



CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD

Recognizing the past with a clear focus on the future

Report including recommendations

Alberta Fish and Game Association Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee

December 2021



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Alberta Fish and Game Association Membership Focus Priorities Committee Members

Stephanie Briggs, Committee Vice-Chair, Drumheller and District Fish and Game Association
 Jim Clarke, Sarcee Fish and Game Association, Life Member Lethbridge Fish and Game Association
 James Donnelly, Red Deer Fish and Game Association
 Glenn Heather, AFGA Provincial Environment Chair, Medicine Hat Fish and Game Association
 Dona Murphy, Onoway and District Fish and Game Association
 Art Polanski, Wheatland Conservation and Wildlife Association, Direct Member
 Grant Pryznyk, Okotoks and District Fish and Game Association
 Darryl Smith, Committee Chair, AFGA Provincial Fish Chair, Life Member
 Matt Taylor, Direct Member
 Ross Towers, Red Deer Fish and Game Association
 Victor Benz, President of AFGA (*ex officio committee member*)
 Delinda Ryerson, Executive Director AFGA, (*ex officio committee member*)

Important Notes to Reader

This report represents the consensus viewpoint of the Alberta Fish and Game Association *Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee (MFPP)*. The committee can only make recommendations. These recommendations will need review by the Alberta Fish and Game Association Executive, other committees, and the larger Alberta Fish and Game Association community. If there is support, the path, and necessary steps to implement should be identified within a strategic business plan.

MFPP is requesting that the AFGA Executive provide feedback to the committee on how it will address the recommendations contained within the report. Following this input, MFPP recommends the committee be dissolved. The report and recommendations contained should guide ongoing work by existing committees or create the need for others.

Dictionaries describe a “*member*” as a person, country, or organization that joins a group, society, or team. In this report, unless otherwise noted, members refer to those who belong to an Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) affiliated club, or direct and life members of the provincial organization. MFPP recognizes this is not consistent with the AFGA bylaws.

The *Alberta Societies Act* is the legislation under which the AFGA bylaws are registered. The bylaws date back to 1946. They set the legal framework that requires an organization to define who is a member. Members under this act can be organizations and/or individuals. Technically the members of AFGA as set out in the bylaws are the affiliated clubs (organization), direct members (individual), and life members (individual). From a governance perspective, AFGA provincially is primarily a federation of clubs. Clubs select delegates from their membership to represent them for votes on business presented at annual or special general meetings which determines the direction of the provincial organization. Federation models are common under the Act.

In no way does membership through an AFGA affiliated club imply that individuals, youth, and families are not part, do not belong, or any less important to AFGA provincially. The issue related to members is one of semantics based on the use of terms as tied to governance in overlying legislation that leads to confusion. Whether youth, adults, or family cohorts, AFGAs members are the backbone of the organization. Neither AFGA provincially or affiliated clubs would exist without the support of our collective membership.

Objects and purposes have the same meaning. The *Alberta Societies Act* requires organizations to have registered objects. Such objects in Government of Canada legislation are referred to as purposes. Whether as objects or purposes, these articles describe the goals of the organization and the boundaries it must work within. AFGA requires its objects (purposes) to not only meet the requirements under *Alberta Societies Act* but also legislation such as the *Canada Income Tax Act*.

Abbreviations, Acronyms, Word Context	
ACA	Alberta Conservation Association
AFGA	Alberta Fish and Game Association
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGMC	AFGA Annual General Meeting Committee
AHEIA	Alberta Hunter Education Instructor' Association
Association (capitalized)	Alberta Fish and Game Association
BCWF	British Columbia Wildlife Federation
BOD	AFGA Executive (Board of Directors)
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
COM	Communications Committee
CWF	Canadian Wildlife Federation
FAR	AFGA Finance Audit Risk Management Committee
FPAC	AFGA Finance Planning Advisory Committee
FPPC	AFGA Focus Priorities Programs Committee
Focus (capitalized)	AFGA Focus
Focus Elements (capitalized)	AFGA Focus Elements
GoA	Government of Alberta
GOV	AFGA Governance Committee
MEM	AFGA Membership Committee
Member	Individual, family, or youth who is a member of an affiliated club or direct and life member of the provincial organization
MFPP	AFGA Membership Focus Priorities Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Objects (capitalized)	AFGA Objects
OFAH	Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Organization (capitalized)	Alberta Fish and Game Association
SGM	Special General Meeting
Strategic Plan (capitalized)	AFGA Strategic Plan
SWF	Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
TOR	Terms of Reference
WTF	AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund

Executive Overview

Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee (MFPP) asked itself the fundamental question: Is there room for a *broad-based lifestyle organization with defined emphasis* that positions itself in the middle of the wildlife conservation spectrum in Alberta’s future?

MFPP is of the opinion room exists, in many ways this would mean Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) mirrors the past, but with defined clarity and purpose. An organization that is in tune with today and the future. Success will be tied to creating and communicating a value proposition that sets the organization apart in a crowded field. To achieve this end will require investment financially, relying on staff and volunteer commitment to do the heavy lifting.

To accomplish this task there will be needed changes across the organization that may impact governance, issue management, membership, finances, communication, promotion, branding, marketing, fundraising, and operations.

MFPP identified that the reason for the review is about potential and future members who may have different motivations for belonging than current members. The impact of change as recommended by MFPP on today’s members was always taken into account and weighed during committee deliberations.

Demonstrating and communicating that the organization is relevant and deserves support across the outdoor community in a rapidly changing society is essential. The focus and objects of the organization were considered fundamental elements that required review. This allowed the determining of structural components that would support the delivery of the organizations focus and objects. The organization can not be everything to everyone, and thus must set boundaries.

Summary of AFGA Structural Components 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

Capacity within the organization is limited, but a status quo position likely will lead to further loss of members and clubs. Delivery on the objects (purposes or goals) that are developed with such a focus will require both strategic and business planning. MFPP is recommending that the focus as presented within this report be endorsed by the AFGA Executive and broader AFGA community.

MFPP has drafted a revised set of objects for consideration. These objects align with the focus of the organization that MFPP is proposing. These objects must be contemporary and relevant to the outdoor community today and in the future. In addition, MFPP is recommending maintenance of charitable status. This means that all objects must be written to support such purpose.

Review of our current objects suggests they would not meet expectations under either the *Alberta Societies Act* or the *Income Tax Act of Canada*. Regardless of the legislation, all work undertaken by the organization must support achieving its objects. The draft objects would present an ambitious agenda where delivery on goals equates to value. Next steps involve consultation with the AFGA membership, additional legal review, and refinement of the objects if appropriate. To change AFGAs objects will require a special resolution where a seventy five percent vote in favor at either an annual general meeting (AGM) or special general meeting (SGM) will be required.

MFPP has developed frameworks to help guide the organization forward. Implementation is the next critical step. Some of this work falls under other committees. Much will be tied to strategic and business plans that the organization needs to develop. MFPP has laid out recommendations tied to following:

- Communications
- Promotions, Marketing, and Branding
- Fundraising
- Policy Development and Issue Management
- Advocacy
- Programs and Projects
- Club and Member Services, Support, and Benefits
- Membership Structure
- Work of other committees
- Strategic and Business Plan

MFPP believes the work being undertaken by Communication Committee (COM) is the crucial immediate priority for AFGA. Messaging must be tied directly to creating organizational relevance and visibility which demonstrate value, targeting both the outdoor community but also the general public. Promotions, marketing, and branding are integrally linked to communications. Putting a revitalized and recognizable face forward is essential for AFGA.

MFPP recognizes that development of additional revenue streams for the organization is a crucial need. AFGA must have a multi-year strategic plan. This must be supported through financial planning that includes annual and longer-term budgetary projections tied to achieving the goals within the strategic plan. Having such plans in place is fundamental for the AFGA Executive and the Finance Audit Risk Management Committee (FAR) to meet their fiduciary responsibilities. The current terms of reference for FAR identify this task. The AFGA Executive and staff are tasked with following, measuring progress, and achieving targets as the plans are implemented. They serve to ensure that the organization remains focused on achieving its goals. AFGA Executives must adhere to these plans year to year until amended.

Maintaining and attracting the largest membership base possible is key to survivability for the organization. Societal shifts and demographic change mean that AFGA must adapt to this reality. There

is no fundamental difference between direct and club affiliated members except if there is a legislated need in the bylaws. Both groups should be viewed as complimentary and not competing sectors.

Communicating to as broad a base as possible across society for membership must be the goal which is tied to delivery of programs, projects, advocacy initiatives, and policies which have appeal and value in the context of today. Ensuring that the membership structure is flexible and does not set up barriers is necessary.

The work done by the Communications Committee (COM) and Governance Committee (GOV) aligns well with that from MFPP. Only some minor changes would be required if the recommendations from MFPP are endorsed.

The organization must revitalize itself. It is not a reinvention but about doing things different with the priorities focused on the context of today and the future.

Preface

The Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee (MFPP) was formed in April of 2021 by the Alberta Fish and Game Association Executive. It first met on July 7, 2021. The gap of time between formation and first meeting was due to the need to complete the work of two existing committees that were merged to form MFPP. The cross over of the terms of reference and commonality of issues being dealt with by the previously enabled Membership Committee (MEM) and Focus Priorities Programs Committee (FPPC) made merging into a single committee more effective. In addition, it allowed for the potential of greater diversity of opinions within the new committee.

In April, work still needed to be completed by FPPC which included a webinar, polling questionnaire, and report to the larger Alberta Fish and Game Association community. This webinar occurred on June 9, 2021. FPPC held 8 formal committee meetings and MEM held 5 committee meeting in the period from January to June 2021. The combined committee (MFPP) has held 4 committee meetings.

The context for an in-depth look at the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) organizationally arose due to the financial challenges facing the organization that were identified in late 2019 and made more acute due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Initially the AFGA Executive formulated the Financial Planning Advisory Committee (FPAC) in June of 2020 that led to the need to hold two special general meetings (SGM) to stabilize the financial situation facing the organization. During 2020 the organization was drastically downsized to a barebones of staff and programs limited to essential only.

FPAC was subsequently dissolved in January of 2021. In its place to move the organization forward, besides MEM and FPPC, three other committees were struck in December of 2020. These were Finance Audit Risk Management Committee (FAR), Governance Committee (GOV), and the Annual General Meeting Committee (AGMC). Detailed Terms of References (TOR) were put in place for all the committees. FAR was tasked with oversight of the financials of the organization and development of a strategic business plan, GOV was tasked with review and revision of the bylaws and operations manual, and AGMC planned and hosted the required Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was successfully held virtually in April of 2021.

Currently four committees exist to help move the organization forward to build on its legacy to meet the needs of Albertans that are passionate about wildlife conservation, fishing, hunting, and related outdoor experiences. FAR, GOV, MFPP, and Communication (COM) committees are working to ensure the organization is valued and respected by Albertans and has the financial, knowledge, staff, and volunteer capacity to meet its mandate.

One of the immediate outcomes is the work undertaken by the COM where updating and contemporizing existing media platforms has occurred. GOV has reviewed the bylaws and is developing revised bylaws that are consistent with current expectations under the Alberta Societies Act. MFPP built on and refined the work undertaken by MEM and FPPC.

This report from MFPP should be seen as compilation and collective vision for the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) based on the consensus opinion within the committee.

Background and Approach

The starting point was an understanding of the historical focus of AFGA through review of the *Operations Manual*, *To Conserve a Heritage*, and *Conservation Pride and Passion, The Alberta Fish and Game Association, 1908 – 2008*, along with committee member perspectives. Review of the Moto, Goals, Objects, Mission Statement and Principles provides a further backdrop. Whether the organization is living up to these expectations or are they still relevant to its membership in the context of “today” is a critical element to determine, as it sets the current benchmark.

The second consideration was facilitated through an environmental scan of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the province that have similar or overlapping mandates. It is a crowded landscape. In the firearm arena there are at least 17 national or provincial organizations active in the province, not counting numerous clubs or private businesses that are not affiliated with any of these organizations. Some of these organizations offer similar insurance products and benefits as those provided through membership or affiliation with AFGA. The environmental or conservation focused organizations form an equally crowded field, with Albertans having a wide choice to support or donate towards their causes. If we just narrow it down to the hunting and fishing community, there are many organizations to choose from as well. Compounding this are delegated administrative organizations (e.g., Alberta Conservation Association) which deliver programs on behalf of the Government of Alberta which Albertans often group with volunteer organizations such as AFGA.

The third consideration was a comparison with our sister organizations which are part of the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF). The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation (SWF), British Columbia Wildlife Federation (BCWF), and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) were all reviewed in detail. Comparison with AFGA on many grounds are stark as these sister organizations have far greater financial capacity and resources due to greater membership, involvement with delivery of government programs, and large professional staffing cohorts. One observation that was obvious, despite AFGA laying the foundation for many programs such as Hunter Education or Habitat (Bucks for Wildlife), the management and delivery has shifted to other organizations rather than remaining within AFGA.

The fourth area of considerations was how broad was the scope and mandate of the other organizations? Except for CWF affiliates, they are generally narrow or single focused, appealing to distinct user groups or individuals with common perspectives. AFGA, when compared to most other organizations in the same arena has a much wider scope and perspective. Whether this equates to a strong and diverse membership is a debate? Such broad-based organizations are a rarity today across society where special or single interests dominate. There are as well issues related to how various organizations position themselves from a social, political, and even within a sector of the hunting, fishing, shooting, conservation, or environmental arenas so to create greater appeal to specific components of society.

Reviewing the membership of AFGA as of October 20, 2021, it currently consists of 66 clubs which have a combined membership that represents 20,583 Albertans (8288 regular, 4418 family, 85 youth, 8083 dependent). Provincially there are 269 direct members (137 regular, 42 family, 2 youth, 88 dependent). AFGA Life Members round out the total with an additional 23. Collectively there are 20,875 members of AFGA as of October 20, 2021. This number meets the target established in the 2020/2021 budget. It is however less than the highs prior to COVID-19 pandemic when membership neared the 25 thousand mark.

While several other organizations have a club or chapter structure, these exist at a regional level, often with common bylaws tied to the parent organization. No organization comes close to having as broad a footprint of clubs at a local level across the province as AFGA. However, while the interests of clubs are varied, much of AFGAs membership comes through affiliation of clubs that have firearms ranges.

The legislated requirement for individuals to belong to a recognized firearm club to own and possess restricted firearms is the single most important driver of membership for many AFGA affiliated clubs. Many are not even aware that when they join a club, they also become part of the larger AFGA community. It must be recognized that there are many options for Albertans to belong to a registered firearm range that can be obtained through membership in a non AFGA affiliated club or even a private business. A strong case can be made for a club to “*go it alone*” and not affiliate with AFGA or any other provincial or national organization as the necessary insurance is available directly to clubs on the open market. The result is a club can retain all membership dollars for its own use.

Unfortunately, most members of AFGA today likely are not aware of the work done on their behalf related to wildlife conservation by AFGA at a club, zone, or provincial level. Even as a selling point to join, this may not be as strong a driver as one would anticipate. Despite opinions to the contrary, Alberta is fortunate to have a great deal of opportunity and access to activities such as hunting and fishing. The diversity of wildlife species accompanied by long seasons and generally low pressure makes Alberta the envy, even within Canada. There is opportunity to hunt from late August well into February for game species. Angling can be pursued year-round and despite low retention limits for some species, quality time on the water makes for an enjoyable experience. Complicating this is the societal shift where most Albertans live in large urban centers and lifestyle choices are moving away from traditional activities such as hunting and fishing.

MFPP based on this analysis, believes that AFGA currently is multi-focused, sitting in the middle of the social and political spectrum. The membership however is dominated by the firearm fraternity which may not be connected, interested, or concerned about the wildlife and fish conservation in the province. The impacts are multi dimensional and lead to options, challenges, and opportunities in any go forward model. We need to recognize that the organization has not grown over the last several decades, despite a greatly increased population in Alberta. At the same time there has been a welcome resurgence in participation in hunting and fishing in the last several years. Most notable is the increase in women becoming involved with the pastimes.

Focus

The fundamental question: *Is there room for a broad-based middle of the road organization in this crowded outdoor field in the future?* MFPP is of the opinion room exists, but there will be needed changes across the organization that may impact governance, issue management, membership, finances, communication, branding, and operations.

Based on this analysis, defining what should be the focus of AFGA going forward is the first step. Focus is tied to organizational relevance, value, and effectiveness. All which are critical if the long-term goal is to increase membership which is tied to financial stability and positioning AFGA as the key stakeholder in the hunting, fishing, or shooting community. MFPP identified that the reason for the need for this review is about potential and future members who may have different motivations for belonging than

current members. The impact of change as recommended by MFPP on today's members was always taken into account during deliberations.

MFPP members believe that change is required, and this will have many benefits. These include improved organizational structure, operational efficiency, clarity related to mandate, and greater understanding of purpose. This will lead to positive outcomes for today's and future members. This however does not mean that much from the past is no longer relevant. All organizations need ongoing review to ensure they are meeting the needs and expectations of their members.

We must not confuse focus with the current structure within AFGA. Structure is tied to a delivery model that allows the organization to fulfill its mandate. The current organizational structure (not focus) was loosely defined for the organization as Board of Directors, Administrative, Membership Club Services and Support, Advocacy (Hunting, Fishing, Environment), and Programs including the Wildlife Trust Fund.

Determining what should be the **"FOCUS"** in a go forward model is the first step which must be tied to the registered objects (purposes) for the organization. How the objects are to be achieved is part of the strategic business planning and annual operational planning processes which may impact many elements within the organization including bylaws.

Key questions that were asked by MFPP include:

- Should the organization's Focus be the same as the past?
- What Focus Elements are defining, foundational, or unique for the organization?
- Has the organization been able to meet members expectations in terms of its' current Focus Elements?
- How broad or narrow should the Focus of the organization be for it to be effective, which implies the ability to achieve its goals and mandate?
- What would the priorities be under the various Focus options?
- Does organizational structure impact or place limitations on the Focus of the organization?
- What capacity exists within the organization to achieve the goals and objectives under each Focus Element?
- Where within the organizational structure (provincial, zone, club, member) does the responsibility for addressing a Focus Element rest?
- Do the current Objects of the association align with Focus Elements?
- What sets us apart from other organizations in Alberta?
- What organization would I choose to join?
- Why would I join that organization?
- Can a value proposition for membership be made based on the Focus?
- What steps need to be put into place to maintain and increase membership?

MFPP developed many potential focus elements. Collectively they were evaluated and grouped. In the end there were four organizational groupings. MFPP felt these groups could define an organization to base future direction.

1. Firearm organization
2. Habitat organization
3. Membership services organization
4. Broad based outdoor lifestyle organization

While the first three options have appeal and would narrow the focus of the organization, they come with the following caveats. AFGA would exist within a crowded landscape with little that is defining, unique, or foundational. While the legislated mandate of belonging to a firearm club with a registered range is a recognized driver of membership, this is a fragile environment filled with competition or options. While the Wildlife Trust Fund is seen as having value, whether this could provide the impetus for a strong organization on its own has limitations. Without a legislated requirement such as insurance for access to crown or private lands, or delivery of government program such as fish stocking, it is unlikely that a membership services organization is viable as a stand-alone option.

This left the fundamental question: Is there room for a *broad-based lifestyle organization with defined emphasis* that positions itself in the middle of the conservation focused spectrum in Alberta's future? The focus elements that MFPP developed could be grouped in a manner that set boundaries, yet aligned with the past.

MFPP is of the opinion room exists, but there will be needed changes across the organization that may impact governance, issue management, membership, finances, communication, promotion, branding, marketing, fund raising, and operations.

How the organization is to be measured by its membership in terms of addressing this focus needs to be tied to a Strategic Business Plan that sets timelines, criteria, targets, structure, and capacity as ultimately this is about **value**.

Recommendation: The recommended Focus for the organization is outlined in the following chart:

Focus for the Alberta Fish and Game Association				
<i>Trying to be everything to everyone is not possible for any organization</i>				
Recommended Focus of AFGA including elements, programs, and projects	Fishing	Hunting	Habitat	Outdoor Recreation, Stewardship, and Ethics
Elements under each FOCUS category to define boundaries and scope	Fisheries Conservation	Wildlife Conservation	Land and Water Stewardship as a component sustainable use, growth, and development (Recreation, domestic, urban, agriculture, industry, or infrastructure needs)	Education, training, mentorship related to outdoor recreational pursuits including, hunting, fishing, shooting sports, air guns, primitive firearms, archery, camping, OHV use, and boating
	Species management plans	Species management plans	Land use planning	Stewardship, responsibilities, and ethics in the pursuit of outdoor activities
	Fisheries Regulations	Hunting Regulations	Crown lands	Citizen Science
	Opportunity	Opportunity	No Net Loss	
	Access	Access		
	(Continued next page)	Programs and Projects AFGA Provincially (Alberta Wildlife Awards, AFGA Angler Survey, AFGA Fisheries Habitat Signage)	Programs and Projects AFGA Provincially (Alberta Wildlife Awards)	Programs and Projects AFGA Provincially (Wildlife Trust Fund, Habitat Stewardship, Pronghorn Fencing, Grassland Community)

<p>Elements under each FOCUS category to define boundaries and scope</p>	<p>Program and Project Supporter at Club, Zone, or External level</p> <p>(ACA Kids Can Catch, Alberta Water Crossing Program, Keep Fish Wet)</p>	<p>Program and Project Supporter at Club, Zone, or External level</p>	<p>Program and Project Supporter at Club, Zone, or External level</p> <p>(Cows and Fish, Antelope Creek Ranch)</p>	<p>Program and Project Supporter at Club, Zone, or External level</p> <p>(Narrow Lake Conservation Camp, Report a Poacher, 310 Land, AHEIA Angler Education and Conservation and Hunter Education)</p>
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Object Alignment

Organizations require formal registration of Objects as a condition under the *Alberta Societies Act* and for designation as a charitable organization by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) under *the Income Tax Act*. Objects are the general goals of an organization. Our current objects date to the 1970s. Review indicates that they likely would not meet the current expectations under the *Societies Act*. More critical is they would likely not be accepted by CRA as part of an audit, complaint, or resubmission process. Their status thus would have to rely on “grandfathering”. There is an expectation that organizations need to ensure both bylaws and objects meet the current regulatory standards.

Recommendation: AFGA objects be revised. This is important not only from a regulatory standpoint to define purpose, but for branding, promotion, and marketing within the organization which is tied directly to finances and membership. In addition, MFPP believes that maintaining charitable status is important for the organization both financially and for the public profile it provides. For example, individuals and businesses may realize tax benefits by donating or through involvement in an organization’s programs or projects.

Maintaining charitable status for a multi focused organization comes with it hurdles. Splitting the organization into two distinct entities, a foundation and advocacy arm has been suggested. While such may be beneficial as part of a longer-term vision contained within a strategic business plan that sets benchmarks and timelines, it simply is not practical at this time. There is too much volatility related to the organization’s near-term survivability, lack of capacity, and insufficient financial resources to move in such a direction now.

The *Alberta Charitable Fund-Raising Act* identifies the common law provisions required by CRA in its review of charitable status for an organization. The act defines "charitable purpose" as including “a philanthropic, benevolent, educational, health, humane, religious, cultural, artistic or recreational purpose, so long as the purpose is not part of a business.”

CRA then requires that charitable purposes not be too broad or vague. Further to be registered under the *Income Tax Act* as a charity, the organization must be exclusively charitable. This means all its “objects” must meet charitable provisions and the organizations does not pursue activities that are unstated. There is a submission process for review by CRA of draft objects. This review includes

submission of the draft objects but also CRA will undertake an analysis of the activities and operations of the organization. An organization is given the opportunity to amend its governing documents so that all its activities support the stated charitable purpose.

Draft Objects

MFPP has drafted revised objects for consideration. These Objects align with the Focus of the organization that MFPP is proposing. These objects must be contemporary and relevant to the outdoor community now and for the future. Further consultation with the AFGA community, additional legal review, as well refinement will be required. Objects will need to be approved through a special resolution at an AGM or SGM of AFGA.

Recommendation: The following draft Objects be endorsed by AFGA.

Proposed Draft Objects
Promote conservation and use of our fish and wildlife resource including the required habitat through application of science and meaningful consultations with Albertans;
Work to ensure continued public ownership and access to all crown lands, waters, and parks in Alberta for outdoor recreational activities;
Work with landowners, industry, municipalities, other stakeholders, the Government of Alberta to ensure that issues related to access and wildlife conservation are addressed on private lands in Alberta;
Develop and support programs that better habitat for fish and wildlife including application of conservation easements, lease, purchase, offsets, and stewardship of lands for the benefit of all Albertans;
Promote and provide programs related to outdoor education, ethics, safety, law, and stewardship as integral components of fish and wildlife management and outdoor responsibilities;
Maintain a culture of volunteer involvement and membership by providing programs, supports, services, and benefits to members, clubs, and zones to achieve wildlife conservation and participate in outdoor recreation activities;
Work with governments, stakeholders, and other authorities to increase public participation in outdoor recreational activities in Alberta by addressing barriers related to access, opportunity, infrastructure, cost, gear limitations, regulation, or policy;
Foster cooperation and partnership to enhance outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation with governments, industry, stakeholders, NGOs, landowners, public, First Nations, and Métis in Alberta;
Acknowledge, recognize, and respect the contribution of First Nations and the Métis people to wildlife and fish conservation through application of traditional knowledge and land stewardship practices.

Special Note Related to Firearm Ownership

The focus and objects that MFPP is recommending do not envision AFGA becoming a dedicated “firearm rights organization”. MFPP recognizes the importance of firearm ownership for AFGA members. Maintaining legal access to firearms is critical. AFGA can not on its own alter societal, organizational, and political perspectives that want stricter firearm control measures in Canada. Working with other

likeminded groups on this issue is critical. Ensuring responsible, safe, legal, and ethical use of firearms has always been a core goal of AFGA. Continuing the educational, training, and provision of facilities provided by clubs and their members is critical. MFPP recognizes this alone has not been enough to change perspective in what has become an emotional and political divide in Canadian society. Still, the work done by AFGA members, affiliated clubs, and provincially is essential and remains the most effective argument that will resonate in the advocacy battle.

The capacity of the organization is limited. Volunteer interests vary. AFGA contribution to the ongoing efforts related to firearm restrictions has become lost and under valued. Yet they are key if there is to be a positive outcome. MFPP has included in the Objects and Focus Elements tools and levers that could be used to manage this issue by the Association that would not impact charitable status.

When reviewing the draft objects, they clearly identify that AFGA can and must play a role in this debate. MFPP incorporated the *North American Model of Wildlife Conservation Principles* within the draft objects. One of the seven principles sets out that “Democracy of Hunting is Standard”. This separates Canada and the United States from other nations where the opportunity to hunt is restricted to those with special status. Access to firearms and firearm control restrictions can directly impact the public’s ability to hunt. The following recommended draft objects provides the foundation and legal framework for AFGA’s ongoing efforts are restated below:

Work with governments, stakeholders, and other authorities to increase public participation in outdoor recreational activities in Alberta by addressing barriers related to access, opportunity, infrastructure, cost, gear limitations, regulation, or policy.

Promote and provide programs related to outdoor education, ethics, safety, law, and stewardship as an integral component of fish and wildlife management and outdoor responsibilities.

Value and Visibility

The expectation of members, clubs, zones, and the perception of the public (potential members) of AFGA are varied. These are value and profile propositions tied to whether the organization can deliver on relevant issues that impact the hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation community. This impact must be viewed as positive and meaningful. Organizations need to be seen engaged, credible, and proactive, not only by members, but other stakeholders and government.

Mobilizing members to continue to rejoin (retention) is paramount for our organization to have a chance at stability. Ultimately the goal must be to attract additional club affiliated or direct members to grow the base to increase capacity from a financial, staff and volunteer standpoint, so the objects of the organization can be achieved.

Recommendation: MFPP supports having both membership through an AFGA affiliated club or directly at a provincial level. I

These membership classes represent two different sectors of the public and as such are complementary. Regardless of the type of membership, the decision to join will be based on demonstrating value through belonging.

There are several initiatives that need to be considered which include how direct members can participate in AFGA activities and governance. They are an important volunteer resource and source of membership dollars. The success of both the British Columbia Wildlife Federation and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters that exist in provinces with similar demographics and high urbanization as Alberta, is in part attributed to large numbers of direct members.

Administratively to the organization, whether through club affiliation or direct membership, the costs are close as they receive similar benefits. Over time, direct members through appropriate marketing and promotion could form a pool for club affiliated membership growth based on the diversity of additional programs and projects available at a club level. Clubs provide additional opportunities and experiences, which equates to greater value.

Discussions on having direct membership cost or club member affiliation fee being the same was entertained by MFPP as a way of attracting more direct members. Consensus could not be reached, and the committee was split on the concept. This was despite the recognition that direct members join the organization for different reasons, the shifting demographics in Alberta, including the lack of clubs in many geographic regions of the province. There remains the fear that clubs will see their membership reduced if this concept was introduced. There is also an unknown as to the actual role that membership cost at current levels plays in one's decision to join the organization, whether provincially or through a club.

Further reflection on this issue should be entertained. The argument by those against is barriers are needed to support clubs to recruit and retain members that might otherwise join the organization directly at a provincial level. The resulting challenge arises, can clubs increase their membership to make up for possible gains that could be provided if the organization had significant numbers of direct members? In theory an organization that has large numbers of both club and direct members should lead to greater stability and capacity to meet the expectations of the overall membership.

Recommendation: A strategic plan needs to be developed with professional help to market the organization at the membership, club, and provincial level.

Simplifying how to join, such as through a common online portal could remove barriers. The use of incentives, including considering discounting club affiliation fees based on membership volume deserves consideration. There are caveats that must be carefully evaluated for this to be viable and make long term strategic sense.

The issue of discounting based on volume is a common marketing tool. A graduated per capita affiliation fee model or tiered club cost model could provide incentives particularly for moderate and larger sized clubs to remain part of the AFGA family. The membership driver for these clubs is largely due to access to their facilities and firearm ranges. This is a tangible benefit and to some is the only reason for joining. Even though these clubs offer other programs, conservation initiatives, and community service, such contributions are likely of lesser value to such members.

Seventy five percent of AFGA clubs have under 150 primary members. Collectively they represent less than 20 percent of the affiliated AFGA primary members. These clubs generally have a conservation or community service focus. There are only fifteen clubs with over 200 primary members, but they represent 80 percent of the membership in the organization. Based on the current per capita formula for affiliation fees, these clubs also provide eighty percent of the revenue derived from membership sales to the provincial arm of AFGA. There are three clubs in the organization which each have over 1000 primary members. When combined they represent close to 50% of AFGA's total membership.

Managing, maintaining, or developing firearm ranges is costly, plus there is the need for extensive volunteer commitment at an executive or general membership level. From a purely business standpoint as a club build on its membership numbers there is a price point where going it alone becomes tempting. This is due to required insurance products, albeit it at higher rates, are available on the open market. Club membership costs could be reduced, or the revenue maintained for club use under this scenario. This is due to a perceived value determination for affiliation solely tied to access to reduced insurance costs. Affiliation fees + group insurance = insurance cost.

There is also the option for clubs to affiliate with a dedicated firearm organization which provide similar access to discounted insurance products. This approach is largely cost neutral. These organizations have similar affiliation fees and insurance costs to those available through AFGA. What these organizations do offer is a single focus on the firearm issue and related programs. Whether this equates to a higher value or greater effectiveness is hard to quantify.

This issue of going it alone is not a new one. There are numerous clubs across the province in the hunting, fishing, and firearm arena that fall into this category. Some were formerly affiliated with AFGA. To offset this, consideration of a graduated or discounted affiliation cost model could be of benefit thus making it attractive to remain with or become part of the AFGA community with its broader contribution to the outdoor community. This however can not be looked at as an immediate solution as there are significant risks. It must be considered in the context of a strategic business plan, likely with a phased approach for implementation.

The impact on the finances on the provincial organization are significant and would vary based on exactly what model parameters were applied. For illustration purposes only, if a simple model of a \$5.00 discount on the current provincial affiliation fee per primary member on club membership roster above 250 was applied, the impact would be approximately \$35K annually based on the current membership composition. Expect that a graduated formula would be needed with further discounts so the competitiveness (incentive) would remain with increasing membership. One scenario might be to look at 500 member increments above a base threshold of 250 (250/750/1250/1750). This is because insurance costs are not tied to membership numbers but the facility. At some point no additional incentive would be possible as the cost of member benefits and associated expenses would be the equal to the discounted rate which would not make for a prudent business case. Looking at such a model based on the current clubs in the organization, the impact on AFGA annual budget could be as high as 175K.

As the organization just went through significant downsizing there is only limited capacity to absorb further budgetary reductions. At the same time, the loss of clubs will throw the organization into the untenable situation of reviewing limited options again, including dissolution. The pathway to graduated affiliation cost model must be tied to a strategic business plan where lost revenue is replaced through increased membership at an affiliated club or direct level, developing alternate revenue streams, and increasing the value proposition.

Outside of direct members, the largest untapped membership pool are unaffiliated firearm clubs. These firearm clubs continue to be successful at a local level. If insurance products on the open market do not substantially increase in cost, continue to be available, or regulatory barriers impact their operations, the current value proposition for affiliation with another organization may not exist. Affiliation with any organization would need to make economic sense to their executives. While one can argue that the other benefits of affiliation should matter, this is an era where local, tangible, and monetary dominate. These other benefits are likely insufficient for a club to join unless supported by a strong financial argument.

This is complicated further by the perception that relatively small special interest groups, local clubs, or even individuals are more effective than larger organizations such as AFGA. This further compounds the catch 22 scenario that AFGA faces.

The success of our sister Canadian Wildlife Federation affiliates enters the conversation. While affiliation cost is referenced as the issue, both the BCWF and OFAH have substantially similar fee structures, yet much greater membership numbers. The SWF does have lower affiliation cost, but it delivers several government programs which greatly increases financial and organizational capacity. Comparing these organizations with AFGA is not an apples-to-apples comparison. Alberta's organizational landscape is different than elsewhere in Canada. To mirror their success, we will need to embrace change, support innovation, develop alternate funding sources, have much larger budgets, increase staffing levels, and alter governance structure.

Fundamental change will take time. Timelines need to be realistic. There is no silver bullet. For change to happen it will have to be driven and delivered by dedicated volunteers for the foreseeable future. Volunteer capacity is limited at a provincial and club level. A case in point: When the recent call to clubs went out for members to sit on committees that were reviewing the organization and recommending change, there were few that came forward. This is troubling as it was these very groups that were asking for change. Such low rate of participation by members at a provincial level is partially due to the structure of the organization which is a federation of clubs. There are only a limited number of volunteers who are involved in ensuring the club functions. Asking them to do more is challenging. This leaves even fewer to volunteer at a provincial level. Across the organization it is a classic case of the few committed doing the heavy lifting for all.

Membership Stability

Fundamentally membership stability or growth will only be possible if AFGA provincially presents a value proposition. We need to build the organization both at the direct membership level but also through clubs. This value proposition applies not only provincially but is important for the clubs as well. Capacities vary within clubs. Looking at how the organization can be collectively marketed will incorporate strategies which will drive growth at all levels within AFGA.

Important to recognize that there are demographically three types of members. There will be supporters who believe that belonging is a way of contributing to the aims of the organization. The second group are those who require membership primarily due to a legislated mandate (e.g. firearm ranges) which make up the majority of the AFGA current membership. The third are those who are committed and are the volunteers at varying levels and interests within the organization.

AFGA is fortunate to have a dedicated volunteer base at the club level. Reality is this is where most of the work on the ground and programs are delivered. What AFGA is doing is a composite of individual, club, zone, and provincial endeavors. Telling this story and disseminating information broadly is critical as it sets the tone for a value proposition for existing or new members. This however cannot be only about the past. It must be about today and the future.

While firearm ranges are the single largest draw for membership for many AFGA clubs, which by extension is critical at a provincial level, this is a finite space to operate in as there are many options both for individuals and clubs. Relying primarily on firearm ranges as the draw to increase or broaden membership would not align with the focus that MFPP is recommending. It also would not reflect the collective history of the organization. Ensuring that programs such as firearm ranges are available at a club level is important but only as one cog in a multi-focused organization.

What is fundamental is for the organization to have high visibility, whether at a club, zone, or provincial level. Visibility comes about due to the public and community being positively aware of an organization. This awareness includes name recognition but more importantly an understanding of what we do, who we are, what we stand for, and WHY we do it.

Clubs in smaller communities are more visible than those in larger urban centers. AFGA at a provincial level becomes lost in a sea of other organizations. Communications to not only our existing members but potential members (public) are critical and core. To this end the AFGA Executive has struck a Communications Committee (COM) to get our message out which is consistent with the direction that MEM and FPPC identified as key.

The communication world is rapidly changing and complex because of a diverse society and technological change. Where simple word of mouth was once the most effective avenue for membership recruitment and retention, it no longer the only vehicle. Differing demographics and generations across society obtain information in multiple and distinct manners.

We must not confuse passing on information that is derived from other organizations (governments, NGOs, stakeholders) with telling “*our story*”. Our story is not just about the past but must show what we are doing today as it relates to policy and issue management. Policy and issue management are generally driven from a provincial level, albeit with grass roots input. Being effective, heard, and visible on this front is essential when the story must be about relevance and value.

Strategic Change Mechanics

The organization has largely stagnated due to limited investment, innovation, and modernization. This is reflective in the fact our membership numbers and demographics have largely remained unchanged for the past decade. Our footprint must expand by telling our story through varying communication channels. We must become contemporary, relevant, essential, and mainstream within society. The organization must invest in revitalization which will include change. The primary change mechanics are related to the following:

- Communications
- Promotions

Marketing
 Branding
 Policy Development
 Issue management
 Programs and Projects
 Club and Member Services and Support
 Fundraising
 Governance

Where to start is a daunting task to determine. The organization will only be successful in the longer term if it has a delivery model with the necessary resources that allows it to achieve its objects. Ultimately this is tied to having sufficient finances, expertise, and capacity at a staff and volunteer level. Membership or affiliation dues are the single most important revenue stream, both today and for the medium term. The organization has a bare bones staff contingent with only budget allocations tied to administrative activities that support membership, the BOD, and the regulatory requirements under the *Alberta Societies Act*, *Income Tax Act*, and other such legislation.

This however is not where value will be seen by members and supporters of the organization. Value is achieved through the delivery of programs and advocacy as defined in the focus elements. The organization has a heavy reliance on volunteers. Unfortunately, while this grass roots involvement has pluses, it also comes with limitations. Reality is there is only a finite amount of work that is possible and variable skill sets exist within the volunteer cohort. This is a critical issue at a policy development and program level for the organization. The success of other Canadian Wildlife Federation affiliates is tied to having staff capacity and finances to draft policies and oversee programs that go beyond administrative functions. They also have resources to market and brand the organization which builds on existing membership which also leads to additional funding source opportunities.

There are five major areas that AFGA lacks capacity and needs professional support. These are program delivery, communications, marketing (includes promotion and branding), fundraising, and policy development. Which is most important is a moot point as ultimately, they all contribute to the success of the organization.

Recommendation: MFPP believes the starting point is communications and marketing.

Sufficient budgetary commitments must be made immediately in these areas. Without at least maintaining the current membership which will only be possible by ensuring the work done by the organization is valued, relevant, and known, there is little chance that the organization can grow.

This takes us back to the three primary questions that FPPC, MEM, and MFPP needed to consider.

- **Why would I join the organization?**
- **Can a value proposition for membership be made based on the Focus?**
- **What steps need to be put into place to maintain and increase membership?**

To some degree these questions have been answered. Due to the wide choice of organizations that Albertans can choose to support or belong, creating the necessary value proposition will require the development of a strategic business plan supported by robust communications and marketing if AFGA is to be successful in the coming decades. Having members and supporters is crucial as no organization

can survive without them. Increasing our financial base is essential. While the organization has a long history of club affiliation to drive membership, the landscape has changed. Options exist for clubs to go it alone. This loss of community is a societal shift that is driven by urbanization, communication change, and individual determination.

Making the organization welcome and relevant across society is critical. The organization must maintain and build on its club base. At the same time embrace individuals and supporters that see their involvement at a provincial level in various roles. As mentioned earlier, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is largely a direct member organization. The British Columbia Wildlife Federation (BCWF) is a hybrid with both club and direct member cohorts. These organizations have been able to create value propositions along with providing a range of “benefits or incentives” that drive membership recruitment and retention. They both have publications focused on their province, insurance products, and provide programs on behalf of their provincial governments. Most importantly they have robust policy and issue management processes that maintains their profile with their membership, the larger public, and government. They have similar affiliation or membership fees as AFGA, which emphasises that value is the driver with cost only a secondary factor.

For AFGA to get to this point means appealing to the broadest base of supporters as possible. The organization will need to rely on the few dedicated staff and small cohort of committed volunteers to drive for change and do the heavy lifting. The draft focus items set the foundation for this to occur. The draft objects set the boundaries and establish the basic goals for the organization while maintaining charitable status. Demonstrating and communicating that the organization is relevant and deserves support across the outdoor community in a rapidly changing environment is essential.

Communications

Retention of existing members and affiliated clubs is the critical first step. Without members believing there is value in belonging to the organization failure will result. Communications must be the cornerstone with a primary focus on what we as an organization are doing. There has been significant improvement in communications over the last year. The creation of the Communication Committee (COM) is a positive step. Telling our story and reaching out to the broadest audience is paramount. This must be our immediate priority but tied to a strategic plan.

We need editorial content to populate our communication platforms which must include contemporary policies and demonstration of issue management. The organization relies exclusively at a club level on volunteers. Provincially the staff cohort is tasked to the limit, primarily focused on administrative functions. The volunteer lay Board of Directors is challenged to deal with all the issues it confronts. There appears to be a lack of recognition that the capacity of the organization is limited and the ability to address every issue is not possible at a membership level. Relying on a finite group of volunteers to develop policy, manage issues, deliver projects, and provide reporting is a daunting task. Burnout and lack of continuity are the result. The success of other organizations is through having staff in place to fulfill many of these functions.

AFGA currently has a communications contractor tasked with maintaining our media and online platforms. Expanding the contract to develop AFGA specific editorial content and messaging at a member, club, zone, or provincial level is necessary. Budgets must include adequate funding for the research, consultation, and writing required to produce such content.

MFPP is aware that COM is reviewing all our communication platforms. Justifiable concern has been raised by MFPP and others that our traditional primary communication platform, Outdoor Canada West, while touted as a membership benefit (incentive) may have low readership and perceived value. If this is the case, it may not contribute to membership retention. Critical is that outside of the *NEWS FROM ALBERTA* section, the magazine does not showcase Alberta which likely contributes to a lack of engagement, relevance, and value to the readership.

The role that publications play in telling our story needs review in the context of our overall communications and marketing strategy. MFPP is aware that a long-term contract through 2025 was signed with Outdoor Canada several years ago. Noteworthy is OFAH has its own dedicated publication, *Ontario Out Of Doors*, and BCWF partners with *BC Outdoors* providing focused content specific to the province. Albertans can receive similar focused content through subscription to the *Alberta Outdoorsmen* magazine, supporting organizations such as the Alberta Wilderness Association (*Wildlife Advocate*), or free subscription to *Conservation* published by the Alberta Conservation Association. The development of an AFGA focused online newsletter needs investigating in the context of overall communication and marketing strategy. The recently introduced AFGA *Hook and Bullet-in* is evolving in this direction.

MFPP believes the work being undertaken by COM is the crucial immediate priority for AFGA. This must be tied directly to creating organizational relevance, visibility, and value. Targeting must go beyond members to include the larger outdoor community. There are important messages that must be delivered to the general public as well. This includes demonstrating that AFGA is proactively engaged on issues. Development of external media connections is essential as internal channels have limited reach to the broader population.

Promotion, Marketing, and Branding

Promotion, marketing, and branding are all tied together. An organization's brand is one of its most important assets. Brands must be recognizable, distinct, remembered, and known. Out of many options available, AFGA must become the organization that one chooses to support. MFPP is concerned that AFGA has lost brand recognition such that there is little that separates us from other organizations that would drive membership to AFGA. There are many aspects to brand development from research to promotion. FPPC identified this issue of branding in its earliest meetings. Branding considers many aspects. FPPC reviewed the organization including Name, Motto, Logo, Goals, Principles, and Mission and found little defining. The supporting documents found in the appendices of this report developed by FPPC provides the foundation for the rebranding exercise. The work initiated by FPPC was based on the development of revised objects and focus. From there the committee moved to consider the name, mission, goals, and motto to ensure consistency, continuity, and identity. Key concepts related to these elements were presented during the webinar hosted by FPPC. There was support for the direction and concepts outlined by FPPC by the webinar participants.

One element that deserves discussion in this report is related to the organization's name and its relevance today. It is recognized that there is a lack of name recognition. Confusion also exists with some believing AFGA is an arm of government.

FPPC asked the question, “Looking to the future, what would be the best name for the organization?” Seventy percent of the participants selected a different name than AFGA. The *Alberta Federation of Anglers, Hunters, and Outdoor Enthusiasts* was preferred by 29 percent of the respondents, 18 percent supported *Alberta Wildlife Federation*, and 18 percent the *Alberta Outdoor Federation*. Considering that most of the participants in the webinar could be classified as long term AFGA supporters including Life Members, this result was surprising. This goes directly to the question: Has the organization become dated? Interesting to note that a long-term retailer on the Alberta scene in the outdoor marketplace just rebranded which included a name change. *Campers Village* is now *Breathe Outdoors*.

Similarly, questions related to mission and vision were presented. It was clear that the participant (hunter, angler, outdoor enthusiast) as well as conservation needed to be identified in future marketing, branding, and communication channels within the association.

Recommendation: An investment in branding development be undertaken as a budgetary priority through contracting professional support.

By contracting professional branding experts, the development of a multi year branding strategy including identifying the necessary financial resources can be determined. This is not a project that can be undertaken by volunteers alone. This is premised on the draft objects and focus that MFPP is presenting being backed by the AFGA Executive. Branding requires a fresh external look and involves multiple elements including the connection to other organizational statements such as mission.

Support, Services, and Benefits

FPPC developed extensive lists of support, services, and benefits at both a club and member level. These have been identified in the respective charts. Initially these sections were included as part of the focus elements for AFGA. They represent stand-alone priorities that are operational, administrative, or delivery avenues that link to communications, promotions, marketing, branding, policy development, issue management, programs, projects, fundraising, and membership throughout AFGA.

For example, providing support to clubs with programs and facilities such as firearm ranges is a recognized need and clearly linked to the focus elements. These elements represent a collection of activities covering everything from membership incentive to organizational efficiency. The charts are provided to help in the development of a strategic business plan, assist other committees and AFGA Executive as they consider possible changes within the organization.

Would highlight that from a membership incentive standpoint at a provincial level, the current “benefits” likely pale in comparison to those provided by a club which has a firearm range, campground, or other facility. Discussion related to the *Outdoor Canada West* magazine in this context was identified earlier. Even the issue of insurance may be perceived as providing minimal value. Homeowners and renters have mandatory liability insurance included within their policies which becomes the “primary payor” in the event of a claim.

MFPP is not advocating for such a situation, but in British Columbia, mandatory liability and property damage insurance is required in some Wildlife Management Units (Fraser Valley Special Area Hunting License). This legislated mandate drives membership to the BCWF which is similar to that with firearm ranges.

MFPP recognizes that the two charts in the following sections may not cover all elements that are required. They should be viewed in the context as a starting point. They are also tied directly to developing a value equation that can grow the organization. Working with the zones, clubs, and members to ensure their needs are addressed is critical. Communicating the resulting value equation is essential.

Member Support Services Benefits

In a “move forward model” there is opportunity to increase or improve membership support, services, and benefits. Where the immediate emphasis or work undertaken should be prioritized within a strategic business plan. In the past, the organization attempted to build on all elements, rather than focusing and completing the task on several. This strategy resulted in little change and lost opportunity. Only through promotion, marketing, and communications will these membership supports, service, and benefits contribute to the value equation.

These supports, services, and benefits are proposed in a “go forward model” and may not currently be in place. Additional elements can be added as identified.					
Membership Support, Services, Benefits					
Grey shading indicates not currently in place or limited					
Benefits including insurance and magazine	Outdoor Canada Subscription	Insurance	Bi-monthly online membership newsletter (Hook and Bullet-in)	Membership incentives for joining and retention	Membership recognition and awards
Merchant Discounts or Affinity Programs	Marks				
Communications and information sharing	Issue identification locally, regionally, provincially, nationally	Resource sharing on issues	Annual Conference and webinars		
Value of belonging	Supporting organizational goals at a club, zone, or provincial level				
(Continued Next Page)					

Volunteer opportunities at club, zone, or provincial level	Leadership development and training	Projects such as habitat stewardship opportunities with Wildlife Trust Fund properties or participation in habitat projects	Involvement on AFGA committees or as stakeholder forum participants	Participating in club, zone, or provincial sponsored events and programs from youth camps to fundraising endeavors	Citizen Science
Fellowship	Involvement with clubs or through projects				

Club Support and Services

From a governance standpoint, clubs are the members of AFGA. Without the affiliated clubs bringing with them their members to be part of the AFGA community, the organization would not exist. While this relationship has existed for decades, it is not generally understood. Many club members may not even be aware they are part of the provincial organization. Complicating this is there are numerous clubs bearing the “Fish and Game Association” name which are not affiliated at a provincial level. Often their members believe they are part of the AFGA community. They directly benefit by the work done across the organization yet provide no support.

This highlights the need for a collective revitalization of the organization for it to be successful in meeting the needs of the outdoor community, both today and into the future. Clubs must see and be aware of value to maintain affiliation. Bringing non-affiliated clubs or organizations into the family is needed.

As with Member Support Services and Benefits, in a “move forward model” there is opportunity to increase or improve club support and services. The immediate emphasis or work undertaken needs to be prioritized in consultation with clubs and identified within a strategic business plan. Setting realistic timelines to achieve including the necessary budgets must be part of the equation.

These supports, services, and programs are proposed in a “go forward model” and may not currently be in place. Additional elements can be added as identified.

Club Support and Services				
Grey shading indicates not currently in place or limited				
Insurance Products	General Liability Insurance \$65 per year	Firearm and Archery Range Insurance is required at \$370 per year, per range (Clubs can choose insurance other than AFGA's but they must prove coverage)	Optional: Non-profit Management and Corporate Liability Insurance which runs from March 1 to April 30 the following year at \$150 per unincorporated club or \$350 per incorporated club	
Membership	Roster input and control for magazine subscription and insurance	Streamlined online membership and renewal platform		

Club Support and Service (Continued)						
Organizational governance	Manual to assist in requirements in relationship to various acts for club start-up and operations	Leadership development and training	Dedicated staff assistance and support	Delegate determination for special and annual general meetings	Annual Conference, special and annual general meetings	
Programs	<p>Firearm and Archery Ranges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance and support with the planning necessary for construction or redevelopment of ranges. • Provide guidance and support with grant applications for range development. • Collect and share best practices for range construction and operation. • Provide collective representation to the Chief Firearms Officer (CFO), acting as an ardent provincial advocate for affiliated clubs. 	<p>Wildlife Awards:</p> <p>Frameworks and criteria</p> <p>Big Game Scoring Workshops</p>	<p>Annual Conference</p> <p>Member and Club recognition:</p> <p>AFGA Service Awards</p>	<p>Habitat Programs and Projects:</p> <p>Frameworks to facilitate involvement in AFGA Provincial Programs including Wildlife Trust Fund</p> <p>Project development assistance locally</p>	<p>Education and Youth:</p> <p>Contact and resource library to assist in delivery of non AFGA Programs: (BOW, Hunter/Angler/Firearm Education, Boating. Others)</p>	<p>Fundraising and Grant Application:</p> <p>Resource library</p> <p>Assistance in application process</p>
Communication and Information Sharing	Issue identification locally, regionally, provincially, nationally platform	Resource development and sharing on issues	Weekly social media and traditional media news tracking (media monitoring)	Focused social media outreach	Traditional media including print, radio, and television	Bi-monthly online membership newsletter (Hook and Bullet-in)
Marketing, Promotion, and Branding	Organizational and club	AFGA branded items	Affiliation fee incentives			

Policy Development and Issue Management

For AFGA to be effective at a provincial level, it must ensure bylaws, operational procedures, policies, and positions are credible, relevant, and current. This requires a process of ongoing review and research. Whether bylaws, the operations manual, or tied to advocacy, AFGA's existing policies and procedures are dated. Our bylaws relate to the 1960s. Our policies except for "off highway vehicle use" and "commercial fishing" are prior to 2005. On the fisheries file, extensive documentation and position development has occurred. Due to the complex and overlapping nature of information contained in papers related to fisheries developed by AFGA, the resolution process (policy adoption) is not an effective method for them to become official policy. The information was widely shared and presented throughout the organization and represents de facto issue management that meets current best practices. At the same time, it is not visible within our communication or information platforms which leads to many misconceptions, both by members, public, stakeholders, and government on where AFGA stands on issues facing the our fisheries resource. Similar situations exist in relation to the hunting and environment portfolios.

AFGA has long used a resolution process to address issues and develop policy. Despite widespread grass roots support in the organization for this process, it has major shortcomings and flaws. To put it bluntly, the current resolution process amounts to opinion polling without the background documentation that is required for policy or position creation. Other organizations continue to use the resolution process for some of their business, but it comes with strict guidelines, caveats, and protocols. Policies today should be living documents due to instant information exchange, evolving science, societal shift, and need for rapid issue management/response. Resolution processes are cumbersome, slow, and represent a snapshot of opinion that could be likened to "Twitter".

Recommendation: There is a critical need to fund and create a policy development section within the organization.

The development of a strategic business plan must address the capacity constraints in the organization. One of the needs is for the funding of a policy development section within the organizations. Lack of capacity severely limits AFGAs current ability to develop sound policy. Most organizations rely on staff to develop policy which is reviewed by committees and adopted at a board of director level. There fortunately are ways to piggyback on sound policy developed by the Canadian Wildlife Federation or affiliates. Other organizations also have policies that we could adopt or modify for our use. We must look no further than the recent issue of coal mining in the East Slopes of Alberta where AFGA was largely silent, primarily to not having current policies to address or a contemporary rapid issue management process.

Policies must be supported by the necessary research and background documentation to be credible. Credibility is essential if an organization wants to be taken seriously in a debate where there are conflicting viewpoints. This is also directly tied to perceived value. Not all members of an organization will support a particular position, but this is not an issue on a one-op as diverse opinions exist throughout society. Support for organizations is based on the overall work, not a single issue. MFPP is not suggesting that AFGA abandon the resolution process entirely, but it must be adapted and used in ways that ensure sound policy development.

Recommendation: MFPP is recommending that the following template be adopted as it relates to advocacy management within for the organization.

Much of the work of the GOV Committee is tied to bylaws and the operations manual that will result in updated policies and procedures throughout the organization to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Similarly, FPPC developed an algorithm to ensure advocacy efforts are consistent with current best practices including outlining options. Advocacy and communications are intrinsically linked and need to happen concurrently.

Issue Management			
Advocacy and Communications must occur concurrently			
Hunting	Fishing	Habitat	Outdoor Recreation, Stewardship, and Ethics
<p>Step one:</p> <p>Issue identification, research, prioritization, and develop management options</p> <p>(Occurs at chair, committee, BOD, or staff level)</p>	<p>Step one:</p> <p>Issue identification, research, prioritization, and develop management options</p> <p>(Occurs at chair, committee, BOD, or staff level)</p>	<p>Step one:</p> <p>Issue identification, research, prioritization, and management options</p> <p>(Occurs at chair, committee, BOD, or staff level)</p>	<p>Step one:</p> <p>Issue identification, research, prioritization, and develop management options</p> <p>(Occurs at chair, committee, BOD, or staff level)</p>
(Several options may be determined to be required to address issue)			
<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Position development, review, or updating, followed by action plan for formal advocacy at provincial level</p>	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Position development, review, or updating, followed by action plan for formal advocacy at provincial level</p>	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Position development, review, or updating, followed by action plan for formal advocacy at provincial level</p>	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Position development, review, or updating, followed by action plan for formal advocacy at provincial level</p>
<p>Option 2:</p> <p>Member and club awareness including providing relevant information or resources leaving to individual or club to respond</p>	<p>Option 2:</p> <p>Member and club awareness including providing relevant information or resources leaving to individual or club to respond</p>	<p>Option 2:</p> <p>Member and club awareness including providing relevant information or resources leaving to individual or club to respond</p>	<p>Option 2:</p> <p>Member and club awareness including providing relevant information or resources leaving to individual or club to respond</p>
<p>Option 3:</p> <p>Support other organizations in their advocacy initiatives related to the issue</p>	<p>Option 3:</p> <p>Support other organizations in their advocacy initiatives related to the issue</p>	<p>Option 3:</p> <p>Support other organizations in their advocacy initiatives related to the issue</p>	<p>Option 3:</p> <p>Support other organizations in their advocacy initiatives related to the issue</p>
<p>Option 4:</p> <p>Participate in stakeholder engagement process at various levels if available (member, club, zone, provincial)</p>	<p>Option 4:</p> <p>Participate in stakeholder engagement process at various levels if available (member, club, zone, provincial)</p>	<p>Option 4:</p> <p>Participate in stakeholder engagement process at various levels if available (member, club, zone, provincial)</p>	<p>Option 4:</p> <p>Participate in stakeholder engagement process at various levels if available (member, club, zone, provincial)</p>
<p>(Options 5 and 6 next page)</p>			

Option 5: Program or project adoption or development	Option 5: Program or project adoption or development	Option 5: Program or project adoption or development	Option 5: Program or project adoption or development
Option 6: Not our issue but advise membership of rationale	Option 6: Not our issue but advise membership of rationale	Option 6: Not our issue but advise membership of rationale	Option 6: Not our issue but advise membership of rationale

Fundraising

Financial capacity of the organization is tied to membership and fundraising. Membership will remain the single largest revenue source for the organization in the near and medium term. Additional revenue streams are required if the organization is to achieve its goals.

Other organizations have dedicated fundraising sections that either rely on staff or contractors. Fundraising is a rather ambiguous concept that goes beyond casinos, raffles, or donations. It is about developing consistent revenue streams from a variety of sources beyond membership fees. Funds raised can go directly to projects and programs. For example, our annual conference and Alberta Wildlife Awards programs need to be revisited so they become revenue generators.

Other organizations run projects and programs where they receive significant funding from government. The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and the Alberta Conservation Association are good examples. Unfortunately, this space has been lost and filled with other organizations such as the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors’ Association. Whether opportunity exists for AFGA to manage programs currently provided by government which support the outdoor community needs to be investigated.

Recommendation: The development of additional revenue streams for the organization is a crucial need and must be addressed in the strategic business plan.

Delivery Model							
Supporters	Outreach and cooperation with other like-minded organizations, agencies, governments, and individuals to achieve common goals						
Sponsors Donors	Currently a missing element in ability of organization to achieve its goals.						
Direct Members	Untapped potential to grow organization in the future.						
Club Members	Our current greatest resource and the delivery mechanism to achieve our collective goals!						
Clubs	Coordination, communication, leadership development, mobilization, fundraiser, critical player in determining organizational direction and planning						
Zones	Coordination, communication, and leadership development						
Provincial	Governance and Management	Support, Services, and Benefits	Communications	Marketing and Promotion	Fundraising (Grants, sponsorship, gaming, events, program delivery)	Advocacy	Programs Including Wildlife Trust Fund

To this end the delivery model was developed by FPPC noting the need for “fund raising” as a core element provincially. The development of a strategic business plan is included under the terms of reference for the Finance Audit Risk Management Committee (FAR) where this action needs to be included.

Work of other Committees

MEM and FPPC met together to discuss common issues and broaden perspective in March of 2021. GOV, like MEM and FPPC shared their minutes throughout the process. FPPC and GOV had shared reports with the other committees and the AFGA Executive. FPPC in addition hosted a webinar in June 2021 where some of the work in this report was presented and input received. MFPP continued this process and addressed the ongoing work of the GOV committee in Meeting 02 and 03. The work of GOV is complimentary and consistent with that of MFPP. Where inconsistencies exist such as MFPP recommendation that the organization needs to focus on habitat rather than the larger environment question, such issues can be resolved at a committee level provided the AFGA Executive is supportive of the overall direction. The critical need is the development of a strategic business plan that incorporates all the elements identified within this report and work by other committees. Within this plan must be timelines, targets, and annual benchmarks to measure whether meaningful work related to the focus and goals of AFGA is achieved.

Recommendation Summary

Contained within this report are many recommendations and ideas. The next step is for the recommendations to be reviewed by the AFGA Executive and other committees. Following this will be presentation to the wider AFGA community for input. Concepts and recommendations that are endorsed will need to be incorporated into a strategic business plan to prioritize, action, and implement. Change is needed within the organization and timelines and measures will need to be established. Actions are already underway related to many of the recommendations. It will take a collective vision and hard work by all for the potential of the Alberta fish and Game Association is to be realized.

If there is an expectation that these tasks and responsibilities fall solely with the AFGA Executive and staff to implement, they will not be achieved. Collective action and support involving members, clubs, zones, staff, and the AFGA Executive is required if revitalization is to be successful. Without collective resolve to work together, the organization will continue to struggle and may fail. This would lead to clubs with perhaps zones functioning and inputting on issues at a local level. No provincial voice would exist with the broad perspective that AFGA has presented throughout its history related to conservation and outdoor activities. Instead, special interest groups would dominate with their own agendas which may not be in touch with the average Albertan or support activities such as hunting and fishing. The organization is more than a sum of its parts. Going forward it must grow its membership and develop alternate revenue streams to fund the work that its members expect. An overview of key points within this report follows.

Focus

Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee (MFPP) believes there is room and a need for a *broad-based lifestyle organization with defined emphasis* that positions itself in the middle of wildlife conservation advocacy spectrum in Alberta's future. The focus as developed by the committee is presented within this report. The structural components that would support delivery of the focus and objects were identified and outlined. There needs to be agreement by the AFGA Executive and broader AFGA community that this direction is in the best collective interests of the organization.

Objects

MFPP recommends that our AFGA objects be revised. Draft objects for consideration are included within this report. They align with the focus elements that were developed. Additional legal review as well refinement will be required before they could be submitted to Service Alberta or CRA. Review and support are required by the AFGA Executive and broader AFGA community. The objects of the organization can only be changed through a special resolution.

Charitable Status

The maintenance of charitable status is felt to be in the best interests of the organization. As such the objects have been drafted based on this premise.

Membership

Retention of existing members and affiliated clubs club is the critical first step. MFPP supports having both membership through an AFGA affiliated club or directly at a provincial level. They represent two different sectors of the public and as such should be viewed as complementary and not competitive. Expanding membership at all levels of the organization must be a priority. A strategic plan needs to be developed with professional help to market the organization at the membership, club, and provincial level to achieve this goal. Simplifying how to join, such as through a common online portal could remove barriers. The use of incentives including considering discounting at a club level affiliation fees based on membership numbers deserves consideration. There are caveats that must carefully evaluated for this to be viable which must factor into long term strategic goals.

Strategic Change Mechanics

MFPP members believe that change is required within the organization for it to be successful to allow it to achieve its objects. This will involve more than tweaks within the organization. Change will impact governance, issue management, membership, finances, communication, promotion, branding, marketing, fund raising, and operations. AFGA lacks capacity and needs professional support for program delivery, communications, marketing (includes promotion and branding), fund raising, and policy development. Which is most important is a moot point as ultimately, they all contribute to the success of the organization. Only through change will the organization be effective, relevant, and supported by the next generation of members.

Communications

MFPP believes the starting point for change is tied to communications and marketing. Sufficient budgetary commitments must be made immediately in these areas. The work being undertaken by COM is the crucial immediate priority for AFGA. Demonstrating and communicating that the organization is relevant and deserves support across the outdoor community in a rapidly changing society is essential. Telling our story and reaching out to the broadest audience is paramount. The work undertaken by COM needs to be incorporated within the strategic plan.

AFGA currently has a communications contractor. Expanding the contract to develop AFGA specific editorial content and messaging at a member, club, zone, or provincial level is necessary. Budgets must include adequate funding for research, consultation, and writing required to produce such content. The role that publications play in telling our story needs review in the context of our overall communications and marketing strategy.

Marketing, Promotions, and Branding

FPPC reviewed the organization including Name, Motto, Logo, Goals, Principles, and Mission and found little defining. MFPP recommends that an investment in brand development be undertaken as a budgetary priority through contracting professional support. The foundation for this endeavor was developed by FPPC and MMFP. Brand is among the most important aspects of any organization and tied directly to communications, marketing, and promotions. Critical for long term membership retention and growth in a crowded organizational landscape where individuals and sponsors have many choices to support.

Membership Support, Services, and Benefits

In a “move forward model” there is opportunity to increase or improve membership support, services, and benefits. Work in this area needs to be prioritized and done in consultation with clubs and members to determine needs. This is one component that will help increase the value equation for the organization.

Club Support and Services

There is both a need and opportunity to increase or improve club support and services. Work in this area will need to be prioritized and done in consultation with the clubs.

Policy and Issue Management

In this era of instant information exchange, evolving science, societal shift, and need for rapid issue management, organizations need to have robust current policies and issue management systems in place. AFGAs policy development system is slow and cumbersome. The result is an organization that loses relevance and profile. There is the need to fund a policy development section within the organizations. Adoption of the Issue Management Template would lead to greater organizational effectiveness, visibility, and relevance, all of which are tied to value.

Fundraising

The development of additional revenue sources for the organization is a crucial need. Fundraising is a rather ambiguous concept that goes beyond casinos, raffles, or donations. It is about developing consistent revenue streams from a variety of sources beyond membership dues. Funds raised can go directly to projects and programs that expand the reach of the organization and thus value. MFPP recognizes that membership dues in the near and medium terms will be the most important revenue stream for the organization. Relying primarily on membership fees however will not allow the organization to meet its potential.

Strategic and Business Plan Development

Having a well laid out strategic and supporting business plan is an essential element for any organization to be successful. Within these plans must be goals, benchmarks, timelines, targets, and measures of success. These tie directly to the achievement of the objects of the organization. AFGA needs to avoid the pitfalls of the past where decisions were often based on the “flavor of the day” or “personal agenda”. Essential to prioritize actions ensuring necessary resources to complete task. In this report many of the key areas have been identified that should be included in a strategic business plan. Other committees will add to this list. **The immediate development of a strategic and supporting business plan is required.** Failure to proceed in this direction will allow mistakes of the past being repeated with the downward spiraling of the organization continuing.

Conclusion

Key Recommendation: Next steps must be tied to the development of a strategic and supporting business plan for AFGA that will operationalize and set timelines around the concepts addressed within this report.

Work underway related to communications should proceed concurrently but needs to be incorporated into the strategic plan. Communications as a single element on its own will not solve the issues facing AFGA.

Much of the work related to developing the strategic and supporting business plan can be based on the concepts identified within this report. MFPP supports maintaining AFGA’s position as a middle of the road conservation organization focused on an outdoor lifestyle. This vision is not substantially different than the past but does include defining boundaries. Critical is that measures are established to monitor success to ensure the objects and goals of the organization are being met. Programing, including a focus on habitat through vehicles such as the Wildlife Trust Fund or stewardship are integral for broad societal support and fundraising. Maintaining our charitable status, while engaging in advocacy on diverse range of topics comes with challenges when single or self interest dominate. Communications related to the value and work of the organization, its staff, volunteers, members, clubs, and zones must be frequent and in multiple platforms.

The question that members, clubs, and the AFGA Executive must ask is whether there continues to be a need for AFGA at a provincial level? Framing the question in a different way, **“Is it time for local interests or single perspectives to dominate?”** MFPP believes that a provincial arm of the organization is critical to maintain. It however must have the capacity and resources to achieve its objects and focus.

This will only be possible through collective action, support, and resolve across the organization that must be instilled at a member and club level.

MFPP has provided multiple recommendations in this report. Additional context is provided in the charts and throughout the body of report. There are other resources including earlier reports, webinar resources, and committee minutes that are included in the appendix. MFPP members come from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Whether the AFGA Executive and the larger AFGA community is supportive of the direction outlined is unknown.

For the organization to be successful in achieving its objects is heavily reliant on volunteers and broad support within the outdoor community. It does involve the AFGA community coming together while recognizing there is a diversity of opinions and differing perspectives covering a wide range of issues impacting the outdoor landscape. Despite differing opinions on some issues, it is about the collective value and resolve of an organization such as AFGA that must be the measure for continued support. Ensuring that activities such as hunting and fishing continue to be accepted by society is a legacy worth striving for.



Appendices

1. Alberta Fish and Game Association Focus Priorities Programs Committee Discussion Report
February 15, 2021
2. Report to AFGA Community
Alberta Fish and Game Association Focus Priorities Programs Committee
May 2021
3. Appendix to Report to AFGA Community
Alberta Fish and Game Association Focus Priorities Programs Committee
May 2021
4. ZOOM Event: Building on our legacy, evolving to meet the challenges of today and the future.
Alberta Fish and Game Association Focus Priorities Programs Committee
June 9, 2021
5. Polling Questions Results
Alberta Fish and Game Association Focus Priorities Programs Committee Webinar
June 9, 2021
6. The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation Technical Review 12-04
The Wildlife Society and The Boone and Crockett Club
December 2012