



NEWS FROM ALBERTA

President's Report

Brian Dingreville

President

I hope this report finds everyone safe and healthy at this very difficult time.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) executive have held a number of Zoom meetings over the past several weeks, and will continue to do so, to deal with the day-to-day challenges we are facing at this time. Although our office is operating with a reduced staff, we are working hard to address any questions or concerns as quickly as possible and are available by phone or e-mail. Our goal is to implement safe practices so that we can reopen the office for membership needs and licence sales. Sadly, we have had to cancel our provincial Wildlife Awards Banquet, which had always been well attended. Our Minister's Special License raffle tickets are still available by phoning the office, and raffle tickets on the Honda quad are available either online or by phone as well. Please note that the draw for the quad has been postponed until Sept. 16. I personally have a few books of quad raffle tickets to sell if anyone in this area would like some.

Most government agencies are still doing day-to-day work either by conference call or Zoom meetings. I per-

sonally have participated in a number of calls dealing with the management plans for Livingstone-Porcupine Hills, Beaver Creek-Cypress Hills, Bob Creek Wildland Park and the Castle Parks. These issues have been put on a temporary hold until things quiet down, but with the help from a number of people who are involved, we are still presenting our thoughts to the powers that be. Near the beginning of April, Blaine Calkins, member of parliament for Red Deer-Lacombe, arranged a conference call that included numerous groups from across Canada and how they were dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly, I feel it was more of a vent rather than a solution call from those that were involved. Todd Zimmerling, president and CEO of the Alberta Conservation Association, made an excellent point with regard to our governments needing to provide better direction on what the public can and cannot do while participating in outdoor activities.

Social media has been an excellent form of communication for those who do participate, offering a number of different topics. I would hope for those who are involved, that you are finding this a good method of staying connected. In these troubling times, I hope

you are still enjoying the outdoors, social distancing in mind, as I feel keeping yourself physically active is critical. Hopefully you have obtained your AFGA membership, so you are able to continue receiving all the benefits that membership to AFGA provides you.

Thankfully, Andrea and I live on an acreage and we have been able to keep ourselves busy with numerous jobs that I have put off over the years. A good friend asked me a few weeks ago how I was doing and if I was keeping busy, to which I replied I should be good until 2022 with all the things that need to be done. Keeping with social distancing, I also have been able to ride most weekends either in the mountains or on the land of a few friends. The snow pack in the mountains was substantial, but it has melted very quickly. Sadly, as most people who have older parents would understand, keeping those who are the most susceptible to illness safe has been a bit of a challenge. This past April, we lost one of AFGA's life members and past presidents, Jack Graham, who we all came to love and admire over the years for all that he has done. You will be sadly missed, Jack! Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife, Phyllis. Rest in peace, Jack. 🐦

MOVING?

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



Past President's Report

Doug Butler

Past President

Wow! What a spring. I wrote my last report in late February, when this pandemic hadn't hit yet, and it came out in print in May, when the pandemic was all that has happened since! Now I'm writing in early May for a publication date of early July, and I sure hope the reverse has happened!

After setting up the Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show booth and being there for the opening on March 12, we were told to shut down at 4 p.m. and go home. This was a big hit for the AFGA, as was the cancellation of the Wildlife Awards Banquet, the spring zone meetings, all the club meetings, and the list goes on. We are working hard to make sure the AFGA comes back stronger than ever when the new normal arrives.

Of course, everyone's safety is our top priority and, doing what we had to do, that's just the way it was. Being stuck in isolation with family members wasn't the end of the world, though. Late March did allow for some great, season-ending ice fishing, April was a great time for some very successful shed antler hunting, and the end of April allowed for some trapping (as Robyn's report shows.) Once the snow finally left, some great walks in the bush really showed the tranquility of nature, as COVID-19 didn't interfere with her. The snow goose spring season was another opportunity, and of course spring bear hunting was as per normal. My neighbour took his young lad to his tree stand and, as the picture shows, a great family time was the result. There were indeed many great opportunities to get involved in nature with your family.

The boat launches are opening as I write, so hopefully we can also take advantage of the start of open water fishing. Many lakes now allow for more harvest, and trout stocking took place as normal. Your hunting draws should all now be in, and, with any luck, by fall we'll be OK to resume more normal lifestyles.

The AFGA has continued to deal with government officials during the pandemic and will also be on top of things once we do get back to normal. We hope to continue a good working relationship with them, and also to get all our clubs and zones back in the loop.

Not much more to say, other than I hope all outdoorsmen and women did what they had to do, stayed safe, made the best of the situation and are now ready to proceed with the next step, whatever it may be. 🐦



Executive Director's Report

Delinda Ryerson

Executive Director

hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy in these challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic is not merely a health crisis, as it has had a ripple effect on most aspects of our lives. Although there seems to be incessant confusion, stress and anxiety during these unprecedented times, there is also an abundance of hope, collaboration and ingenuity demonstrated by people across the province, and across the globe. As we act to respond to this new global threat, many non-profit organizations are struggling with how to not only help their communities, but also trying to survive the crisis themselves.

Like most other non-profits, the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) and its affiliated clubs rely heavily on fundraising banquets, other group-oriented events, as well as casinos and raffles. Unfortunately, we are already beginning to suffer from massive declines in revenue from un-renewed memberships and by having to cancel all of our face-to-face fundraising events, group gatherings and camps. Because the vast majority of AFGA's gaming proceeds, donations and other funds go directly into our wildlife trust fund program, it is primarily only membership dues that can be used to cover the cost of the AFGA staff and operations. As we grapple to manage continuity, while reimagining ourselves to youth, and identifying new creative and innovative ways to engage our members, we prepare for the "new normal." As an organization with a 112-year history, capable of securing almost 45,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in this province, I know the AFGA will persevere and emerge

from this crisis, perhaps even stronger than it is now, but this can only happen with your help!

The AFGA continues to make this province a better place for wildlife and Albertans to live, one wildlife trust property at a time. As AFGA members, we know that that our passion is to promote, through education, advocacy and programs, the conservation and utilization of fish and wildlife, and to protect and enhance the habitats upon which




they depend, and that our collective voice on matters of concern to resident hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts is strengthened by each member. The AFGA and its affiliated clubs have always been community and volunteer-based organizations. It is now, more than ever, that we need to band together to ensure that our beloved organization can withstand the devastating impacts this pandemic is having.

I invite you to share not only your love of nature, but also of the AFGA, by

paying it forward and giving the gift of membership to others. AFGA-affiliated clubs, I encourage you to be more proactive in promoting and renewing your memberships than you may have been in the past, and to consider purchasing memberships for those who perhaps cannot afford to buy a membership as a result of COVID-19-related hardships, so they can enjoy the many benefits our membership affords. I encourage individuals to contact their local club to not only renew their membership, but also to purchase one or many memberships for new members or previous members that are currently not able to. If you are unable to get in contact with the membership chair of a local club or they cannot sell you memberships at this time, I urge you to purchase direct memberships from the AFGA website and indicate the club you belonged to previously, if you wish.

Something Brad Fenson had mentioned to me really resonated with me. Brad told me that friends of his taught their young children that if they ever found themselves lost in the outdoors, they should find someone dressed in camo and approach them for help because hunters are some of the kindest and most caring people there are. It is often in times of tragedy and crisis that true leaders become apparent. I am confident that the AFGA will remain Alberta's voice in conservation and emerge from this pandemic as the compassionate leaders and role models I know all of you to be.

Please contact the AFGA office with any questions or creative ideas to assist the AFGA through this challenging time. 



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2nd Vice-President's Report

Matt Zazula

2nd Vice-president

Wow! That's about all I can say about the past few months. I'm writing this article in late April and don't think anyone would have imagined in their wildest dreams (nightmares?) just what a horrible effect the COVID-19 pandemic would/could/did have on people. People became ill, some lost their lives, and far too many were affected by job losses, school closures and various restrictions. I hope our members and their families were able to weather the storm. The premier's announcement in late April was that a plan for recovery was in the works, including opening boat launches and provincial parks. I am really hoping that by the time you are reading this, we have come through the other side and see some major improvements.

We all did whatever was needed at the time. We limited our exposure to others, to times and places which were only necessary. We protected the elderly or those with other health issues by staying away from them. We looked after people when they couldn't get out and pick up things for themselves. And, for people in essential services, you made sure the rest of us were able to get what we needed. Your AFGA executive wasn't any different. All in-person meetings were cancelled. Zone meetings were postponed. The executive and senior executive met by conference call or video conference to address those issues which needed to be dealt with to keep our business moving.

We also recognized that in the big picture some issues were just a little less important at the time, so we set them aside until government and others were better able to address them. Rest assured that, behind the scenes, the AFGA work was still being done. And, we saw an increase in AFGA communications to members by e-mail newsletters and on our Facebook site. I think it was really good to see that information and posts. It kept us informed and gave



us a much-needed distraction.

I have seen and heard at the club level that some club memberships are down. I just want to remind you that memberships are the lifeblood of our organization. Let's reach out to those members who haven't had a chance to renew yet and ask them to come back. And let's not forget to continue to try to get new people to join. We do a lot of great work, and we want that work to be able to continue.

One thing I heard a lot during the challenges of this spring was that so many of us were happy to have a good supply of wild game in our freezers. There was talk of meat shortages in some stores, and while it didn't get quite as bad as

it could have been, I saw and heard so many hunters letting people know that they were well stocked. If anyone was in need, the offers were there. This theme of hunters helping others and sharing harvest is one which we see often. To see it increase even more during tough times is outstanding. Well done, everyone! In keeping with that theme, I increased my hunting draw applications this year and will be watching for some of those local, undersubscribed tags when the time comes.

Have you seen some of the numbers of licenced fishermen in the last few years? The number has been trending downward. That's not a good thing. We need people involved in outdoor pursuits like fishing if we want our way of life and passion for the outdoors to continue. The increased opportunity to harvest a fish for the frying pan this year might help the situation.

Let's all do our part to get these numbers back up. Take a kid fishing and introduce them to the sport. We need the support of these future anglers.

We don't know what this summer and early fall will bring. I know that personally I will be spending as much time in the outdoors as I can. I still need to shake off that cooped-up feeling from last spring. I'm also looking forward to some of our AFGA activities ramping back up. I sincerely hope you all have a chance to enjoy the summer, get in some fishing, some camping, and some evenings gazing into a campfire. We all need it! And, don't forget to give back to the resource whenever you can. 🐦



Hunting Chair Report

Jim Clarke

Hunting Chair

Wow! The past few weeks sure have been different than what any of us are used to. COVID-19 will go down in history for many things. Our lives, our health and our appreciation for everything has sure taken a different outlook as of late. I truly do hope each of you have gone through this with the best of health and helped Alberta to “flatten the curve” so we can all get back to doing what we love the most – enjoying the great outdoors of Alberta in each of our own ways. As I write this report, I just witnessed Premier Jason Kenney announce the planned reopening of Alberta in many phases. Very quickly we will be able to once again enjoy our provincial parks for day use and boat launches will be opened up. Plans are for the middle of May, to have most of the provincial parks opened up! Finally, a light at the end of the tunnel.

Of course, as one can expect, it has been very quiet due to COVID-19 so unfortunately I do not have much to report on. Many items that were in the queue to be worked on in 2020 have naturally been postponed for the short term. Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council was supposed to meet in early April, but that meeting was also cancelled. Alberta Professional Outfitters Society was supposed to host a chronic wasting disease (CWD) forum in April as well, and I was to attend to represent AFGA and to listen to their slate of speakers. March through May is also the prime time for many of the Alberta Fish and Game clubs to host their annual banquets. Unfortunately, those were also cancelled. Many hard decisions were made by executives and I truly do appreciate the tough but necessary decisions each of you had to

make. Those decisions also had to be made provincially. Unfortunately for us, and all fish and gamers, as well as successful participants in the provincial competition, the AFGA 57th annual Wildlife Awards Banquet in April was cancelled. Plans are in place to recognize the winners of the fish, bird, big game and photography competitions in a different manner. We will likely have seen something by the time you read this. I was extremely fortunate to have a great fishing trip in Alberta last year with my fishing partner, Matt Zazula, and I ended up winning the award for the largest rainbow trout. Thanks Matt, your turn this year! I’ve broken from my usual trait of attaching hunting photos to my reports and attached a picture from that trip last year.

On another positive note, the wildlife draws are now over and I hope each of you were successful in drawing some tags. I for one appreciated even more than normal the great venison that my family and friends were able to enjoy. It definitely helped out during this trying time. I know


I offered many friends some meat if they wanted or needed any. I know a few of them were more than impressed with my elk burgers! I also had some extra time that I could put to use and, over a couple of weekends, I managed to produce 24 pounds (wet) of extruded jerky and the people that enjoyed it were definitely asking for more. Those friends are now supporters of the hunting fraternity.

We do have some meetings scheduled very soon with Alberta Environment

and Parks (AEP) via computer format, so hopefully we have some information coming soon. That is one thing that COVID-19 enabled many of us to do – many clubs and organizations were still able to function through some type of online media. That had not happened before and I guess we’ll see if that trend continues. I know I have been on several AFGA-led, online meetings and I feel they were more than adequate. I was also able to participate in an online Wild Sheep working group survey to share our AFGA positions. A lot of information has been read and passed, through online media, as most of us were an eager audience while we were all self-isolating. I know I personally have posted a lot more information to the AFGA zone 2 Facebook site than I normally do, but it was all in an effort to pass on information and keep members informed. As well, many posts have been added to the AFGA site. Why not join the sites to keep up to date? I was also able to participate in two online radio-style in-

terviews with Michael Short. One was regarding the Minister’s Special Licence raffle and auction that the AFGA administers. The other one was regarding CWD in Alberta. That one is yet to be posted, but hopefully it turned out OK. From the last issue and my previous report, I did note that the *Wildlife Regulation Act* in

Alberta needed to be approved and I’m sure our friends in AEP have been very busy getting this completed.

I’ve concluded the last couple of reports with quotes from Fred Bear. Here is another one to ponder as we get our results of the draws and plan for this year’s hunts. I’m sure all of us will truly understand what he is saying: “If you consider an unsuccessful hunt to be a waste of time, then the true meaning of the chase eludes you all together.” 



In Memory Of John (Jack) Graham

JULY 22, 1932 - APRIL 3, 2020



Jack Graham passed away peacefully on April 3, 2020, at home with his loving wife of 65 years, Phyllis, and his family at his side.

Many will remember Jack for his dynamic personality, boisterous laughter, lively stories, sometimes questionable jokes, and his insights. He loved the outdoors and spent a majority of his leisure time enjoying hunting and angling with family, friends and fellow fish and gamers. Given an opportunity, he would share his knowledge with anyone and, when he spoke, all would listen.

Jack had a deep appreciation for fish, wildlife and the environment, which in the late 1950s led to his lifelong volunteer involvement in fish and game. He served as president of the Edmonton Fish & Game Association in 1973, and subsequently received a life membership in 1975. That same year, he and Phyllis received Alberta Fish & Game Association distinguished service awards. In later years, Jack also joined the Edmonton Old Timers Fishing Club, served as their president from 2002 to 2004, and received a life membership.

In 1975, Jack took on the records-keeping responsibility of maintaining the AFGA records for the largest fish, bird and big game species taken annually in Alberta. Utilizing the available records from 1963 onward, he compiled all the data for the first-ever Alberta Trophy Book, introduced in 1978. He even served as the trophy chair on the AFGA Standing Committee from 1976 to 1983. Over the years, Jack enjoyed his involvement in the provincial wildlife awards competition and took pleasure in emceeing the annual awards banquet.

Recognizing the need for qualified big game scorers, in 1981 he initiated a measuring school for AFGA affiliates us-


ing the Boone and Crockett Club measuring system. Jack became a renowned North American official Boone & Crockett measurer, and an official measurer for the Pope and Young Club and the Longhunters Society. He traveled throughout Alberta as an instructor, teaching more than 1,000 students in his lifetime. Jack became an icon and fore-

most authority when it came to big game measuring.

In 1984, Jack received an AFGA life membership. From 1988 to 1990, he served as the AFGA president and, during his tenure, sat on the then provincial wildlife advisory council for five years (1986 to 1991) and presented numerous briefs at forestry meetings, appeal boards, on game ranching issues, and was involved in the re-write of the provincial *Wildlife Act*. Jack later became a Canadian Wildlife Federation director at large from 1991 to 2001 and served on the federal fisheries, publicity and native affairs committees.

Jack was presented, in 1992, with the Fulton Award, the highest AFGA award given for outstanding long-term contribution to conservation and the well-being of the AFGA. He was a member of the Heritage 100 Committee, whose objective it was to oversee the preparation and publication of the AFGA's history book, *Conservation Pride and Passion* 1908 to 2008. Most recently, Jack was one of eight committee members who compiled the fourth edition of the *AFGA Alberta Wildlife Records Book* 1963 to 2018.

He once said, "I am an avid outdoorsman and appreciate and enjoy all of nature's resources and always work to encourage conservation and respect to promote projects that will enhance the interests of club members."

Jack will be greatly missed by all who knew him. 



Fishing Chair Report

Darryl Smith

Fishing Chair

The New Reality - Positive News Despite COVID-19

How two weeks can change everyone's life! I wrote my last *Outdoor Canada West* column on Feb. 28. By March 15, the COVID-19 pandemic had arrived in Alberta and provincial health orders were rolling out. Physical distancing and self isolation have become the new norm. I know many of you are struggling as the impacts of the pandemic goes beyond health to all parts of our economic and social fabric. As a health care professional, I have been proud to see the resolve of Albertans as we navigate these uncertain times together. For those that have lost a loved one, my heart goes out to you.

We will not get back to our former normal for many months. The most optimistic science and economic indicators would suggest that it will be at least 18 to 24 months before anything close to our past normal will be possible. This is based on the development of an effective vaccine, administration of the vaccine to all, and faster bounce back of the global economy than in the past. While we are beginning to reopen our economy and society, it does come with many ongoing restrictions that will be part of the new norm.

The good news story is that many outdoor activities carry with them

minimal risk, provided they occur under the conditions as outlined by Alberta Health. As I pen this article, golfers have just been allowed to return to the links. It is, however, not the same game. Strict physical distancing, not travelling to golf courses together unless part of a social isolation unit, contact with surfaces minimized and strict sanitizing guidelines in place are all required conditions. Angling is another activity that we can participate in that comes with limited risk, but only by adhering to the public health rules. Saskatchewan, as part of its reopening strategy, outlined strict guidelines that include only those in a self isolation unit can be in same boat and no angling from docks, which is due to the difficulty of maintaining physical distancing in these circumstances. Boat launches and parking areas in Alberta provincial parks and recreation areas have just been reopened and, like on the water, the same rules apply. We must all do our part and adjust to the new reality, regardless of the activity, to protect the most vulnerable, not overwhelm our health care system, and maintain our economy.


Even more positive news, the Alberta Fish and Game Association has been a staunch supporter of conservation education and many of our

members and clubs continue to deliver programs across the province to youth and families. The roll out of the new Alberta Fishing Education Program, provided through the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA), is a welcome addition. Education is the foundation for stewardship, ensuring best practices, modifying behaviour and creating understanding. While this program is aimed at the angling community, there are other educational opportunities related to our collective responsibilities to ensure that we are all doing our part to protect vital habitat, on both private and public lands, that should be the cornerstone of future direction. At the time I write this column, the AHEIA program is available free of charge, online.

In my last column, I noted that the consultations that occurred in January, related to creating angling opportunity, were received positively by the angling community. No formal announcements, however, of any changes for 2020 were made at the AFGA AGM. When the *Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations* was released in March, it was evident that our voice had been heard. In discussions with Alberta and Environment and Parks, more positive changes will take place next year, despite the ongoing focus of dealing with the CO-

VID-19 pandemic.

As part of AFGA's management approach related to fisheries issues, there is constant re-evaluation of member support for the direction that we have been moving in. At the 2020 AGM, a meeting with the zone and club fish chairs occurred. There was unanimous agreement from this group that the track we were on meets the objective of most of our members. In addition, a survey was distributed during the AGM related to this path. Sixty-nine members completed the survey, 55 indicated total support. Of the remaining 14, 11 provided additional comments but were supportive of the direction. Three surveys were negative to most of the direction outlined. We will incorporate this feedback, as well as that resulting from our resolution process, into our guidance documents. The Alberta Fish and Game Association looks forward to working with the ministry and departments in a collaborative fashion to ensure sustainable management of our fisheries resource, their habitat and the recreational pastimes they support over the next year.

In closing, I want to thank Minister Nixon and his staff for beginning to address many long-time concerns of the Alberta Fish and Game Association related to fisheries management in Alberta. In these extraordinary and uncertain times, Albertans need a positive vision, as well the opportunity to participate in outdoor pastimes that can occur in a socially responsible way, brought about by the new norm due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Be safe, we will all get through these challenging times together; and while we may not be able to share the same boat, we will certainly give you a wave while out on the water. 



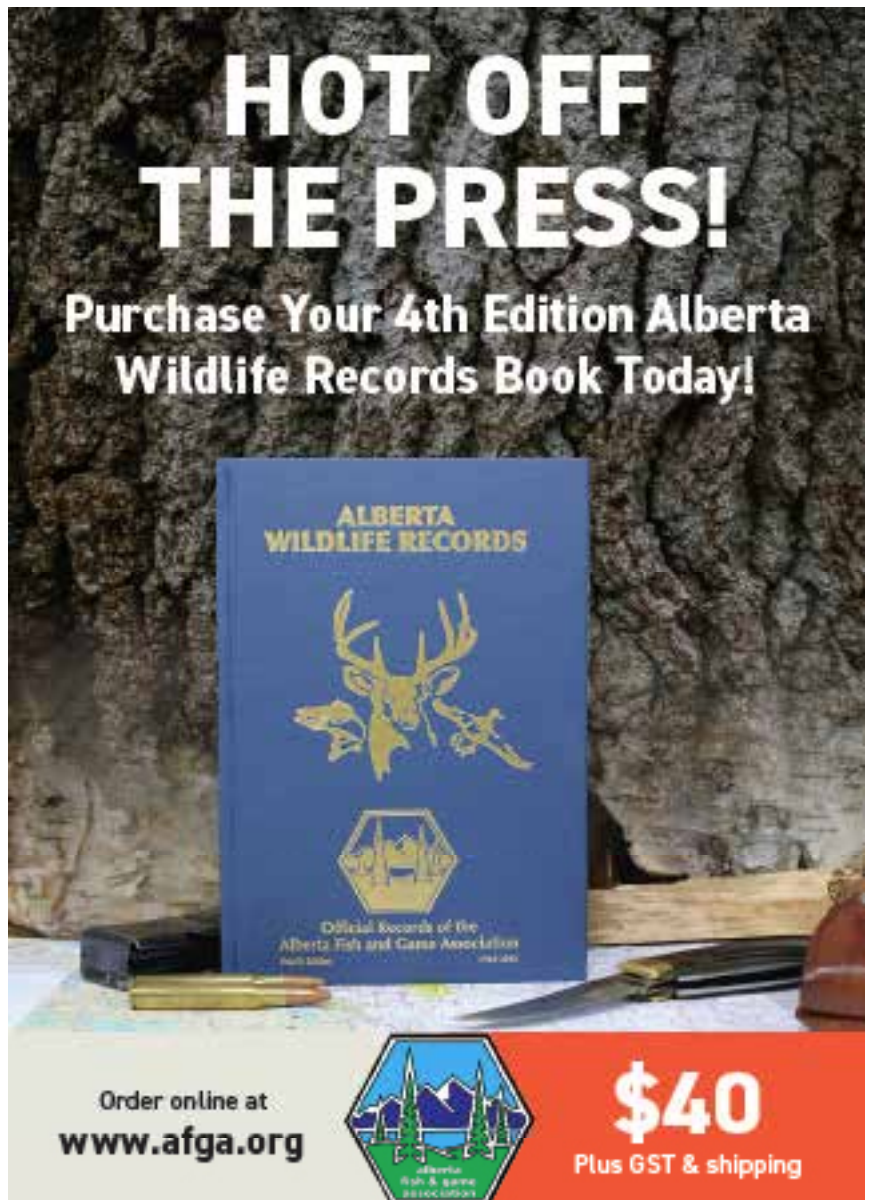
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Environment Chair Report

Victor Benz

Environment Chair



It's time to conclude my reporting on why the comments and input of everyday Albertans are not welcome, and are almost always ignored, by the Alberta government in the approval of Alberta projects.

So, what can we do about it?

Protesting and letter writing campaigns on individual projects of concern are well and good, but we need to push for fundamental changes to the government bureaucratic behaviour, driven by legislative change.

Alberta legislation and interpretation of legislation lags behind other provinces in allowing public participation. The government has justified the move to a deregulated state in favour of business development by arguing that such moves were needed to

stay competitive. Instead of regulating business, our provincial government bureaucracy allows business to self-regulate.

As Charles Perrow has stated, the main reason businesses were regulated in the first place is that their historical behaviour has usually had negative impacts on the public. The move towards deregulation and self-regulation in favour of business has essentially "decriminalized" this behaviour. Our government can successfully claim that a subsequent problem is not theirs.

History shows us that contaminated water, soil and air are the price we pay for a lack of direct regulation in the public interest – always trying to clean up after the damage has been


done. Just look at current issues such as fracking, gravel pits (Mixcor Aggregates), orphan wells, etc.

Today's hands-off approach by our government is in stark contrast to past action, like the formation of the Alberta Boilers Safety Association, a response 100 years ago to poorly built, exploding steam boilers on farm equipment.

A major result of bureaucratic inaction is the growing number of NGOs that have stepped up and promoted their respective agendas, both with the public and the government. Today, the more effective an NGO is at lobbying the government, the more likely that their perspective will be reflected in government decisions. Just look at the groups placed on the government's sub-regional caribou task forces.



So what can we do about it? The public has to be as vocal as any NGO. We need to speak up for fundamental changes to government bureaucratic behaviour, driven by legislative change. I propose several actions:

1. Take the time to meet with your MP and MLA to share these concerns. Write an email. I took the opportunity recently when I met with the Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks, to raise the need for a clear definition of the term "directly affected."
2. At every opportunity, push your elected representatives at all levels for Canada's approval of the UN 1998 Aarhus Convention, which specifically extends the right to participate in an environmental decision-making process to anyone with an interest in the decision.
3. Work with local authorities to develop a bylaw standard whereby sufficient local concern or opposition to a proposed industrial development forces a public hearing on the matter. As noted in earlier articles, the sooner in the decision chain that your issues are formally heard and addressed, the greater the likelihood they will impact the decision.
4. Stay informed on potential developments of concern in your area and mobilize to get answers to your specific concerns at the earliest stage possible. The further down the decision chain a development moves, the more difficult it will be to stop or significantly modify it. 

Program Chair Report

Ingrid Horner

Program Chair

Hello all! I hope you are all staying safe and healthy in these difficult times. It is a tough thing to see all of our activities and events on hold for now. I am writing this article in late April and am hoping by the time you read this, things have returned to a more normal pace once again.


Our Alberta Fish and Game members are an amazing bunch. Spruce Grove Fish and Game was on the news with their curbside pickup of birdhouse building kits. They handed out over 70 kits, complete with instructions for the kids to build their own birdhouses at home.

Dona Murphy and I put out the Cloth Mask Challenge to all clubs in April. We have had an amazing response to this program from all around the province. Thank you to everyone who is sending us e-mail and picture updates! Please keep them coming into programs.afga@gmail.com. My 83-year-old mom has now surpassed 220 masks made, Mark and my daughter Ayla are keeping us supplied too. She has cut out over 500

masks now and is keeping all of us sewers stocked up. We were also very fortunate to have Cynthia Pawliuk, from Beaver River Fish and Game, donate over 25 metres of quilting material to help keep our project going. We have found that local pharmacies really appreciate the donated masks and I know which people in need these masks should go to. Sometimes people have offered to pay us for masks; when that happens, we request that they donate their money to local food banks.

Unfortunately, all Narrow Lake Conservation Camps have been cancelled for the year, but better that we all stay safe. We look forward to next year when we will definitely need some good outdoor time together!

Albertans have been hit hard everywhere and it's great to see Alberta healthcare workers are doing all they can to keep us healthy and safe. A huge thank you to all of our frontline workers who are doing their part to keep our province going!

We are Alberta strong. Stay safe and healthy, everyone! 



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ZONE REPORTS

ZONE 1

Director's Report

Glenn Heather

INDEED, I WISH to say, hang in there. This COVID-19 has changed our lives, but only temporarily. Our zone 1 April 5 meeting was cancelled, but we will set a new date as soon as we can. I know each of our clubs is struggling, not being able to hold their meetings. All our events are cancelled or on hold until later. What can we do? Not much, except wait and let these COVID-19 restrictions continue at our health professionals' request. However, now is the time to think of how important our conservation and outdoor experiences are and what we and AFGA can do moving forward. Our world has forever changed; our mindset and, in some ways, our invisibility has been challenged. However, as being brought up in the outdoors as hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts, we are resilient.

On a bright note, the southern Alberta region has many ponds and reservoirs stocked this spring, between the end of April and into June. There will be good angling opportunities. This information was shared by our regional fisheries management; again, a good sign that our current government is transparent and listening to Albertans by providing better fishing opportunities. Thank you. Here are the expected stock quantities:

- Kenex Trout Pond: 4,000 rainbow trout
- Nicholas Sheran Pond: 2,000 rainbow trout (20 centimetres) and 2,000 brown trout (19 centimetres),

plus 100 rainbow trout over 30 centimetres

- Riverstone Pond: 1,000 rainbow trout (20 centimetres)
- McVinnie Reservoir: 2,005 rainbow trout (20 centimetres)
- McQuillan Reservoir: 2,350 rainbow trout
- Brooks Aqueduct Pond: 20,000 rainbow trout (18 centimetres), plus some more fish in September
- Michel Reservoir: 23,000 rainbow trout (18 centimetres) and 9,000 brown trout (19 centimetres)
- Cavan Reservoir: 11,000 rainbow trout (18 centimetres)
- Reesor Lake: 17,000 rainbow trout, and also 3,500 tiger trout in September (23 centimetres)
- Spruce Coulee Reservoir: 6,000 brook trout

Don't forget about the hunting draws this June, another opportunity to plan and look forward to this fall.

Our conservation, hunting, fishing and outdoor experiences are now that much more precious. These cannot be taken away forever. To me, the opportunities we have in Alberta, and in the future, will always be there.

Take care all. Stay safe, stay healthy and see you soon!

ZONE 2

Director's Report

Deb Clarke

WHILE WRITING THIS report, Alberta was just implementing a safe and staged COVID-19 recovery plan to relaunch our economy.

Did you ever expect to experience, in your lifetime, what we are now

with the COVID-19 pandemic? I sure didn't. Unbelievable! It has taken some time for most of us to find a "new" normal and routine, which isn't normal, if that makes any sense.

It's a tough time for fish and game, as many clubs cannot proceed with planned events, projects or programs without compromising social distancing and the stay home and be safe recommendations of health professionals. Membership numbers are low. It's more important than ever that we stay alive and strong.

Have you ever thought about why you became and/or remain a fish and game member? Are these some of the reasons?

- Hunting and/or fishing interests
- Conservation and saving habitat
- You've been a member since your youth
- Environmental concerns
- The AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund
- Access to shooting ranges
- Outdoor-related activities (camping, hiking, boating, photography, berry picking, etc.)
- *Outdoor Canada West* magazine
- Insurance benefits
- A family member got you involved
- It's tradition for you to be a member
- Wildlife trophies/awards
- Youth and family activities in clubs
- To gain outdoor-related knowledge
- To attend youth camps
- Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) program
- Annual banquet and award nights
- To meet new people with similar interests
- To be a volunteer
- You believe in what the organization stands for

- To support Alberta's oldest and largest hunting, fishing and conservation association

Send an email to zone2.afga@gmail.com and let me know (in a few words) why you became a member. Include what one or two aspects of this organization are important to you. I'm interested in hearing from you.

Let others know about our organization and encourage them to join too. Show them the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund year and decade in review video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCBGsNWp53A&t=9s.

The AFGA relies heavily on the affiliation dues from clubs to keep operations running smoothly. If your club has not forwarded current club and membership information to AFGA, please do so ASAP. If a member is not registered, they do not receive the *Outdoor Canada* magazine, there is no insurance coverage or other benefits. The AFGA has been operational during the pandemic and has been handling day-to-day business, sending information, invoicing, posting to social media, etc.

Having difficulty and looking for ideas to keep in touch with your members? There are many fish and game clubs, along with the AFGA, who have an online presence. Search and peruse their websites, Facebook and/or Instagram accounts. Check out the Zone 2 Facebook site for current interesting and up-to-date information.

Most people are finding that they have more time to read, discover or learn something new, surf the net/social media and look for outdoor activities whereby they can still practice social/physical distancing. Let's try and grab their attention.

If you're not receiving the AFGA monthly e-newsletter, go the AFGA website and/or this link to subscribe: <https://www.afga.org/join-html/>.

My apologies for the errors in the May/June *Outdoor Canada West* Zone 2 report. In my haste to submit the re-

port, I missed recognizing Hussar Fish & Game for their donation of \$500 to the Wildlife Trust Fund, and the Calgary Fish & Game donated \$20,000 not \$15,000, as written.

In addition, success of the Trust Fund has been possible though donations and the dedication of AFGA employee Brad Fenson. He was recognized and appreciated at the annual AFGA conference for his 31 years of service to the program. Congratulations!

Free family fishing weekend this year is July 4 and 5. Introduce someone to fishing. Remember though that Alberta's sportfishing regulations apply all year to anglers of all ages and residences, including during the Family Fishing weekends. For more details, along with the link to the *Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations*, go to My Wild Alberta at <https://mywildalberta.ca/fishing/family-fishing-weekends/default.aspx>.

Whether you're young, old or somewhere in between, while out fishing take a photo of your catch for entry into your local fish and game club and/or for one of the AFGA provincial award categories. Regardless whether it is kept or released, a length measurement is required which coincides with the provincial pinched tail regulations. Photos need to be clear and legible with both the full length of the fish and measuring device together in the picture.

The latest CWD surveillance update and info can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/chronic-wasting-disease-updates.aspx>.

If you have an opportunity, say thank you to those many amazing Albertans who are working, doing and contributing what they can during this very challenging time.

Thankfully most of us hunt and fish and have a bounty of harvest in our freezers. Should you need more variety in your diets, support the pork, beef, poultry and potato producers. Knowing that we are in difficult times,

stay in touch with family and friends, support others in any way, along with local and small businesses, keep a sense of humour and be sympathetic and understanding when you can.

Be safe, stay healthy and be kind.

Did U Know: Before heading out to enjoy the outdoors this summer, take a minute or two to check out and follow the guidelines and recommendations at COVID-19 Info for Albertans: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>.

ZONE 3

Director's Report
Arnold Winkler

THE SNOW IS gone, the ice is off, and now a cool spring should be followed by a warm summer. The birds are all back, having built nests for their anticipated offspring; however, earlier cool temperatures and some fluctuating water levels may have impacted the quantity of hatchlings for certain species. All lakes should be open, but some access points may be limited due to closure stipulations relating to the COVID-19 virus.

Spring bear season opened, and a lot of hunters reported sightings. Just being able to get out into the bush is sometimes a plus right now, as possible UTV and ATV usage may be restricted due to hazardous forest fire conditions.

The *Alberta Sportfishing Regulations* are available for this year and there are some positive implementations concerning lakes and limits; it's a start, and we can hope that this will continue in the future. Thank you, Minister Nixon.

The hunting (limited entry and special licence) applications will wrap up mid-June and hopefully you succeed in getting your draws, as there could possibly be more free time to pursue your intended game due to COVID-19 ▶

lingering on. The curve has flattened and dropped off in most areas, but that doesn't mean we can relax in our social distancing, sanitization or the use of facial masks in contact situations.

Many clubs have been making plans and are eager to commence their summer programs and activities, while still being cautious. Zone 3 Central Alberta Fish and Game Association will get to our mandatory business agenda as soon as we have an opportunity to physically engage.

Keep safe, the outdoors is waiting for us and also provides us with an opportunity to get our young people involved. Enjoy!

ZONE 4

Director's Report

Faran Schaber

I HOPE THAT everyone is enjoying their summer. It is the last week of April as I write this article, and with the current COVID-19 situation, self-isolation, social distancing and business closures are the norm these days.

As a result, we are cancelling events, meetings and gatherings. With these cancellations, there are not many events to write about.

I attended the Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show to help work the AFGA booth. The event lasted four hours before it was shut down. This was the start of our current situation. Since that time, all manner of events have been cancelled.

The AFGA executive held a meeting via Zoom to discuss ideas on how to keep the membership informed. If you are not already signed up for the AFGA newsletter, I encourage you to do so on our website here: <https://www.afga.org/join-html/>.

On a brighter note, the geese are back, the birds are still singing, the grass is still growing and we will get through this.

Stay safe, stay active and stay positive!

ZONE 5

Director's Report

Robyn Butler

I HOPE YOU are all well and staying safe. This is a really difficult time, but we can get through this COVID-19 by supporting our members and being there for each other. It is important that clubs stay in touch with their members, as we are all self isolating, but we can phone, text or e-mail our members.

I know this pandemic has affected a lot of club activities with cancellations of banquets, summer events and getting out in your communities to promote your club and AFGA. Maybe this is the time for clubs to brainstorm for new and better events when this pandemic has come to an end.

A huge thank you to Ingrid Horner, our new programs chair, and Dona Murphy, who have been sewing masks and distributing them to anyone who is in need – great job and idea.

During this crisis, you can spend time practicing with your bow and rifle, perfecting your aim for the upcoming hunting season. Some of you may have already been hunting spring

bear or perhaps snow geese. I hope you were successful.

We don't have to stay cooped up in our house. Take a walk through the woods and listen to the sounds: the birds chirping and preparing their nests for their new arrivals, the screech of the hawks looking for their next meal and the hammering of the woodpecker in search of food, a nesting place and attempts to attract a mate. Sit back and listen to the creeks and rivers flowing, the wind whispering through the trees and the chattering of squirrels as they scurry from tree to tree. All these sounds and sights can be so relaxing. So please, take the time to enjoy our nature at its best. Take a youth with you on these walks and educate them, or sometimes they will educate you. As you can see by the photo, trapping, skinning and stretching muskrats with youth is not only teaching, but also encouraging them to learn.

It is hard to write about what is going on in the world at this time, as I have to write this report two months ahead. I do hope by now the crisis is over and we are all back to semi-normal. Hopefully this means that some of you are gearing up for bird hunting and archery season. Stay safe. 🐦





Pronghorn Corridor Enhancement Project

T.J. Schwanky

Wildlife Projects Co-ordinator

The Pronghorn Corridor Enhancement Project or Antelope Fencing Project, as it's more commonly known, is a joint project of the Alberta Fish and Game Association and Alberta Conservation Association. These groups work with private landowners to make fences more friendly for pronghorn throughout southern Alberta. This is achieved by adding a smooth wire, set at 18 inches, to the bottom of existing barbed-wire fences. As antelope very rarely jump fences, the bottom wire height facilitates easy passage underneath for antelope, aiding in migration and predator avoidance. Antelope are no longer forced to cross at historical crossings, but rather can pass underneath the fence along its entire length. Replacing barbed wire with smooth wire helps mitigate scaring and hair loss on the antelope's backs, increasing winter survival rates. The project is funded through the Alberta Conservation Association's Conservation, Community and Education Grants and the Minister's Special Licence Fund.

Projects are conducted throughout southern Alberta and, in 2019, these included two projects near Milk River and one near Empress. In the past, the Alberta Conservation Association radio collared several antelope to help identify key migration corridors in the province, and fencing sites are selected using this data. There are no conditions placed on the landowners where fencing




projects are conducted and there is no cost to them. All that is required of the landowner is that they permit access to make the fence modifications. This project would not be possible without their co-operation.

The actual stapling of the bottom smooth wire and respacing of wires above to wildlife-friendly standards is done solely by volunteers and each of the three projects, annually, sees about 10 miles of fence made more wildlife friendly. The program is in its 11th year and over 200 miles of fence have been modified and approximately 25 miles of page wire have been permanently removed from the landscape. While the volunteers are the heart of the project, our corporate partner, FenceFast Ltd.,

and their generous donation of the use of three of their power staplers, staple pullers and all the staples we need for the project is a critical part of the team. Their involvement four years ago has allowed us to increase the amount of fence lines we do by nearly 50 per cent, with half the number of volunteer hours. Many of our volunteers are in their 60s and without the involvement of FenceFast Ltd., there's no way we could accomplish what we do.

Despite the challenges being presented by COVID-19, three projects are scheduled for 2020. AFGA and ACA staff are still working to find suitable locations, but the tentative dates are July 17 to 19, August 21 to 23 and September 18 to 20. The projects will be conducted with a smaller number of volunteers than previous years and strict COVID-19 safety protocols are being adopted to keep volunteers as safe as possible, but the number of miles of fence upgraded should be close to the same as previous years.

For more information on becoming involved in this project as a volunteer or landowner, contact T.J. Schwanky, Wildlife Projects Co-ordinator, Alberta Fish and Game Association, at tj-afga@shaw.ca 

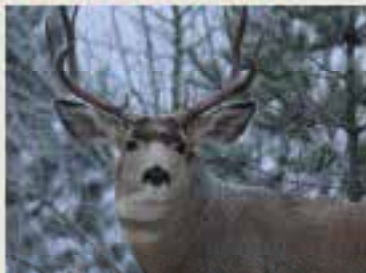
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