



NEWS FROM ALBERTA

President's Report

By Victor Benz

President

It has been eight months since the revitalization of the AFGA began, following the Special General Meetings last fall, and almost six months since you elected a new AFGA Executive. Everyone deserves an update on what we have been up to.

We currently have four committees dealing with our ongoing revitalization.

The Communications Committee (COM), under 2nd Vice President Dave Doonanco, is focused on raising the standard of regular AFGA communication to meet the needs of all of our members.

The Finance, Audit, & Risk Committee (FAR) under our Financial Chair, Andy von Busse, has the lead to ensure the AFGA is, and remains, financially stable.

The Membership, Focus, Priorities & Programs (MFPP) Committee, under Fishing Chair Darryl Smith, is charged with ensuring the AFGA remains relevant, known, and valued within Alberta. To do so, it is addressing the Why, Who, How, and What of the AFGA.

The Governance (GOV) Committee, chaired by me, President Victor Benz, is responsible for resolving the inconsistencies and contradictions that now exist within and between our governance



documents. Combined with input from the previously mentioned committees, will lead to fundamental revisions to all the AFGA governance documentation.

The work of all four committees is coordinated through the AFGA Executive. All Committees continue to share their work with the other committees, Executive, and the greater AFGA community.

1.0 WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

Probably the biggest single challenge over this period has been dealing with the ongoing restrictions and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Day-long, in-person, working meetings have been replaced by two-hour virtual meetings using the Zoom platform. This requires that almost all committee work is ▶

MOVING?

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

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

*Please note that \$6.30 of your annual membership dues are allocated to Outdoor Canada West Magazine



completed outside these meetings, requiring engaged, committed members. However, using virtual meetings has also led to more frequent meetings which has meant the pace is quicker, equating to more being accomplished.

The AFGA COM Committee effort is ongoing and expanding on the work already completed by staff.

The AFGA website has been revamped and is frequently being updated.

The AFGA is active on all major social media sites with regularly updated accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The AFGA Hook and Bullet-in newsletter is being delivered by email every two months to the entire AFGA family.

All AFGA Executives continue to contribute reports to Outdoor Canada West every two months.

With the help of Michael Short of Let's Go Outdoors, the AFGA now posts a new weekly interview with key contributors on its website, under the heading Media and News.

In early June, the AFGA held its first virtual webinar, showcasing the work of the Focus Priorities Programs Committee (FPPC), supported by polling questions. Extensive online resources were made available for review of the work completed by FPPC to support the event. The former Membership Committee (MEM) and FPPC subsequently merged to continue their work as the MFPP Committee.

The close focus on the AFGA's finances has also produced results. The AFGA unaudited monthly financial statements continue to show a good financial outlook, including:

- Improved, positive overall cash position
- Better-than-budgeted monthly performance
- Reduced age of Accounts Payable

The following chart summarizes the key focus elements developed by the MFPP Committee.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED FOCUS OF AFGA PROVINCIALLY IN "GO FORWARD MODEL"

MEMBER	CLUB	HABITAT PROGRAMS	PROGRAMS	ADVOCACY
Member Support, Services, and Benefits	Club Support and Services	Wildlife Trust Fund and others	Support collective goals or needs of members, clubs, and zones	Hunting
				Fishing
				Habitat
				Outdoor Recreation, Stewardship, and Ethics

Using these focus elements, the MFPP Committee is in the process of formulating recommendations related to "Objects" and "Membership Structure" for the organization. The goal is to have drafts complete by mid-October. An interview by Michael Short on the process was released over the summer.

The GOV Committee has been very active, delivering on a number of fronts.

Key AFGA Executive and Staff Policies have been approved by the AFGA Executive on:

- Code of Conduct
 - Confidentiality
 - Conflict of Interest
- Foundational AFGA Position Papers have been ratified by the AFGA Executive on:
- Current AFGA Membership
 - Fiduciary Duty
 - Current AFGA Governance Model
 - Current AFGA Executive — Executive Director Relationship
 - Current AFGA Senior Executive Powers
 - AFGA Executive Board training, including
 - AFGA Board Orientation checklist
 - An on-line AFGA Board Leadership Program

2.0 WHAT WORK IS ONGOING, COMPLETE WITH TIMELINES

The primary target for this year has always been to present a first draft of new AFGA Objects and Bylaws for discussion by year's end. The limited feedback from the June 9th webinar

has meant that, for now, the committees doing this work are flying blind. If feedback is forthcoming as we share our work over the next few months, the December drafts may well reflect your wishes and form the basis for change in the form of Special Resolutions.

The MFPP Committee has been working through a process to draft proposed new Objects for the AFGA. A critical component to this discussion is the question of the AFGA's charitable status. Any proposed changes to the Objects of the AFGA must first be approved by the Canada Revenue Agency if the AFGA is to retain its charitable status. Specifically impacted could be the ability of the AFGA to advocate on firearms issues. A decision to abandon federal charitable status will have far-reaching implications through everything the AFGA does today and all the AFGA Governance documentation.

Both the MFPP and GOV Committees are working on the AFGA Membership question. This is a critical point, since any decision here will ripple through the entire set of AFGA Governance documents. There appear to be two possibilities; a "Federation" model (with clubs as AFGA members and delegate voting), and an "Individual Members" model (where each individual is a full AFGA member, with full voting rights etc.). Each option has its own specific pros and cons. An initial draft of these options has been developed and is being refined prior to being shared with you in the very near future.

Executive Director's Report

Delinda Ryerson

Executive Director

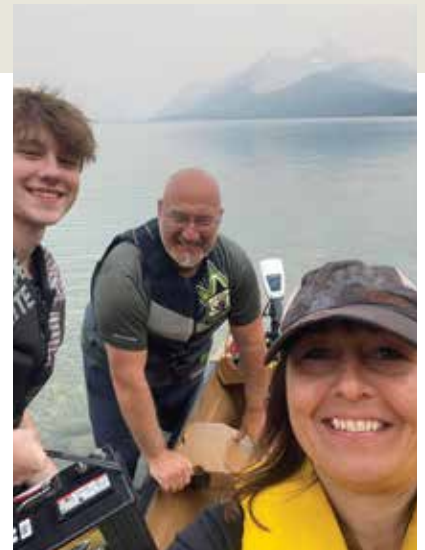
I hope you and your family had as fantastic a summer as my family and I did in the great outdoors. As soon as the exceptionally hot temperatures subsided, we did a lot of fishing. We went to several different lakes in the mountains and the boreal, targeting different species each time. It was so wonderful to enjoy nature and each other's company, while doing one of my all-time favourite activities – fishing!

A number of inquiries have been received about when the office will be open to the public again, and although Rhonda and I are always happy to assist our affiliated club members, whether in person or remotely, it was decided that having the office open to the general public, just to sell hunting and fishing licences, amongst the changing Alberta Health Service guidelines was not conducive to keeping our members and staff safe during the pandemic. As we contemplated opening the office to the public again, we did a cost analysis and identified that it costs us considerably more to sell hunting and fishing licences than we make by selling them. AFGA's commission on the sales of licences was less than \$2,000 in 2017, when we were selling more licences, and we don't expect to sell that many now or post-pandemic, as people have gotten more used to purchasing items online. As a result, we have decided to stop selling licences and focus entirely on assisting our member clubs and with AFGA programs.

As you are likely aware, the AFGA staff compliment has been reduced from six full-time staff to two. Currently, Rhonda Eidick and I are the only full-time staff, however Natalie Horne assists us with the maintenance of our website, our social media, the Hook and Bullet-in and other electronic newsletters, various other communication pieces, as well as designing numerous promotional items on a contractual, part-time basis. Additionally, our books and finances would not be in the excellent shape they are in today without the assistance from the Alberta Conservation Association Finance Team over the past 18 months.

With only the two of us trying to fulfill all of the work required to keep the AFGA operational, we find ourselves working on vast array of undertakings including answering our member's questions about anything related to the AFGA and our insurance, applying for and reporting on grants, or managing and delivering the Minister's Special Licence (MSL) program.

The AFGA is very fortunate to be the organization managing the MSL program, and as you are likely aware, the MSL program is a fantastic initiative to collect funds from the Wild Sheep Show



and the MSL raffle to subsequently grant out to worthy conservation projects. Although we are permitted to recoup significant amounts of our administration costs, it certainly keeps us busy throughout most of the year. If we are not promoting the program on a number of platforms, we are receiving grant applications for funding, or convening the MSL Granting Committee to determine which projects will receive funding or working with the Wild Sheep Foundation related to auctioning our three tags off at their Sheep Show auction in January of each year or selling and processing MSL raffle tickets for the three different species to Alberta resident hunters. I'm sure Rhonda will tell me that I forgot a bunch of items related to the MSL program after she reads this... but you get the gist.

Managing our finances by ensuring that all of our payables and receivables are processed as soon as possible, preparing and sending the Executive monthly financial statements, developing an annual operating budget, as well as providing requested information to our auditors also takes considerable amounts of time throughout the year.

If we are not working with Club Membership Chairs to upload their rosters into the AFGA database, we could be ensuring that the insurance documentation we are provided is accurate and submitted to our insurance company, whether it is Club General Liability, Club Non-profit Management Liability or Range insurance. ▶





You could regularly find us busy preparing for a monthly Executive or Senior Executive meeting or preparing draft minutes from the previous month's meetings. We are also very involved in the planning and delivery of the annual general meeting and any special general meetings held, as well as preparing minutes for them.

We know that advocacy is important to the AFGA and our members, so Rhonda and I are often involved in preparing, reviewing, or editing various advocacy-related communications. We are also responsible for collating, editing and formatting the Alberta section of the Outdoor Canada West magazine every second month.

As the Executive Director, I am currently accountable for all aspects of the Wildlife Trust Fund Program as well as



the Volunteer Land Stewardship Program. And although TJ Schwanky takes care of the details related to the Pronghorn Corridor Enhancement Program and the same for Everett Hanna pertaining to the Operation Grassland Community Program, I ultimately oversee these programs, and ensure that they have the necessary resources,

and get paid for the amazing work they are doing. Additionally, I am the Vice-Chair of the Antelope Creek Ranch Management Team and the AFGA is responsible for managing all of Antelope Creek Ranch's finances including payroll, payables, and receivables.

Last year we were instrumental in the delivery of the Wildlife Awards and associated video celebrating animals harvested in 2019, however, with all of our other work, we are unable to be able to deliver the Wildlife Awards or plan and deliver a conference in 2022, so we really need a Club or Zone to take these projects on this year for them to happen.

Our members are always our priority. We hope that the upcoming winter and holiday season brings you family time in the outdoors, and hunting successes. 🐾

1st Vice-President's Report

By **Faran Schaber**

1st Vice-President

As I write this, we are into harvest and archery season and I have finished harvesting peas and wheat, all before the end of August. Maybe I will make it out on the long weekend and harvest an animal as well.

We continue to move forward with monthly AFGA Executive and committee meetings. The club contacts have received information on planning and hosting the AFGA Wildlife Awards, as well as the Annual Conference and AGM but to date, no group has stepped forward to take on either of these projects. This organization cannot be run by the office staff and Executive alone. It also requires the volunteer efforts of the grassroots of our organization on a provincial level

to move us forward. We are in a time of change for the AFGA, and the affiliated clubs and their members cannot expect things to run as they have in the past. We have to come up with new ideas, new initiatives, and move ourselves forward.

I am currently working on a number of different options for holding our Annual Conference and AGM which will be discussed by the Executive. Again, we must remember we are in a time of change, and we cannot expect to have things done as they were in the past.

I attended the Teck Coal Annual Trails Meeting where it was discussed that they will continue to have some trails open, but some trails will remain closed while they go through the reclamation process. However, they

say that they will accommodate those wishing to hunt in the area and ask that you contact them a few days in advance of your trip, to make arrangements to have you escorted through the mine site to the back country.

We were also invited to a meeting with Teck Coal representatives along with a few other user groups. I invited our Environment Chair, Glenn Heather, along as well. Teck Coal was looking for input from user groups on what they would like the landscape to look like once reclamation is done. I'll let Glenn supply more information on the subject, with the information that he requested from Teck Coal.

As we move into our annual hunting season, now more than ever, be safe and shoot straight. 🐾

2nd Vice-President's Report

By **Dave Doonanco**

2nd Vice-president

Sometimes you just need to hear it for yourself or you're never too old to learn or something like that. Several years ago, or possibly many years ago, a young RCMP friend had decided to take up the activity of hunting and join us on one of our trips.

Being that I was the owner of a sporting goods store at the time, I was able to guide him and gear him up for the occasion according to the age-old standards that I was taught. On his own though he picked up one of those new-fangled commercial moose calls, one that us old birch horn chortlers would frown upon.

As we settled in on the first evening, we got to practicing our calls and low and behold he pulled out this plastic funnel with a clarinet reed attached to the blower end. With an extended blast he sent me back to the days of junior high band class and the squealing and squeaking sounds that the clarinet section tended to emit.

I couldn't exactly laugh at the whole procedure, after all it came from my store, but I certainly thought to myself that I've never heard a moose sound like that. The long ooowah of the cow or the short grunt of the bull were the two messages that I had been taught to perfect. There was the short stint with the ketchup can and string, which garnered me the raised eyebrow look over the glasses from my mentor, but other than that it was the birch horn for me.

My birch horn was able to coax a young bull into range, well at least he followed the cow who was coming to the call, and after that the clarinet was placed on the shelf for the time being.

Years later, after one of our party tagged out, myself, my junior trap-



ping partner and my oldest son who was a preteen at the time, headed down along the trail to scout out beaver houses for the upcoming trapping season. It was a Winnie the Pooh kind of day, all blustery and blowing, a perfect day to hunt but not so good if you're trying to call a moose. As we traipsed along the river, we kept hearing a high-pitched squeal, the sound you might hear when two aspen trees are rubbing together in the wind.

It continued on as did we, but something wasn't right, it wasn't consistent. So, I led my team slowly along the river and as we moved upwind the sound became louder. Then turning the bend, we could see a big old cow moose standing in the river and that squealing clarinet sound was coming from her direction, that same sound that I had heard coming from that plastic horn that was now gathering dust on the shelf.

There was a moment of confusion as the old cow started to drink out of the river and the sound continued, so she was either a ventrilimoose or she was passing air out of the other end and

had fooled us all. About that moment a young squealing cow joined her in the river, and we could see the source of the noise. Within seconds we saw what she was squealing about as a big forty-plus inch bull sauntered over to the ladies in wading.

I wasn't sure if we were about to see a ménage à moose trois or just the usual act of nature that may have to be explained to the young man standing beside me. A quick bull grunt at the trio and the big fellow gave a sharp stare in our direction, then another grunt and he turned to face his opposition. We played the grunt and stare game for several minutes until he decided to move his mini harem to a safer location and leave the three of us with a lifetime memory and myself with the realization that you need to open up your mind to change and new ideas.

The acceptance of new methods and ideas holds true with AFGA and its affiliate clubs and zones. We need to be able to hold onto some of those traditions, beliefs and activities that have gotten us to where we are, but at the



same time we need to let go of things that are no longer relevant in today's day and age. We need to be able to look at new ideas and change, not just for the sake of change, but in order to make our existence more relevant to the people of the outdoor community who are going to be our future.

I have heard from many people that we need to go back to in-person meetings and as much as I enjoy sitting down face to face with people, and especially the socialization after, we need to really look at how ineffective our past methods of meetings and communication would be today and with the future generations.

We live in a fast-paced world where decisions are needed to be made on issues in as short a time as possible. So having meetings only four times a year in person is very ineffective in accomplishing objectives in a timely fashion. Just as sitting all day in an eight-hour meeting is also less effective than having a couple hour meeting more frequently. People lose their focus after a few hours and become less engaged as well.

The Zoom style meetings also enable us to reduce our travel expenses and allow for more time to be spent dealing with issues relevant to the outdoor community as opposed to traveling to a meeting.

So, what do we do? Do we toss out the old birch horn and go with the new call? Not necessarily, sometimes we can add the new technology to existing methods and come up with a hybrid. Such is the case with AFGA meetings; we will look to the future and develop a system that will make sure that we are effective in meeting the needs of the association and its members. As we move forward, we will see some in-person meetings taking place with the option to "Zoom" in.

This same concept of looking at changes to our traditions will be looked at across the entire AFGA list of activities. This past year has given us a chance to reflect and reset our priorities and the relevance of ourselves as an organization within the outdoor community.


So how can you help? First and foremost, you as individual members and

clubs need to be engaged. It is a difficult task to come up with what the membership sees as our way forward if we don't hear from anyone. I realize that communication is a two-way street and that has been part of the issue with a lack of communication on what is happening within the provincial body of the AFGA. I believe we have started to correct that problem through the increase of social media, the Hook and Bullet-in newsletter, the Let's Go Outdoors interview series with Michael Short, and the articles in the Outdoor Canada West magazine. I know we have a ways to go and we will continue to improve our communication from the board to the members and clubs. We would like to hear more from the clubs and members. We have heard from a few people in regard to the Hook and Bullet-in newsletter, and the survey in the August edition did have a well above average response which is very helpful in planning future communication initiatives.

Let's keep that going and we would love to hear some comments on the Let's Go Outdoors interviews with Michael Short. If you haven't seen them yet go to the website, afga.org, and on the drop-down menu click on Resources and then Media and News.

We are working on developing a social media platform through mainly Facebook and Instagram but will explore the use of Twitter as well. So, if you are on those mediums look us up and follow us, but also engage in the conversations through a like or an actual comment. As well as following AFGA, follow the other clubs and zones that have accounts.

You will most likely see other changes to some of the age-old traditions that have been the Alberta Fish and Game Association. Let's keep an open mind, open lines of communication and remember that we, as a team, are in this for the benefit of the entire outdoor community.

All the best to you and yours. 



Environment Chair Report

By Glenn Heather

Environment Chair



It seems lately there has been a lot of time talking about coal mining. Initially it was the potential development of new strip-mining locations, which now appears to have been off the radar. Now it's the Cardinal River mine reclamation near Cadomin, where Teck Coal has stopped mining. Yes, this is the area that is probably the premier bighorn sheep habitat and largest population within the province.

In June 2020 the last coal was mined from this Cardinal River Mine location.

In 2012/2013 significant stake holders were assembled and gave feedback related to the Luscar mine area. A Land Management Plan now exists for this Luscar mine area but none for the Cheviot mine area. Teck Coal has reestablished discussions with stakeholders related to opinions and suggestions for reclamation and what that should be.

In a lot of ways, coal mining in this area has enhanced the habitat for fish, birds, elk, grizzly bears, and bighorn

sheep. As example, within the boundaries of the Teck Coal facility there is potentially the highest percentage of grizzly bears within the province. We know the quality of bighorn sheep within this property, plus there is now a significant elk herd that calls this area home.

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) plays the largest role in the Land Use Management Plan as they would ultimately determine overall access to this area.

The feedback Teck Coal is currently requesting is:

- Where can Teck Coal integrate traditional land uses back into the landscape?
- Where can Teck Coal reestablish or accommodate recreation back on the landscape?
- How to integrate social and ecological values for closure planning.

These are very broad-based questions. So, the questions are, what is best for Albertans, and you, our membership?

- What access should be allowed?
- What reclamation should be recommended?
- What trails should be kept and what should be removed?


There truly are so many factors to be considered. Now the reclamation will take years, however decisions need to occur soon, to set the direction for Teck Coal.

AFGA has been participating in each meeting and has given responses to these questions. Additionally, there are requests for Teck Coal to reeducate themselves on the past recommendations of the Luscar mine. Many if not most are applicable to the reclamation of the Cheviot mine area.

More so, AEP recommendations related to the Land Use Management will be presented separately, as indeed the decision regarding access and future use is critical.

What about the North Raven River and potential gravel pit interference? This by no means is a dead issue for the AFGA nor the Friends of the North Raven River. Nothing concrete has occurred on a gravel operation approval. Therefore, with the upcoming local Municipal election in October, AFGA and ACA will have an opportunity to speak and educate the potential future leaders of Clearwater County on the negative consequences and the sensitive ecosystems that will be affected by gravel operations.

Next issue there will be a summary on the Banff Bison Reintroduction Project. Not to give up too many tidbits of data, but this project has been very successful and shows how habitat and human initiative can come together to repopulate a species.

Until next issue, stay safe, enjoy the outdoors and take the time to notice habitat and how habitat is the most important element to sustain all forms of wildlife. 



Hunting Chair Report

By Brian Rudyk

Hunting Chair

In the early, predawn darkness, from our position crouched in the tall grass, we could hear them gathering. Their calls intensifying as they prepared to come. A shiver ran through me, perhaps from the crisp, cold, morning air or maybe in anticipation of what was to come, and I moved closer to my calm, confident companion. He gave me a reassuring smile and a squeeze on the shoulder with his big, strong hand. With the break of the sun over the horizon they came, advancing in wave after wave. As they were almost upon us, my partner arose in one smooth motion shouldering his firearm and with each report, his selected target tumbled to the ground.

I was four years old, and this is my earliest recollection of hunting with my Dad. We were set up in a natural flyway between two large sloughs on my Gido's (Grandfather's) farm near Lavoy, Alberta. As the flocks of ducks flew over, the hulls ejected from Dad's J.C. Higgins semi-auto fell all around me. I picked one up and first experienced the wonderful aroma of freshly burned gunpowder, a habit now carried on by my children and grandchildren. The morning cold was erased by the excitement of the hunt and a special experience was permanently etched into memory. It was the beginning of what I refer to as "A Course Taught by Dad". I continued to hunt that flyway from the time I was big enough to keep both ends of Gido's Neuman Brothers side by side, double barrel shotgun off the ground, until many years later when the farm was sold. I was extremely fortunate to have grown up in a very different time.



Growing up in this time frame and with a father who took me along on many a trek back into a remote moose camp or back country lake, hunting and fishing played a large part in determining my character, what I believe in, and who I am. My Dad was my mentor, instructor and hunting partner. Pursuing the outdoor lifestyle is extremely important to us. Maturity and responsibility come along with this lifestyle gained from experiences like receiving an Ithaca M-49 falling block, single shot .22 on my 8th birthday to control the gopher population in the pasture. Care of, control and safety with this little carbine was an expectation and it still holds a place of pride from my youth in my gun cabinet. Although I know this type of upbringing is still happening to some degree today, it is happening in a world where many believe it is highly irresponsible and governments even write legislation to prevent it. The world is a much different place than when I was a kid.

The acceptance of hunting and firearm ownership is one of the things that has changed considerably over the years. Urbanization of the population is a contributing factor in this shift.

Due to COVID, an increasing interest in hunting amongst women, and in many others now seeking a high quality, organic meat source, we have seen a slight resurgence in hunting and fishing licenses sold, but the percentage of population who hunt continues to decline. When I started teaching the Alberta Conservation Hunter Education Course some 35 years ago, about 10 to 15% of Alberta's population hunted. That number has dropped to around 3 to 5% even though Alberta still ranks amongst the highest percentage rates of hunters in North America. To ensure the preservation of the outdoor pursuits we cherish, we depend upon the support of the population majority. This is why it is so important that we put forward a positive, respectful image of what hunting is, does and means, anytime we portray it in any manner. As I write this, we have an upcoming Federal election in September which will be completed by the time this article is published. Hopefully we will have a government in power that is supportive of our outdoor lifestyle. Notwithstanding, it is important that we all do our part to support and promote our passion.

These changing times require a different approach to how we promote and support our outdoor pursuits. The majority of hunters and anglers go about their activities with little fanfare and are happiest when they are left alone to do so. Unfortunately, in an era where our proportion of the population is decreasing and those who oppose our lifestyle continue to lobby governments and utilize avenues like social media to garner support for their

position, we need to become more vocal promoting our passion in a positive light. Not only is it important to be a part of an organization like the Alberta Fish and Game Association but it is vital to be an active, contributing member. Whether at the club, zone or provincial level, there are hard working volunteers expending countless hours to preserve the outdoor life we cherish.

There are limitless ways people are able to lend support. If you are not into the political or lobbying aspects of promotion, there are many other ways to pitch in. Every constructive activity we are involved with in our communities from education, mentorship, habitat improvement to other community projects helps to bolster the support we receive from the general public. Often, especially in urban centers, "A Course Taught by Dad" is not a common reality so many youths and those unfamiliar with the outdoor world will never be exposed to it unless someone experienced provides the opportunity. We often receive questions about what value AFGA membership provides, and a lot of effort is made to deliver that worth, but the truth is that the biggest value in the association is our members. Ultimately the success of our association is dependent upon our members and my belief is that it is better to be proactive than reactive.

An example of where the AFGA Executive is being proactive is in response to the Alberta Elk Commission's letter seeking letters of support from municipal governments for Cervid Harvesting Preserves. AFGA President, Victor Benz, sent a letter to all 63 of Alberta's Counties, Municipal Districts and Special Areas providing our position on this matter and reasons why we are against it. So far, we have had some positive response, but this is definitely an area where members should be talking to their elected officials to find out where they stand. The more feedback our elected officials



hear from a variety of fronts the more likely we are to reach our objective.

Hopefully while you read this you are enjoying the success of the recent hunting season or are perhaps planning for a late season hunt. Hopefully you are also contemplating how you can continue to champion our cause

to ensure the future of our outdoor pursuits for generations to come. My goal is to add my grandkids' and great grandkids' hunting pictures to these of my son Jonathan's 2019 moose and his wife Allison's 2020 bull. If we all work together and do what we can, I am confident it will happen. 🐦



Fishing Chair Report

By Darryl Smith

Fishing Chair

Setting Frameworks: AFGA's Priorities Related To Fishing In Alberta

The last eighteen months have been anything but normal as one tries to fulfill their responsibilities as an AFGA Provincial Executive member. In my case, the expected roles related to fisheries and as a member of the Board of Directors (BOD) has expanded to include being the chair on multiple internal committees. These committees have been tasked with finding solutions for the financial challenges facing the organization and ensuring that the organization is positioned to deliver on the expectations of the membership today and into the future. The biggest concern is attempting to reconcile the diverse opinions of clubs and members as to what should be the focus of the organization which is directly tied to financials, staff, volunteer capacity and commitment.

In June 2020, I began the journey as Chair of the Financial Planning Advisory Committee (FPAC), followed by Focus Priorities Programs Committee (FPPC), which today has evolved into the Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee (MFPP). What I have learned is there are a wide range of opinions as to where the organization should devote its limited resources. There are many camps with a wide range of perspectives as to the focus of the organization. These include becoming a dedicated firearms lobby group to an organization solely focused on habitat.



I've been fortunate that the members that have sat on the committees have come from across Alberta with diverse involvement including leadership at a club level, firearm range management, volunteering, or as a supporter. They all came with open minds, the ability to assess the organizational landscape in Alberta, and a commitment to position AFGA for the future. For many reasons, FPPC and

MFPP committees believe the foundation for the organization must be tied to wildlife conservation with a strong connection to a wide range of outdoor recreational pursuits.

This includes firearm use, along with the necessary supports that enable safe, ethical, and responsible use that comes from mentorship, training, and the need for facilities such as ranges. The hope of the committee is that the

firearms lobbyists sees value in remaining part of the broader conservation community.

Much of the works of the committees have been to develop frameworks as to how the organization should move forward under such a foundation. The committee members provide outside eyes that involve broader viewpoints than just the angling community or provincial executive. This is critical due to societal and demographic changes in Alberta if the organization is to remain relevant and supported by the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.

Fishing is identified as a continuing focus within the organization and is broken down in the frameworks. There are direct links to programs, position development, and advocacy. The key words are "Fishing, Habitat, Outdoor Recreation, Stewardship, and Ethics". Fishing can be further refined to include "fisheries conservation, species management plans, fisheries regulations, opportunity, access, programs, and projects. How do these framework elements related to fishing align with our current direction?

AFGA has consistently advocated on behalf of Alberta's sportfishing community to ensure that the management of our fisheries resource is balanced and takes into account the social, economic, and environmental implications for over 100 years.

Our number one priority is habitat. AFGA is focused on assuring there is "NO NET LOSS" of aquatic habitat in Alberta. This goes beyond the stream, river, or lake, as riparian and upland areas are integral to watershed health as they are the source of runoff that feeds our aquifers and streams. Such a vision is only possible through a collaborative land use, planning, and regulatory approval process that involves stakeholders, landowners, industry, municipalities, and extends across all ministries of the Government of Alberta.

The second is related to sportfishing ethics, education, public awareness, and stewardship. This is to deal with habitat issues, perception of sportfishing, and to ensure the survivability of fish when they are released.

Sportfishing regulation simplifications and standardization is critical. While there has been some standardization recently, when one considers the relative few waterbodies in the province, the regulations remain far too complex and complicated. For example, the Little Smoky River has many different sets of regulations ranging from provincial species default to species specific depending on the reaches that impact size, possession, and seasons.

AFGA has been consistently calling for a one fish limit for species such as walleye and northern pike to be established for most waterbodies in Alberta. There is room for watershed specific regulations, but these must only be designated through a process involving meaningful consultations to determine the appropriate fisheries management objective.

Creating angling opportunity through innovation such as enhanced fish stocking, habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement, and establishing appropriate sportfishing regulations is essential. Alberta for far too long has used a one-dimensional approach to fisheries management relying almost exclusively on sportfishing regulations to achieve fisheries management objectives.

Over 80 percent of Albertans live in urban settings. For there to be a next generation of anglers, they must be introduced to the pastime by anglers of today and have the opportunity to participate close to their homes. The creation of urban fisheries and programs to recruit anglers must be a priority.


All of these elements, in my opinion as your provincial Fishing Chair, fit within the frameworks and should remain priorities for the organization.

The next step will be to involve the AFGA Zone Fish Chairs to garner their input.

To take us off topic, my biggest concern is the continuing direction that fisheries management in Alberta is headed. AFGA has identified this issue repeatedly to our various governments, whether Conservative, NDP, or UCP. Politicians have listened, but even for them, change is difficult to instill in institutions that are often linear, inward thinking, and siloed. Our current Minister Nixon has been pushing for innovation and we thank him for his effort and resolve.

To successfully manage our fisheries resource to optimize its social, economic, and biodiversity connections means that consultation, collaboration, and partnership are cornerstones. This extends to areas of research which must incorporate traditional knowledge and citizen science to develop consensus-based direction that leads to innovation. Only through a team approach with industry, the ACA, local governments, other Ministries within the Government of Alberta including Justice, NGOs, and the general sportfishing community will this be possible.

Sadly, this is not the case today. AFGA's concerns related to the Draft Bull Trout Recovery Plan elicited a typical bureaucratic response with little substance.

Personally, I believe we're at the point where unless the siloes, hierarchy, and internal perspective within the bureaucracy can be eliminated, landscape level gains related to wildlife conservation in the province are unlikely. I believe it is time to consider a USA style Fisheries Commission where regulatory, management, and enforcement responsibilities rest with an outside agency which includes stakeholders having a real say. Anglers in the province are tired of being forgotten and given lip service only! 



Wildlife Trust Fund Program Feature Property The Caroline — Shell Property

By **Natalie Horne**

The Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA), Wildlife Trust Fund program was founded in 1983 by progressive and forward thinking AFGA Executives, Zones, and Clubs, who saw the need to protect critical habitat and advanced conservation efforts for all Albertans. These land acquisitions and subsequent land management is made possible through generous contributions and tireless fund-raising efforts, and the volunteer land stewards that ensure we get the most benefit possible from our wildlife resources.

To the Alberta Fish and Game members, we thank you for being a part of the lasting legacy of our Wildlife Trust Fund properties. If you are unfamiliar with this program, the Wildlife Trust Fund is Alberta's oldest and most well respected land trust. It includes over 100 properties that stretch from the extreme southern reaches of the province all the way north to Manning. These properties encompass nearly 50,000 acres of important fish and wildlife habitat. In addition to conserving critical habitat, these properties provide recreational opportunities for all outdoor enthusiasts.

Proper management of our Wildlife Trust Fund properties depends heavily on AFGA members and so in 2009 we established a volunteer land stewardship program to ensure they are well looked after. Volunteer stewards conduct biannual inspections and assist habitat staff with maintenance and special projects. With such a large number of properties located across the province there is no way these properties could be properly

monitored without the dedication of our volunteer stewards.

In this month's issue we will be highlighting one of our Wildlife Trust Fund Properties and acknowledging the valuable role that our volunteer land stewards play when it comes to these conservation sites.

The Caroline — Shell Canada property is a 160-acre site, located approximately 28km north of Sundre along Highway 22 and falls under Wildlife Management Unit 320.



It is situated in the dry mixed-wood subregion of the Boreal Forest natural area of Alberta, southeast of the town of

Caroline. The forest consists of mature pine, trembling aspen, balsam poplar, birch, alder, willow, saskatoon, and chokecherry. White and black spruces are also prevalent throughout. Wildlife found on the property includes white-tailed and mule deer, moose, elk, black bear, fox, coyote, grouse and occasionally wolf and even grizzly bear. A variety of small mammals and songbirds are residents or regular migrants. This property is day use and foot access only, with no open fires.




We would like to extend our thanks to land steward Marianne Hunt for submitting details and photos for this property, information from which is used in this article. Current volunteer land stewards for this property are Colin and Gerty Kure, Maria Sihlis, Terry and Marianne Hunt, Diane Lindblom, Bert and Marita Stermann, Brian Goliss, and Teresa Wiliger, who regularly inspect and submit flora and fauna reports on this property. This information is extremely valuable for our conservation efforts on this property.



Marianne Hunt

ing there in all seasons; hiking, skiing and volunteering their time while also enjoying the beauty it has to offer. Marianne reports that volunteers have fixed fences and performed weed control while also recording and reporting on changes over time caused by beaver activity and flooding. The property has a varied ecosystem with wetlands, forests, meadows and a lot of wildlife activity.

As members of the AFGA, these properties belong to you and are to be enjoyed and treasured. To see a detailed description of AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund properties, based on area, please visit our website: <https://www.afga.org/wildlife-trust-fund-properties>. These, and our partners' conservation sites, are also listed via a map search through the Alberta Discover Guide, available at <https://www.albertadiscoverguide.com>. 



Terry Hunt

We encourage all of our members to visit this, and other Wildlife Trust Fund properties and contact us via email at communications@afga.org with your recreation experiences, details of any animals you spot or see signs of, flora you see or even berries or animals you harvest! If you are interested in becoming a volunteer land steward for this, or any other properties, please contact us via email to office@afga.org, we would love to hear from you.



Caroline Fencing Project

Two long standing volunteer land stewards, Maria and Bob Hall (both deceased) were also major contributors to conservation efforts on the Caroline — Shell Canada property. They erected bird boxes, organized weed removal and completed regular inspections and reports on the property. To commemorate their connection to this Wildlife Trust Fund property, a sign was organized and paid for by their fellow stewards and erected on the property. It is through the efforts of volunteers such as Maria and Bob, that our Wildlife Trust Fund properties will remain as a legacy for all Albertans and wildlife conservation within our province.

Terry and Marianne Hunt, and Bert and Marita Stermann live close to the property and regularly enjoy recreat-

This offer is valid at any
Mark's Work Wearhouse

Show your Member Savings card at any
 Mark's Work Wearhouse location and save 10%
 off all merchandise listed on your card.



ZONE REPORTS

ZONE 1 REPORT

By Greg Bird, Zone Director

WELCOME EVERYONE AND thank you for your continued support through these challenging times we are facing. Gone are the days of assumed face to face meetings and contact/relationship building. We are finding ourselves continually wrestling with the online format of meetings. The AFGA is no exception; we have tried our best to ensure that the continuity and continuance of the organization forges ahead while respecting the restrictions and cautions needed to ensure safety for all.

In canvassing many clubs in Zone 1 over the past while, it is unfortunately apparent that many have all but fallen silent as a result of the ever-changing restrictions. As we all know, volunteer input and consistency is something that all clubs struggle with and add to it a pandemic, and we all see the added strain on keeping our clubs and activities current and advancing. I am happy to report however that many that I have talked to have not lost the spirit, just the means under the current environment to contribute and make that mark that we all know the AFGA has done for decades.

I am continually impressed with the depth of the dedication of our affiliated clubs and the people within them. We truly are a conservation-based organization, the diversity of how this is applied in different clubs and regions is nothing short of amazing. Together we truly can achieve a province and more importantly, a culture of conservation and preservation. With the ever-changing political landscape, it becomes that

much more important that our institutional based organization continues to deliver a consistent and well thought out approach to issues facing our landscape and the resources found within it. To that, I feel humbled when I review submissions made from individual members working tirelessly to this end.

Zone 1 has been relatively quiet with meetings etc., but I am confident that as things reopen and solidify, the individual clubs will suddenly spring back to life and we will be met with a new reality, one filled with hope and opportunity.

As you read this, for many, hunting will be coming to a close, and for others they will be anxiously measuring ice thickness and quality, in anticipation of getting out there and drilling a hole in their favourite spot. These experiences are invaluable and when shared ensure the future of our heritage.

All the best, keep conservation front and center, and hopefully before long we will be sharing experiences in person again.

ZONE 2 REPORT

By Joe Baranyay

AS I PEN this article I think back and wonder where the summer has gone and what lies ahead in the fall. Most of our membership is planning fall trips and by the time you read this article some fine table fare will have been processed and your trips are just memories of the past.

Your AFGA board members and staff have been working hard on your behalf and hats off to them for their time

and dedication to communicate with membership on important issues that affect the future of conservation education and management of our natural resources in Alberta. Over the past few years, I have heard many comments on the lack of information in our organization, but it seems that in our Zone, there is very little communication between clubs, and we seem to forget that we all work towards a common goal to preserve our heritage and unite like-minded individuals. There is strength in numbers, and we should be sharing ideas to build a stronger organization rather than being divided. With spring and summer behind us there seems to be good numbers in the upland and migratory bird populations. The bird hunters should be happy this fall.

I have not had a lot of response from clubs in Zone 2 regarding activities for one reason or another. It seems that with COVID, the larger clubs have gone into early hibernation, but the smaller clubs are active and always willing to share information. As always, Hussar Fish and Game seems to be active and with the range open, have planned some fun activities with their annual shotgun turkey shoot that was held on October 17th, located in the campground in the village of Hussar. Even with COVID cancelling a lot of their shoots, they still manage to have some activities to keep membership and guests active. Good job Barry Traxel.

The Okotoks and District Fish and Game Association activities have started up again to a degree, post COVID restrictions, as I am sure many clubs have. So far, we have had a very successful year. There has been a lot of

talk throughout the AFGA about what membership numbers will look like coming out of the pandemic. Well, we have seen a big increase in our membership in 2021. Past years we have averaged around 40 members or so with the 2020 membership being 37 members. This year, Okotoks has 122 members. A big part of the growth was due to a membership drive we had in late spring and into the summer. All new members' names, as well as the names of current members who sold new memberships, went into a draw for a pair of binoculars donated by Bob Gruszecki and AHEIA. Many new memberships were purchased through our web page while others were sold directly by members. We gained 51 new members during the draw. The draw was won by a young lady, Sydney Nethersole who was thrilled with the prize.



We hosted a Member Meet & Greet night in August. It was a chance for new and old members to meet each other, exchange stories and offer suggestions for new ODFGA programs. Over 30 people, including many families and children attended. We hosted a shotgun shoot at the AHEIA facility south of Calgary in September. Members and guests did participate in the shoot and enjoyed a barbecue afterwards. Meetings are expected to start this fall. Our focus will be less on formal business and more on the kind of informative presentation and activities that our members would like to see. Thank you, Matt Zazula, for your report.



CWD is still a major concern and I have circulated an email to all the clubs in Zone 2 which I hope they sent out to their membership, from Mark Ball, PhD Wildlife Disease Specialist with AEP. There were some interesting links attached showing the proper way to collect tissue samples so that you don't have to submit the whole head. I found it quite interesting, and it would reduce the number of heads in the freezers. This could speed up the test time and get results back sooner. With AEP increasing the number of deer licence allocations in their attempt to control the spread of CWD by increasing harvest numbers, we should do everything we can to assist the program in reducing wait times and getting faster results.

As we are in the 4th wave of COVID, I want to wish all of our members and families safe journeys and wish you all the best in the upcoming holiday season in December. Get involved and stay active in your clubs.

ZONE 3 REPORT

By Harold Drok

THIS REPORT IS being written on September 2nd and it's amazing how quickly the weather can change. Three weeks ago, it was 30 degrees almost every day and today it's having trouble reaching double digits. The good news is that the streams, rivers, lakes and stillwater ponds are starting to cool down, and fishing will start to improve; fall fishing

is my favourite. Let's hope we get lots of snow this winter or we will see some of the water bodies start to show signs of the limited snow and rain we have had the past 12 months in central Alberta.

It's been two months since I became the Zone 3 Director and I have now attempted to call all of the club presidents in Zone 3. The pandemic has certainly challenged many of the clubs that have had difficulty holding in-person meetings and holding elections. Many clubs had to cancel their annual banquets where they sell the majority of their club memberships. As well, the banquets are typically the main, club fund raiser. Almost everyone I talked to is looking forward to 2022 when they can hold their youth camps, fun shoots and other activities.

Zone 3 club news includes Rimbey Fish and Game purchasing the golf course south of Rimbey and now has plans to build a club house and archery course on the property. Innisfail Fish and Game is trying to get approval to set up an archery course close to Innisfail and Red Deer Fish and Game is looking at relocating their Alberta Youth Pheasant facilities from east of Innisfail to the Red Deer Fish and Game Habitat Land.

Zone 3 had several volunteers step up and volunteer for two of the vacant Zone 3 positions, Kelsey Kure is the Hunting Chair and Dale Reid will be the Resolutions Chair; both positions will have been formalized at the October 3rd Zone 3 meeting. We are still looking for an Environment Chairperson. If anyone is interested, please call me 403.887.2403. ▶





ZONE 4 REPORT

By **Chelsea Jaeger**

IT'S NICE TO be back and involved with the AFGA! I have missed being a part of such an amazing and dedicated organization. My apologies for missing the last issue of Outdoor Canada West, I am still familiarizing myself with Zone 4 and its clubs.

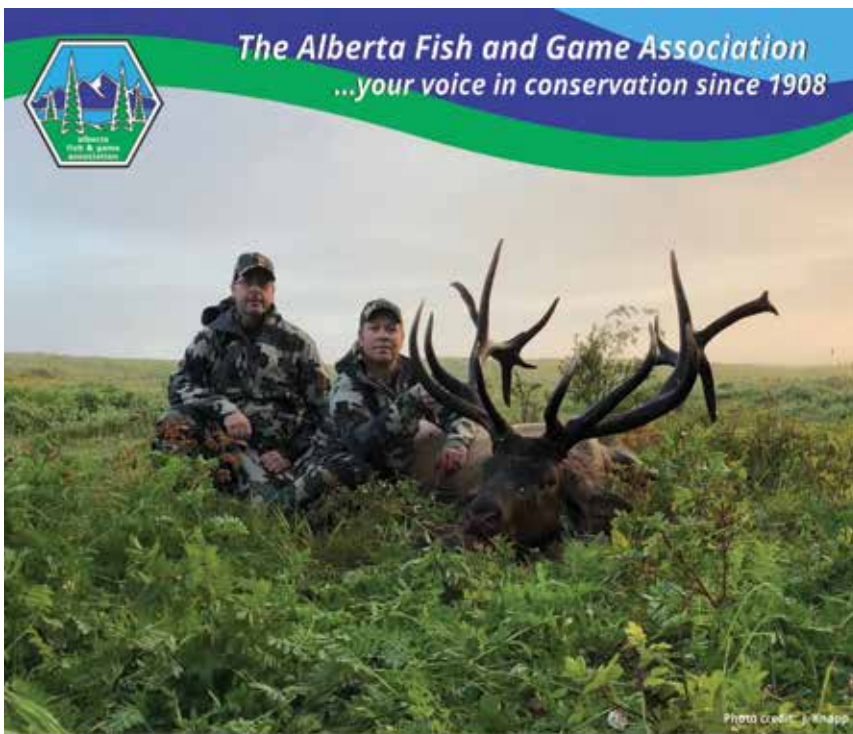
Much of my time has been spent with the Narrow Lake Conservation Centre which is where the Narrow Lake Youth Camp is held twice a year as well as the BOW camp. Both of which are incredible programs and I highly recommend people attend. The AGM for NLCC was held on Sept 11 however at the time of writing this, I do not yet know what has come out of the meeting.

Zone 4 had a virtual AGM on June 27. The Board of Directors has some new names, as well as some returning names. They are:

- Director – Chelsea Jaeger
- Vice-Director – Dona Murphy
- Secretary – Samantha Wulff
- Treasurer – Paul Kirkham
- Hunting Chair – VACANT
- Fishing Chair – Gerald Schutte
- Environment Chair – VACANT
- Casino Chair – Scott Arthurs
- Program Chair – VACANT
- Youth Chair – Samantha Wulff

If you have an interest in helping out with the Zone, please contact me regarding the vacant positions. The next meeting will be held on October 17th via Zoom.

It is the time of year for resolutions. Resolutions are an important part of AFGA, and it is an opportunity to help focus the voice of the members. If all the clubs could get their resolutions in to me for the October 17th meeting, they will be discussed, and approved resolutions will be forwarded to the 1st Vice-President. 🐦



*The Alberta Fish and Game Association
...your voice in conservation since 1908*

Become a member, add your voice, and enjoy the following benefits:

- Knowledge that you are supporting the largest conservation organization in Alberta
- Being part of the acquisition and protection of over 50,000 acres of our Wildlife Trust Fund properties; available for hunting, angling and outdoor pursuits
- Participation in our annual Wildlife Awards competition
- Opportunity to participate in youth and women camps in Alberta
- Opportunity to participate on numerous conservation projects such as Volunteer Land Stewardship or Pronghorn Corridor Enhancement
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit while participating in hunting, fishing, trapping or authorized AFGA club activities, including Accidental Dental Expense, Rehabilitation Benefit, Accident Reimbursement Expense, Travel Medical Expense, and others
- \$25,000 search and rescue expense (Canada only)
- \$5,000,000 personal excess liability insurance
- Discounts on the purchase of personal insurance through BrokerLink (1-888-826-9427)
- Yearly subscription to Outdoor Canada West magazine (regular newsstand price \$7.99 per issue, six issues per year)
- 10% discount on Mark's merchandise.

<https://www.afga.org/join-afga/> • 780-437-2342 • office@afga.org
13045 - 156 St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5V 0A2

