Game Association
Bighorn Sheep	180 4/8 inches	Barry Thimer	Innisfree & District Fish & Game Association
Rocky Mountain Goat	47 4/8 inches	Matthew Leriger	Picture Butte Fish & Game Association
Cougar	15 9/16 inches	Jesse A MacDonnell	Fort Macleod Fish & Game Association
Wolf	15 10/16 inches	Stephen Loitz	Fort Saskatchewan Fish & Game Association
Black Bear	21 3/16 inches	Bryan Atkinson	Dunvegan Fish & Game Association
Largest Big Game - Archery (Canada Moose)	183 1/8 inches	Riley Schaffrick	Sundre Fish & Game Association
Largest Big Game - Blackpowder (Typical Mule Deer)	165 5/8 inches	Brad Stenger	Alberta Black Powder Association
Non-current Big Game (Non-Typical Whitetail 2011)	203 6/8 inches	Jason DeJong	Camrose Fish & Game Association
Master Big Game (Typical Whitetail)	176 6/8 inches	Jesse Ahlgrim	Edmonton Fish & Game Association
Chase Heck Memorial Award - Largest Big Game by a Youth (Moose)	183 1/8 inches	Riley Schaffrick	The Chase Heck Family
FISH WINNERS - 2019			
Arctic Grayling	39.05 cm	Jeromy Mortenson	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Brook Trout	39.37 cm	Jacey Dongworth	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Brown Trout	72.71 cm	Jeromy Mortenson	Dickson Fish and Game Association



SPECIES	SCORE	NAME	SPONSOR
Bull Trout	86.50 cm	Kyle Stevens	Rocky Mountain House Fish & Game Association
Burbot	83.82 cm	Mac Jensen	Willingdon & District Fish & Game Association
Cutthroat Trout	48.26 cm	AJ Alberda	Lacombe Fish & Game Association
Golden Trout	28.58 cm	Jeromy Mortenson	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Goldeye	49.53 cm	Joe Safar	Lethbridge Fish & Game Association
Lake Sturgeon	147.32 cm	Alyna Krawetz	Alberta Fish & Game Association
Lake Trout	90.17 cm	Dinos Lazaridis	Morinville Fish & Game Association
Lake Whitefish	61.00 cm	Doug McIntyre	Edmonton Oldtimers' Fishing Club
Mooneye	30.50 cm	Kieran Krawetz	Alberta Fish & Game Association
Northern Pike	121.92 cm	Arnold Winkler	Vegreville Wildlife Federation
Rainbow Trout	75.00 cm	Jim Clarke	Beaver River Fish & Game Association
Rocky Mountain Whitefish	46.00 cm	Jimmy Yu	Ponoka Fish & Game Association
Sauger	41.91 cm	Jeromy Mortenson	Southern Alberta Outdoorsmen
Tiger Trout	48.26 cm	Jacques Richard	Alberta Fish & Game Association
Walleye	83.80 cm	Mike Engler	Beaver River Fish & Game Association
Yellow Perch	38.10 cm	Laurie Semotiuk	St. Albert & District Fish & Game Association
Master Fish (Goldeye)	49.53 cm	Joe Safar	Sarcee Fish & Game Association
Largest Trout Taken with a F ly (Bull Trout)	86.50 cm	Kyle Stevens	Edmonton Trout Fishing Club
BIRD WINNERS - 2019			
Canada Goose	6.48 kg	Dan Mosier	Provost & District Fish & Game Association
Hungarian Partridge	0.44 kg	Rylan Fedorak	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Mallard Duck	1.94 kg	Bob Mascarin	Leduc Fish & Game Association
Ruffed Grouse	1.09 kg	Arnold Winkler	Barrhead Fish & Game Association
Sharp-tailed Grouse	1.16 kg	Bob Mascarin	Narrow Lake Conservation Centre
Snow Goose	3.89 kg	Dave MacKenzie	Medicine Hat Fish & Game Association
Spruce Grouse	0.59 kg	Daymian Morin	Hussar Fish & Game Association
White-Fronted Goose	3.76 kg	Bob Mascarin	Wheatland Conservation & Wildlife Association
Merriam's Turkey	24.20 cm	Caleb Lawrence	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Pheasant	107.00 cm	Andrew Czar Toone	Calgary Fish & Game Association
PHOTOGRAPHY WINNERS - 2019			
Wildlife Photography		Dan Mosier	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Scenic Photography		Melissa Poirier	Lloydminster & District Fish & Game Association

Check out our Wildlife Awards video on our website at www.afga.org, under the Events tab!



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