



NEWS FROM ALBERTA

President's Report

Brian Dingreville

President

As we enter into the coming months, I feel we all have come to realize we now live in a completely new world from what we were used to. The past several months has fully changed how AFGA does business within the association. From face-to-face meetings, we are now either doing Zoom meetings or phone conferences, which by my thoughts have been OK. Yes, it does take away the personal contact within the board, but the travel and costs have been reduced substantially.

A number of the AFGA executive did meet with Alberta Environment and Parks in the early part of June by way of a Zoom call to discuss a number of important issues relating to hunting, fishing and the approved resolutions from this past February's conference. It was interesting to hear that fishing and hunting applications have increased substantially this year over previous years.

Zone 1 is working on setting up a meeting either through Zoom or, as Heinz Plontke has indicated, it could happen in an open area. I have offered my place, weather permitting, or we could use the open area at the Lethbridge Fish and Game club house.

Over the past several months, I have

been involved with the management plans for the Castle Parks, Livingstone-Porcupine Hills, Beaver Creek and Bob Creek areas by way of conference calls. The plans by all groups had to be submitted prior to June 1, 2020, and the goal is to have a final plan prior to the end of 2020. I did attend the Fort Macleod Fish and Game summer wind-up BBQ back in June, which was well attended. While there, I spoke on what AFGA was doing and all that was happening these past several months, including promoting the new Alberta Wildlife Records book. Fort Macleod may still have some copies for sale. If you are ever down in the south on a camping trip, I would strongly recommend contacting the club and reserving a spot at their facility. Many spots with power are available. On an interesting note, a good friend, who owns one of the RV dealerships in the south, told me this has been one of their best years in RV sales; go figure!

Over the past couple of months, Andrea and I have headed out to the mountains either camping or riding. It was a bit of a shock to see how many are going to the backcountry, as well as the number of family campers. You will be hard pressed to find a spot in any of the random camping spots or provin-

cial parks if you are not out early Friday. Again, while out on one of our camping trips, we met up with my good friend Lloyd Cook and his family who have been members of the Brooks Fish and Game club for many years. Their club too may still have copies of the Alberta Wildlife Records books. At present, there are also a number of Alberta Wildlife Records books still available at head office. These can be purchased on our website or by calling the office.

As many of you know, since 2006 I have set up a four-day trail ride in the Castle Parks. This year we are heading to the Old Man area. With the ability to drive and haul your horses to the spot where we are going to camp, I have opened it up to a number of people who were not able to join in previous years. This year looks to be bigger and better than ever before. At present, we have approximately 36 interested riders; all in all, it should be a wonderful time again! All spouses are welcome this year, which Andrea is looking forward to be a part of.

Hopefully everyone submitted their hunting draws on time and by now have received their results. We are all looking forward to this year's hunting season to open.

Happy trails, all! Stay healthy. 

MOVING?

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Past President's Report

Doug Butler

Past President

It is certainly a different year we've had. COVID-19 has sure changed what and how we do things. With all clubs and zones shut down, there hasn't been much happening on the local fronts. I encourage clubs to hang in there, be patient and to keep memberships going strong.

We had a very good meeting with Alberta Fish and Wildlife on a Zoom call and some great messages were heard here. I'm sure others will mention this, but I'll hit some of the headlines for you. We've been asking, for some time, for some re-structuring of this department, a stronger fish and wildlife portfolio and the return of operations to policy without all the disconnects we've had to endure over the past few years. We were told that under the Alberta Environment and Parks department, there will now be a Stewardship Branch strictly for fish and wildlife! Great news, and I think the resolutions and top priorities we've been promoting have had something to do with it. Travis Ripley will be the executive director of this branch, and under him will be six directors of different departments. The province will be divided into the south, northwest and northeast, with each zone having a director. There will also be directors for fish and wildlife policy, species at risk, and wildlife health and licensing. This last department will include all the AlbertaReIm licensing and health issues such as chronic wasting disease (CWD) and whirling disease.

Other announcements include that



although all trout stocking was completed, the planned walleye spawn camps were postponed due to COVID-19, but plans are to get them going next spring. More harvest opportunities are also planned, as this year's harvest is going over very well. They also want to engage more participation and engagement from groups such as ours. Increased perch management is also in the plans. The fishing engagement sessions with the public went over well last year, and plans to do the same with wildlife and hunting are in place for after this fall's hunting seasons. Wildlife will have a higher level of management and we can expect some changes for the 2021 hunting season. All species management plans will continue, as well as a strategic plan for CWD. The mandatory hunter harvest reports have gone very well and are quite helpful in management issues.

We'll continue to keep on top of things as best we can, until our new

normal starts to resemble the old normal a bit more. Social distancing has still allowed most outdoor pursuits, fishing and hunting. Outdoor activities are a great way to get out and have benefited many, as we now have seen what "smelling the coffee" is really like. We are able to enjoy nature without the rat race distractions, in many cases.

The (fairly) new Alberta Wildlife Records book is a must have, and you can all order one via our website or by calling the AFGA office. Also available are raffle tickets on the Honda quad – the draw date of Sept. 16 is fast approaching.

I wish you all well in the upcoming fall and hope you have a special draw tag to pursue. I'm sure many of you were able to enjoy some good times on the water this summer and spend time with your family doing so. I sure did and a couple good fish fries were the icing on the cake. In the meantime, straight shooting and tight lines. 🐟



Executive Director's Report

Delinda Ryerson

Executive Director

Did you know that the minister of Environment and Parks (AEP), with the government of Alberta, makes the Minister's Special Licence (MSL) program possible by donating two Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, two antlered elk and two antlered mule deer tags that are auctioned and raffled off to raise funds?

The AEP and Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) share in the dedication of conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife populations and the habitats upon which they depend, for future generations to enjoy as part of our natural heritage. The AFGA has been managing this fantastic program since 2013, raising funds for conser-



vation programs benefitting fish and wildlife in Alberta. The MSL program has been an excellent initiative to raise and, subsequently, grant funds to various conservation projects focusing on mule deer, elk and bighorn sheep, as well as land stewardship, habitat improvement, education or other conservation-related projects.

The "special" part of these licences is that the MSL hunter has many more wildlife management unit areas to hunt in, and an extended season for each species. As well, these tags are separate from any hunting draw or purchase you may have already made.

The MSL program raises funds through an auction at the Wild Sheep Show in Reno, Nevada, and, for Alberta residents only, the MSL raffle. Each event awards one tag for each of the three species. The MSL auction brings in an average of \$200,000 annually, and the raffle open to resident hunters only raises an average of \$123,000 annually.

All of the funds raised are then

granted out to pertinent projects, through a stakeholder committee. This year, we more than doubled the number of grant applications received into the MSL program, and we're happy to report that numerous habitat improvement, wildlife-friendly fencing, disease testing, as well as harvest and population monitoring projects for all three species received funding. Additionally, the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council obtained funding through MSL, as did online hunting and youth hunter courses. You can be assured that when you purchase your MSL raffle tickets, the funds go toward these types of worthy conservation projects.

For a listing of this year's high bidders and raffle winners, check out our website.

A huge thank you to all of the hunters that support this important program by purchasing tickets because, without you, there would be no MSL program! 🐦



1st Vice-President's Report

By Ian Stuart

1st Vice-president

As everyone is painfully aware, the COVID-19 issue has affected every one of us and every organization. Local AFGA clubs, zones and AFGA provincially have all been impacted, and it appears those effects will be with us for an unknown period.

Our focus at the provincial level is on understanding our options going forward, such as focus on maintaining core functions like insurance for members and clubs, our flagship Wildlife Habitat Trust Fund and continuing to defend habitat, fish and wildlife and the rights and responsibilities of ethical hunters, anglers, sport shooters and other outdoor enthusiasts. We must look at this as an opportunity to be more efficient and effective in those pursuits.

On a personal basis, closed schools resulted in homeschooling a grandson. As we are fortunate to live on a small farm and next to a conservation site, his ecology lessons had much more opportunity for interaction with the outdoors than way too many kids have had, and it was satisfying to be back into outdoor education. I learned a lot too! Long past experience as a Project Wild instructor motivated me to dig out my old instructor's manual, and further, to enquire of Doug Butler, one of our current Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF)/AFGA representatives, if that program was still active. It is, and much more outdoor education material that is well worth perusing is available on the CWF website: <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/education>.

Other than trees, edible plants and

weeds, I previously had not paid much attention to other plant species, but by downloading an app called iNaturalist and an enthusiastic 11-year-old educating me on its use, I learned to identify more native plants in a couple of hours hiking through the conservation site than I have ever had the interest and patience to identify using a plant key. The modern outdoor education resources available are impres-



sive and good tools to involve youth, something many AFGA clubs do, and also an opportunity for others.

Further on AFGA activities, you will recall that General Resolution 2020-G-2: "BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Fish and Game Association develop a gun range committee to act as a single voice for the respective club ranges across Alberta" carried overwhelmingly at the Alberta Fish and Game Association annual

general meeting on Feb. 22, 2020.

In order to get this off the ground, and not knowing who else to start with, I asked two of our members that I know have long experience as range chairpersons to help launch the committee: Oscar Long of Provost and Ross Towers of Red Deer. I am certain that others will step up as this evolves, and I ask that all other range chairs participate in an online discussion and advance your ideas as this committee becomes established. The objectives are sharing information for the benefit of all, and efficient two-way communication with provincial and federal regulators that clubs with firearms ranges need to interact with, not for AFGA to dictate how any club should run their range(s). Letters have gone out to all clubs that have firearms ranges, but to date response has been minimal. No doubt the disruption of COVID-19 and focus on the ill-conceived assault-style weapons ban has occupied everyone's attention, but it is also possible that the information did not reach range chairs at the club level, with everything else that has been happening. If you or someone at your club is in such a position, please make sure they have this information. Ross can be reached at outdoorrange@reddeerfishandgame.com and Oscar Long at scar270@gmail.com

As you will see in other reports, some very positive direction was announced in an online meeting with Fish and Wildlife staff. With all of the distractions the government of Alberta faces, it is gratifying to see that the value of fish and wildlife is recognized, and that AFGA plays a part. 🐦



2nd Vice- President's Report

Matt Zazula

2nd Vice-president

How was your summer? I hope you managed to spend some time in the outdoors, camping, fishing and spending time with family and friends. We got out camping a few times. From what I saw, campgrounds were generally as busy as any other summer. People really seemed happy to get out and do some things that felt a little more normal than the way the spring started out.

Your AFGA executive has been quite busy through the late spring and summer, even with some of the restrictions still in place. As you'll likely read in other reports, we've had video and telephone meetings with the Alberta government people at Alberta Environment and Parks. We've talked about everything from the current fishing regs, proposed fishing and hunting regulation changes, camping and resource access and, of course, our previously submitted resolutions and position statements. I think that face-to-face meetings get the best results. Still, everyone participated in these remote meetings very well, with positive vibes coming out. Your executive has also been meeting informally with their area club representatives. It's been really important to keep in touch. I've been impressed with the attitude of the people I've met with and run into. Common concerns everywhere have been lower membership numbers, financial challenges due to no banquets and fundraisers last spring, and the inability to offer many of the member-oriented programs that so many clubs run. Even with those concerns, people I've talked to are still very optimistic and looking forward to getting right back on track. I congratulate those people for staying so positive. It's that kind of positive attitude that will help us succeed and grow.

Your executive has also been working



through a very challenging financial situation at the AFGA. Lower memberships have hit our bottom line, and the restrictions we all faced had a negative impact on our ability to fundraise too. Some hard decisions had to be made. The great thing about an executive with diverse backgrounds is that a lot of great ideas and thoughts come forward. Through the hard work of the executive, we'll get through it. I look forward to better times coming back.

At the time of writing this, there haven't been any zone meetings held yet that I know of. However, with fall just around the corner, I'm sure they will start up again soon. Remember, resolutions can be discussed and submitted at any time. If there are issues you think are worthy of consideration through the resolution process, get them through your clubs to the zones as soon as you can.

Hunting season is, of course, right around the corner. Like everyone, I

have my go-to hunts and favourite draw applications. However, I also really like the opportunity to try new things. This fall I'll be hunting non-trophy sheep for the first time. It's been a long wait-time for my hunting partner and me. We're both very much looking forward to the new experience. I know a little about the hunting area, thanks in large part to our sheep mentor. The terrain is definitely different than the moose and whitetail terrain we're used to. The hiking boots will get a workout! I'm also going to try to spend some time with new or relatively new hunters this fall. It's been a few years since I mentored a new hunter. It looks like hunter numbers in Alberta are growing. If we want this trend to continue, we should all look for the opportunity to help others out by sharing our knowledge, our ethics and appreciation for the activity. Your help will be appreciated, and we'll add support to the hunting fraternity. I still fondly remember being introduced to hunting by some coworkers when I was in my late 20s. We had many years of good times, great friendship and even a few successful hunts. Without those guys, I wouldn't be nearly the outdoorsman I am today.

I want to close by saying thank you to all of you for your continuing support of the Alberta Fish and Game Association and the affiliated clubs. This organization has an amazing legacy stretching back over a century. We've had lots of good times, and we've made it through some pretty tough times as well. It's the grassroots members that drive this success. Keep your local clubs going and growing, support your zone initiatives, and support the AFGA in any way you can. Be part of a continuing legacy for generations to come.

And, as always, don't forget to give back to the resource whenever you can. 🐦



Fishing Chair Report

Darryl Smith

Fishing Chair

As Albertans adapt to the reality of living with COVID-19 impacts, there are notable observations that one would not have predicted during the early days of the pandemic. As anglers and hunters, we have always had a deep connection with the outdoors. It appears that the rest of Albertans are also rediscovering this relationship!

Outdoor activities are relatively safe to participate in, provided we follow the rules as set out by our provincial public health officer. This, in combination with the built-up stresses related to self-isolation requirements, and that many activities such as cinema, festivals, indoor activities such as sports, family programs and community events are restricted or cancelled, have led Albertans to look for other activities to partake in. This is great for personal wellness, but also for economic reasons. Just think of the benefits from reduced time watching television or video gaming as we explore the wonders of the great outdoors.

Angling and hunting participation are undergoing resurgence in the province, with licence sales already well ahead of last year. One sees this when out on the water. There are more boats, and docks are always occupied with those eager to get away from the current reality. Visit your local tackle shop and shelves are often bare – some is a result of supply chain disruptions, but often it is that wholesalers are simply out of stock as they did not predict the demand. This is not just an Alberta phenomenon. As jurisdictions across North America reopen, similar trends are being seen.

Will this result in long-term reversal of the trend to lower participation in angling and hunting? This is a good question. Personally, I am optimistic it will; not only are Albertans rediscovering the joys experienced with outdoor activities, in addition hunting, fishing and gardening all bring with them the added benefit of fresh and wholesome food for the table.


The AFGA executive had a Zoom conference with the new Fish and Wildlife resource stewardship division on June 5, 2020. The reorganization taking place within Alberta Environment and Parks will result in Fish and Wildlife's various components being reunited under a single agency format and does not include enforcement. There will be three regions, northwest, northeast and south. We have not seen the details, but it appears, for example, the south region will incorporate the North and South Saskatchewan River drainage basins. Under the executive director, there will be the three regional directors: director of fish and wildlife policy, director of species at risk and director of wildlife health/licensing. Who will be in those roles is unknown, but expect formal announcements from Alberta Environment and Parks over the summer. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and Alberta Environment and Parks are co-ordinating their Fisheries Action Plans as part of the reorganization.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been disruption to normal operations across government. Planned walleye stocking will not occur in 2020. Cutthroat trout egg collection at Job Lake did not take place. While

unfortunate, it has given time for additional planning and upgrading of facilities. There is still a commitment to move ahead with other projects in 2020, including perch stockings, as COVID-19-related restrictions are relaxed. There is a willingness to involve volunteers in fish sampling projects and involvement with walleye stocking programs.

The ACA reached out to AFGA to see what the priorities should be or if changes are required related to their programs. We emphasized a need for additional work in the habitat area, whether within the green or white areas of the province, to ensure watershed protection and restoration, which is vital for there to be naturally sustainable fisheries.

On June 4, 2020, the federal government released their proposed recovery strategies for bull trout, Saskatchewan-Nelson Rivers and rainbow trout Athabasca River population, for the 60-day public review process. One of the reasons for these reviews is so that the necessary government orders to allow catch-and-release angling to continue in watersheds these species occupy must be issued within a designated time of species being listed under the *Species at Risk Act*.

I hope everyone has a chance to get out on the water, but remember: you must abide by the public health orders that are in place that require physical distancing, wearing masks when you cannot maintain physical distancing, frequent hand washing and travelling in vehicles only with those in your immediate or cohort families. We must do our part as outdoor people to prevent a second wave of COVID-19. Keep safe. 

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Hunting Chair Report

Jim Clarke

Hunting Chair

2020. COVID-19. Pretty much sums up what has been happening! With the pandemic slowing and Alberta gradually loosening up, hopefully things will get better and better. I truly hope each and every one of you and your families have stayed safe and healthy. Of course, COVID-19 has changed everything for a lot of us and it has definitely affected the way we meet and the way we interact with government of Alberta representatives.

Shortly after my last report was submitted, we did have an online meeting with the government of Alberta group. Many of you were made aware at the most recent conference, that due to ministerial announcements they were undergoing reorganization. With COVID-19, this process has somewhat stalled or slowed. We should know very soon what the most recent changes are in relation to the naming of six key directors – one for fish and wildlife policy, one for species at risk, one for wildlife health and licencing and finally three for regional representation, with one each for the south, northwest and northeast. I'm sure after they are named, more work will be undertaken for the next levels of personnel.

During the wildlife portion of our meeting, it was announced there will be wildlife engagement meetings taking place across the province, formatted very much like the recent fishery meetings that took place. It was also announced that wildlife management plans are being pushed ahead, with a goal of completing ASAP. However, it was also stated we would have input into these management plans before they go to the general public for final review and before they are put in place. In fact, just days ago, I was asked if I would

participate to review the first one, the Mule Deer Management Plan, which of course I agreed to do. I'm looking forward to seeing what they have put together. We were also told that the 2020 hunting regs are ready and were going to print soon and that we would be pleased with the outcome; can't wait to see them!

There seems to be more interest in using citizen science for wildlife management going forward; that can only mean that they will be asking us for our input, which is great. Just as an FYI, they had over 80 per cent compliance with reporting hunter efforts after last hunting sea-



son. That is far better information they have to utilize than the 24 to 26 per cent voluntary participation they were getting. They are still undertaking regulation simplification and we will likely see the results of that endeavour in 2021. It is interesting to note that they reported increases again on fishing and hunting licences compared to the same time last year. At the time of the meeting, fishing licences were up 30 per cent and game bird licences were up 160 per cent, with bow hunting up 119 per cent. This is likely due to individuals purchasing those options at the same time they purchased

their wildlife certificate to participate in the hunting draws, but we'll see.

Draw results will have come out when you read this. I always look forward to seeing the results, as I'm sure each of us is. We will all soon be out in the field again, enjoying what nature provides to us, social distancing at its best. And remember to take a youth hunting!

Finally, some good news! It was just announced that the long-awaited sandhill crane hunting season will take place for the first time in Alberta this year! This is something we as fish and gamers have been asking for a long time now! Details will be coming out, but for now we know you will be allowed to hunt them in about 50 select WMUs. This is so that we can stay out of WMUs that are known to be migratory routes for whooping cranes. The season will start around Sept. 1 and you will need a game bird licence and, of course, the federal migratory game bird permit to participate. Did you know that, for many years now, select states in the US have been harvesting Alberta's allotted quota of the birds while we did not have a season?

I have been doing a lot of reading and I came across a quote from Jack O'Connor that, even though he is talking about sheep hunting, I think it speaks volumes to each and every one of us in all our outdoor pursuits: "The wild ram embodies the mystery and magic of the mountains, the rocky canyons, the snowy peaks, the fragrant alpine meadows, the gray slide rock, the icy dancing rills fed by snowbank and glacier, the sweet clean air of the high places and the sense of being alone on the top of the world with the eagles, the marmots and the wild sheep themselves," *The Bighorn*, 1960. 🐾



Program Chair Report

Ingrid Horner

Program Chair

Hello to all of our fellow Fish and Game members across Alberta. It sure has been a wet and rainy spring and into early summer. This weather does not make the tough times due to the pandemic any easier. I sure hope everyone has a good set of rain gear and an umbrella!

On the positive note, a lot of home-bound folks have cleaned out closets, caught up on long-awaited chores and hobbies and reunited some much-needed family ties.

Programs have come to a standstill.



The great outdoors has given some a great escape, as our campgrounds are full of activity – at a distance.

An update on our mask adventure: my 83-year-young mom has now sewn more than 1,000 masks and does not plan on stopping! Some of these masks are being sent all across Canada and as far as Germany.

Again, Dona and I would like to say thank you to all of our frontline workers who have helped keep many of us safe, healthy and fed! We hope this article finds club meetings and activities starting up again this fall.

Stay strong, safe and healthy. 🐦

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Z O N E R E P O R T S

ZONE 1 REPORT

Glenn Heather

SOCIAL DISTANCING and Alberta Health Services (AHS) requirements have certainly affected all clubs within Zone 1. Having face-to-face meetings have been made very challenging to organize. However, Zone 1 is planning to have a face-to-face meeting, establishing all AHS requirements, this summer. Details have not been sorted out yet; however, we will make it happen.

Resolutions are due in September. Therefore, all clubs who have thoughts on resolutions, please send them to me once your club has voted that they accept and support these resolutions.

It's now time to focus on our passions – angling, hunting and outdoor experiences. Fall is soon upon us; I'm hoping that your draws were successful, and plans could be made.

With numerous reservoirs stocked this spring, there are increased angling experiences within Zone 1. I hope that many of you are having the opportunity to enjoy the fishing.

2020 will certainly go down in history as a year like no other. Even though things are different, we still have the ability to enjoy the outdoors and champion events and projects.

Our AFGA Environment, Hunting and Fishing Chairs have been lobbying and giving recommendations to the Alberta government, even though the offices have been working remotely. The efforts of the AFGA have not diminished during these COV-

ID-19 times.

As always, I make a plea to all our members who receive these great *Outdoor Canada West* magazines, tell your friends, advertise the necessity that without Albertans' input, things we cherish like outdoors experiences can be restricted or taken away if we do not have a unified voice. AFGA is that voice and membership numbers increase that voice! Thank you for joining, let's get more members.

Take care all; stay safe, stay healthy!

ZONE 2 REPORT

Deb Clarke

I AM NOT quite sure where to start. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected so many lives, livelihoods, lifestyles, how business is conducted and, overall, life in general. Before the virus, not too many ever talked about a summer staycation or used social media to the extent they do now.

On the plus side, people brought some form of outdoor activities into their lives this spring/summer that ranged from walking, biking, hiking, fishing and/or camping. Slowing down and being outside together with family and/or friends was important and that way of thinking seems to have remained. Social distancing outside is far easier than a trip to the mall or grocery store.

All those outdoor newbies need to be made aware that we are conservationists and can offer them outdoor knowledge, programs to improve on or experience new skillsets, opportunities to meet like-minded people,

\$5,000,000 personal excess liability insurance, subscription to the *Outdoor Canada West* magazine, youth and women's camps, and so much more. Making sure members renew their membership is equally important. At minimum, look at updating your club's website or other social media platforms. For instance, there could be up-to-date club e-mail/contact, activity and project info available, together with promotion of general outdoor-related online courses, links to videos or any other information (i.e., the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund year and decade in review video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCBGsNWp53A&t=9s>.)

The AFGA must change and evolve with the times. Our executive director and board of directors have been working hard on important priorities, which have caused some delays with restructuring annual programs and events, along with e-mail and call response times. Be assured that, as members, you are important to the organization and your ideas, suggestions and concerns will be addressed. Your continued patience during the pandemic is sincerely appreciated. Ideally, we all need to work together to fundamentally keep our organization strong and remain the voice for conservation.

On behalf of Zone 2, a big thank you to Delinda, our executive director, and her staff, who have been keeping the essential operations of the association going during this time of crisis. The hard work and efforts of all involved have not gone unnoticed!

My previous report asked the ques-

tion, "Have you ever thought about why you became and/or remain to be a fish and game member?" and gave examples of some reasons why you may have joined a fish and game club. As I write this report, sadly not one e-mail has been received. I am still interested in hearing from you! Send an email to zone2.afga@gmail.com and let me know (in a few words) why you became or remain a member. Include one or two aspects of what is important to you in the organization.

If you are not receiving the AFGA electronic newsletter, sign up at <https://www.afga.org/join-html/>.

The AFGA relies heavily on the affiliation dues from clubs to keep operations running smoothly. Please forward current club and membership information to the AFGA as soon as possible. This will also ensure your members receive all organization benefits.

I have had the opportunity to chat here and there with fish and game members about opportunities and club futures. By the time this report reaches you, I trust that the Zone 2 club reps will have been able to meet to talk shop and strategize (from a club standpoint) how to move forward in this ever-changing world.

Best of luck to you during this upcoming hunting season. Before you head out, check this link for important hunter information regarding CWD: <https://www.alberta.ca/chronic-wasting-disease-updates.aspx>.

Did U Know that with everyone spending more time at home, knowing, growing, harvesting and cooking our own food, these pleasures are again a popular lifestyle choice. Here are a few links to adventurous recipes, ideas and cooking tips from Canadian outdoor enthusiasts with a passion for cooking too. Enjoy!

- www.sossyoutdoors.com/season-one – Venison wontons, Sossy Outdoors, Tammy Wood
- www.albertaoutdoorsmen.ca/

recipe.html – Recipe of the month with Duane Radford

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=whhVEiHD5m4 – Three simple brine recipes for smoked trout, Brad Fenson
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCgqP0BX9dM&list=PLsmTH2mHmlEe2G7eF7FaELMak8mvHllza – How to cook wild game steak with a sous vide, TJ Schwanky
- www.outdoorcanada.ca/wines-to-pair-with-fish-fowl-and-game/ – Wines to pair with fish, fowl and game, Duane Radford

ZONE 3 REPORT

Arnold Winkler

WE'RE HALFWAY THROUGH 2020, with not much having changed in the last couple of months; our clubs are social distancing as best they can with their outdoor activities. The COVID-19 pandemic is still hanging around, creating financial hardships for individuals, families and a lot of businesses. The myth that warmer temperatures would stop the spread of the virus is just that, a myth. Some southern US ▶

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states, such as California, Texas and Florida, were having above-average summer temperatures and their COVID-19 cases kept increasing dramatically.

Here in Alberta, we were steady or with slight declines in certain areas, but our temperatures were cooler than normal from beginning of April to end of June, with a couple of frost nights mid-June, some intense hailstorms and lots of record-breaking rainfall amounts. Whatever we as Albertans are doing has been working, possibly by following the procedures outlined by our provincial health authorities. Stay safe; great job everyone.

All of you that had applied for the special licence draws will have, by now, found out if you were successful. Some negative comments were voiced on having to purchase the wildlife certificate in order to apply for the draws, but true and dedicated hunters do understand the process.

As 2020 seems to have a slow-moving trend, our AFGA club memberships are also down somewhat; all clubs should try and connect with previous members. This is not only for all the benefits that they are entitled to, but also to ensure that with a large membership, we have a voice to influence what the provincial fish and wildlife departments implement into our fishing and hunting opportunities. In Alberta, we enjoy our great outdoors with tight lines, straight arrows and steady crosshairs.

Stay safe with social distancing, use protective products; the best communicator is a thumbs up!

ZONE 4 REPORT

Faran Schaber

AS I WRITE this, it is the first week of July and I just finished seeding two weeks ago, constantly fighting with repairs and the rain. And tonight, just

for a change of pace, it's raining again.

With COVID-19 still a concern, hopefully you have all gotten out to practice a little physical distancing while fishing. It is a new era to do the things we love to do.

The draw results are now out. Some of you will be planning your hunts using the draws you were successful on, and some of you are trying to figure out why you didn't get your draws.

The provincial AFGA executive has been meeting via Zoom conferencing, as well as sending e-mails to stay in touch and support the association. If there are any concerns from the clubs in Zone 4 or Zone 6, send me an e-mail and I will bring it up with the executive.

Teck Coal usually has a trails committee meeting the end of June. This year the in-person meeting was cancelled, but they asked for ideas on how the meeting could be conducted during this pandemic. It was decided that a Zoom conference was the best alternative and our meeting was scheduled for July 25.

Stay safe and happy fishing until hunting season; then we can all go outdoors and self-isolate for a while.

ZONE 5 REPORT

Robyn Butler

AS WITH MY last report, again I hope you are all well and staying safe. This has been a really difficult time, but we can get through this COVID-19 pandemic by supporting our members and being there for each other. I know clubs haven't been able to meet or hold any of the normal annual activities, so it's been harder to keep memberships up and to hold any type of fundraising activities. 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'm really hoping our zone can hold some kind of meeting soon,

as life has to go on somehow. Maybe this is the time for clubs to brainstorm for new and better events when this pandemic has come to an end.

Social distancing certainly doesn't end many of our outdoor activities, and hiking, bird watching, target plinking, fishing, etc. are still great ways to spend time with family. I sure hope the summer was a good time to get out and especially spend some hours on the water. All reports show fishing has been good and, with some relaxed regulations, a fish fry is a great reward. Enjoy nature and continue good conservation practices, as always.

Alberta Fish and Game has held



several Zoom meetings, including one with Fish and Wildlife which was quite promising, but I'm sure other reports will cover it. My own local club, Lamont and District Fish and Game, has been quiet, but we did get 100 trees planted on the Wildlife Trust Fund property that we steward and had our trout pond stocked where we also got a good clean-up day completed. Our youth group has had to stay inactive, so not much to report on there. Send me any updates you have, and I'll keep you updated on when and if we can finally get together and get Zone 5 ramped up again.

Wishing you success and an enjoyable fall season. 🐦



Wildlife Trust Fund Success 2019-2020

Brad Fenson

AFGA Habitat Development Coordinator

The Wildlife Trust Fund (WTF) had a busy and creative 2019 and early 2020, working co-operatively with the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) to secure 606 acres of habitat. The WTF now has 45,831.35 acres of habitat acquired in Alberta.

The collaborative efforts of the two organizations generated a new approach to habitat ownership and management in 2018, and staff and volunteer stewards have been working to ensure sound management on the properties with shared titles.

Conservation-minded landowners were instrumental in making the WTF grow in the past year. The Stefaniuk Conservation Site is a donation of 146 acres, being processed through the Eco-gifts Program to maximize benefits to the donor. A significant number of properties have been donated to the WTF in the last decade, from landowners wanting to ensure their property remains conserved in perpetuity.

The MacConnachie Conservation Site offers excellent access for hunting activities and is adjacent to the ▶



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Securement ACA Regions Crown Habitat Management Area 	<p>Stefaniuk Farm Potential Eco-gift NE 33-62-21-W4</p>
<p>Source: Spatial data provided by Alberta Government Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N Imagery Used: ESRI World Imagery</p> <p>0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Kilometers</p>		<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Alberta Conservation Association</p> </div> <p>Date: 2019-04-15 Scale: 1:8,000</p>



Morecambe Conservation Site, and the Rannach Provincial Grazing Reserve to the north, with 21,324 acres.


An expansion to the MacConnachie Conservation Site brought another 151 acres into the WTF, holding joint title with ACA. This property offers incredible biodiversity and is an excellent addition to the adjacent MacConnachie and Morecambe Conservation Sites.

Affiliate clubs and zones have been generous over the years with donations and support, and we are looking for help to fund securement work. The only form of funding for the WTF is donations from clubs, zones, private individuals, and raffles. We have continued to leverage dollars generated in the past and what the properties provide in revenue. Our partnerships have been pivotal to our success and help us manage our properties with collaborated staff efforts.

WTF will need to find volunteer stewards for new sites before spring inspections. We have volunteer stewards for the majority of our properties but are always looking to expand existing groups and welcome new volunteers into the stewardship movement. If you, your club, family or friends would like to get involved, it is a great way to spend some time

outdoors and see the real value of the habitat on WTF properties.

Please consider donating to the WTF so we may continue to grow and provide benefits to all wildlife and people in Alberta.

For more information on the WTF and what was achieved in recent times, go to <https://www.afga.org/wildlife-trust-fund-properties/>. 

PROPERTY	ACREAGE	LLD
MacConnachie	309	E Half 35-54-11-W4
MacConnachie Expansion Conservation Site	151	NW 36-054-11-W4
Stefaniuk Conservation Site	146	NE 33-62-21-W4
TOTAL	606	



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A Decade of Conservation At Golden Ranches

Brad Fenson

AFGA Habitat Development Coordinator

The Golden Ranches, located 27 kilometres east of Edmonton, represents an unprecedented conservation project within the province of Alberta. There were seven organizations initially involved in the acquisition of an approximately 1,500-acre property, which is the result of a team-oriented mindset for conservation in Alberta.

The acquisition of the entire Golden Ranch was a dream back in 2009, but a decade later, all Albertans can celebrate the conservation achievement. The Alberta Fish and Game Association



(AFGA), Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), Nature Conservancy of Canada, Edmonton Area Land Trust and Ducks Unlimited Canada were the main players in securing the Golden Ranches.

Golden Ranches was established in the early 1950s by a family passionate about ranching and rodeo. The Golden Ranch is located within the Cooking Lake Moraine Natural Area – a mosaic of dry mixed wood forest, grassland and wetland habitats. The knob-and-kettle topography supports a high diversity of vegetation, waterfowl, mammals and birds, and also functions as an extensive groundwater recharge area. The Cooking Lake Moraine Natural Area contains Cooking, Hastings and Ministik lakes, which provide excellent staging areas for globally significant concentrations of migra- ▶



tory waterfowl and shorebirds in the spring. The area also provides habitat for the piping plover, a shorebird listed as endangered in Canada.

The entire Golden Ranches project provides more than eight kilometres of shoreline and important wetland habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and mammals. The diversified landscape favours an abundance of wildlife, such as mule deer, moose, red-tailed hawk and numerous species of songbirds and small mammals.

Not only does Golden Ranches create habitat for plants and animals, but it is a key section of land to provide an ecological linkage to nearby Elk Island National Park, Blackfoot Grazing Reserve and Ministik Lake Grazing Reserve.

The conservation efforts of all organizations in the Cooking Lake Moraine Natural Area focused on achieving maximum benefit for wildlife movement and conserving the land that Alberta's species depend on.

All of the partner organizations are continuing in their efforts to manage the Golden Ranches and restore it to native habitat. This is one of the largest projects tackled by the conservation community in central Alberta and a considerable investment has been made on behalf of all Albertans.

Unique funding from grassroot donors, special lotteries, federal stewardship, creative sentencing through Alberta Justice and significant dollars raised through all conservation groups

have made the Golden Ranches a conservation success story.

AFGA members, clubs and zones raised close to \$170,000 to help with the purchase of the Golden Ranches. These are funds raised at a grassroots level in our province, by volunteers that work hard to generate funds for what they believe in. The ACA has provided a grant to match the funds generated by the AFGA affiliates to strengthen partnerships, flex funds raised for conservation and to continue securing more acres on the ground by working collaboratively.

The first parcel of the ranch was conserved in 2009, and a decade later the conservation dream is a reality for all Albertans to explore and enjoy. 🐦

