

## **NEWS FROM ALBERTA**

### **President's Report**

By Victor Benz

President

he months of April and
May have focused on attending the AFGA Zone
Spring Meetings, introducing the AFGA's new
Interim Executive Director, giving an update on the AFGA's status, and answering all your questions. Three major concerns dominated:

- The Wildlife Trust Fund,
- The impact of the loss of Sherwood Park Fish and Game affiliation, and
- The status of the Minister's Special Licence (MSL) programme, both short and long-term

#### The Wildlife Trust Fund (WTF)

In March 2021, the AFGA Executive was informed that the WTF no longer had enough unrestricted funds to continue operations. If immediate action was not taken, then the failure of the WTF could lead to dissolution of the AFGA with significant tax implications as well.

The AFGA Executive extended funds to the WTF to continue operation and find a qualified donee(s) to share in WTF land that was only titled to the AFGA. The Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) stepped forward and joined the AFGA as lead title holder on most of these land deeds, ensuring



the lands would always have free access to all Albertans.

Agreements were completed for each individual property affected. The ACA was added to each land title as the lead organization. As part of the agreement, the ACA covered all current outstanding property taxes and

land costs, but the AFGA was allowed to retain any land revenue they had already collected.

This change was completed this (2021-22) fiscal year. No money changed hands, although the revaluing of the lands affected, does show up in the Financial Statements as Asset Adjustments.

#### MOVING?

# AFGA

## The Impact Of The Loss Of Sherwood Park Fish And Game

Following the February AFGA AGM, on March 17, 2022, Sherwood Park Fish and Game formally announced that it would no longer affiliate with the AFGA. This potential loss of one third of the AFGA's Affiliated Club members reduced Affiliation Due income by a similar amount. A review of the AFGA's financial reserves indicated we had the next year to put measures in place to address this shortfall.

We also sent an email to all former 2021 Sherwood Park Affiliated Club members explaining the impact on their benefits, encouraging them to join nearby AFGA Affiliated Clubs to continue in their support of the AFGA. The Hook & Bullet-in will continue to be sent to these former members throughout 2021.

With our AFGA Executive meeting held at the end of April, we have begun an intensive process to develop a Strategic Plan and Vision for our AFGA. Please stay tuned as we share our progress.

## Minister's Special Licence Programme

Your AFGA held the contract for both the MSL auctions, historically held during the Wild Sheep Show in Reno, Nevada, and Alberta raffles for 2013-2017. From 2018 through 2022, that contract was informally extended each year for one more year.

On December 11, 2021, in a meeting with senior Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) staff, the AFGA was informed that, starting in 2023, management of the MSL Auctions had been given to the Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS). The MSL raffle portion of the programme would be given to a deserving Alberta-based conservation organization. AEP would not commit to naming AFGA as that organization.

The 2022 MSL Raffles for Antlered Elk, Antlered Mule Deer, and Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep were de-

layed as we finalized arrangements with RaffleBox and AGLC, to conduct them on-line as electronic raffles.

On March 24, 2022 two observant AFGA Affiliated Club members contacted us independently to let us know of the MSL Auction, underway in Minnesota at the Wild Sheep Foundation Mid-West Chapter Banquet for three new MSL tags given to APOS (Wild Turkey, Pronghorn Antelope and Antlered Moose). The AFGA was never informed of these new MSL tags and it has never received an explanation why these MSL tags were given to APOS a year early.

After the Minnesota auction closed, we noted that the same individual had won all three auctions. That prompted my letter to AEP, asking if the standards used by AFGA for the auctions and raffles would continue to apply to all MSL tags in the future. They are:

85% of all revenue derived has always been, and will be, directed towards qualified conservation projects in Alberta.

The auctions are intended to attract an international audience and pocketbook.

The raffles are limited to Alberta Residents only, giving them an equal opportunity for the same number of tags as the auctions.

Raffle ticket purchases are initially limited, for the first 30 to 90 days, to 100 tickets per person per species per day.

Only the actual winners of the auctions or the raffles can use the tags won. In other words, the tags cannot be resold/traded/given to any other individual.

As of May 10th, no reply had been received from AEP.

We have now been told the MSL auctions and raffles will be the subject of a formal AEP procurement process starting in August 2022. We are unaware of any bidder qualification process, nor of any formal criteria to evaluate these bids.

We will continue to pursue this project in the best interests of all Albertans.

## Executive Director's Report

By Mark Olson

Interim Executive Director

he AFGA has many experienced contributors to this magazine that are much better versed to talk about activities and issues of interest to our members, be they anglers, hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, and/or conservationists.

I'd like to discuss a broader, more holistic topic, the importance and relevance of a strong and united AFGA as we embark on our revitalization for the future.

I believe there is a way to change, still honour our roots and be true to our values. We have a proud and storied tradition. Mistakes have been made but without malice. Motives have been pure but the results of some of the pandemic era decisions have been mixed to be sure. As the saying goes, "if you ain't failing you ain't trying". The key is to admit those failings and course correct.

First of all, we need a strong provincial voice in advocacy. That doesn't mean that the regional and local needs of our zones and clubs need be sacrificed. By the very definition of a federation, they are their own entities, but they can't speak for all of the AFGA. Government, funders, and sponsors want to maximize the return on their investment provincially.

My early observations are that we need to bring more value to our affiliate members. That can't happen without being strong provincially and recognized as progressive and effectual. We need to expand our inclusion and diversity by reaching out to our First Nations' communities, expanding our programming for women and youth and being innovative in our fund development. At the same time, we must re-establish confidence in the Wildlife Trust Fund (WTF) and acknowledge all the tremendous stewardship that our volunteers throughout the province have provided. We are working collaboratively with the Alberta Conservation Association to maximize our resources and minimize our risk, but we recognize that the WTF has been a foundational pillar and we will continue to look at opportunities presented by generous, conservation minded landowners.

Being communicative, transparent,

and accountable are the way organizations, especially not-for-profits and charities (and there is a difference) grow support. The AFGA is a combination of individuals, clubs, and Zones, which together with shared goals can create a strong, collective impact.

Your Executive and Provincial Board are committed to a strategic planning process that is re-examining and where necessary, reforming every aspect of our governance and operations.

I can assure you that the AFGA is but one of many industry/sector organizations that is seizing the emergence from pandemic malaise to one of an exciting period of rejuvenation. Our passionate volunteer base provides us with much optimism for the future. My guiding position is no different than any other leader, we need to listen to our grassroots stakeholders. What is good for our members is good for the AFGA, not the other way around. We truly and deeply respect the sweat equity that a relative few have invested to the benefit of many.

If you want AFGA to grow and be influential, get involved, join a committee, become a delegate, work an event, contribute an op-ed piece to our newsletter, sign up a new member. We need your support!

## 1st Vice-President's Report

By Faran Schaber

1st Vice-President

s spring turned to summer, spring bear season turned to summer fishing and camping adventures, and finding out the results of our draws for the up coming hunting season.

The AFGA Executive continues to

meet on a monthly basis and move our organization towards the future. We welcome ideas from the grassroots of our Association to discuss and implement based on feasibility.

The AFGA Resolutions SGM went well. There were some technical issues, but even so, we did have many good discussions.

I attended the Zone 4 AGM in April. It was the first-in person meeting that I have attended in two years. It was a small group, but there was good discussion on the subjects presented. Victor Benz, President, and Mark Olson, Interim Executive Director, were also in attendance to present the AFGA report.

Victor, Mark and I had a meeting with Canadian Wildlife Federation CEO Rick Bates and President John Williams. They were on a cross-country tour to meet with the provincial affiliates. It was an informative session, and it is interesting how our concerns align with a lot of the other affiliates. Victor and I will be attending their AGM in mid-June. Their AGM will be held in Charlottetown, PEI, but we will be attending virtually.

I attended the AFGA Wildlife Awards banquet on May 7th, and the Zone 2 Meeting mid-May.

There has been no contact from Tech Coal in regard to the trails. The annual meeting is usually in late June.



Photo by Adele Armstrong, Wildlife Photography Winner, AFGA 2021 Wildlife Awards



## 2nd Vice-President's Report

By Dave Doonanco

2nd Vice-President

other's Day, many years ago, my wife and one of her good friends headed out for a weekend getaway. Upon their return it was apparent that I was not in the running for husband of the year as I had accidently allowed my three-year-old to partake in a beer, and his giggling and constant animal sounds were evidence that I had not caught him in time. Added to that was the news that I had bought a farm while she was gone and was now asking forgiveness rather than permission.

I was not a farmer and had not grown up on a farm, but how hard could this be? Lacking any mechanical abilities, I thought it was best to stay away from things involving machinery, so after a couple of years of renting out our pastureland, I decided to try my hand at cattle. My only previous experience was being in charge of cows at my in-laws one weekend while I was still in courtship mode; that didn't go well as the one and only calf that I was responsible for didn't make it and we ended up calling a vet who took it out in pieces...yearlings it was.

To my neighbours, I was like that four-year-old kid that never stops asking questions. From proper amounts of grain, to fence building, rotational pasture grazing, and everything in between. Then once in a while I would strike out on my own with an idea on how to fix a problem, which resulted in probably

the strangest story our local vet has ever heard. Learning something from the M.A.S.H. television series doesn't always work in real life, but certainly has been a source of entertainment. As well, I learned that my horsemanship skills were best kept to the red roan with the Honda decal on the side.

Just as my venture into raising yearlings was a huge learning curve, this step up to the AFGA Executive and the Chair of the Communications Committee has been a learning experience as well. The thirty years that I spent teaching certainly helped with the required organizational skills, problem solving and communication, but this is a bit different.

I learned that the AFGA has such a wide range of areas that it covers; environment, angling, hunting, program maintenance and development, and supporting our firearms community to name a few. Then, take into account that within each of those areas there is a further breakdown of topics that can be as diverse as the membership itself. Finally, the diversity of interests and concerns across the province even on similar topics, such as elk populations or angling pressures has to be considered.

Trying to bring all of this diversity together so that we are all working cooperatively is certainly full of challenges. Having an open mind and a willingness to listen to everyone's concerns is certainly paramount to making effective and rational decisions as a board member. As well, we as board members need to always keep in mind that the organization itself and its best interests are in the forefront of each decision that we make. I feel that we have a group of people who have those skills and abilities and are working in that direction.

This is about using a team approach and the board is simply one part of the team. My first practicum experience, when I was enrolled in my BEd. program, was with a teacher who instilled in me, that team approach. He had told me that each and every one of the staff in the school was equally important to the success of the school, from custodian to principal. I have always maintained that philosophy.

So it is with the AFGA. The board is part of a larger team and as such we rely on each and every member to help move this organization forward. Just as in any team, you have people taking on various roles. Some take on chair positions at the club level, some take on chair positions at the Zone and provincial levels, while others help run a club event, sell club raffle tickets, or write a letter to their MLA, while others buy a membership to support the organization. Whatever part you play, you are equally important as the next person.

I also learned from those first couple of Zone meetings that I attended last year, it was abundantly clear that communication was a huge issue. It was equally clear that we didn't have a great deal of time to solve the problem; members wanted to see some change, and rightfully so. Our committee went to work to improve the communications situation and I would like to think that we have had some improvement from a year ago. We do realize that we are far from done and are working on areas and ideas to continue this path forward.

We didn't get into this situation overnight and we won't be able to solve it overnight either. It is however encouraging to see that many of the clubs and Zones have begun to get involved with improving communications through their use of social media. I see that they are sharing each other's posts and pertinent information about the events, programs and activities. As well, your AFGA communications team will continue to do the same. So keep up the great job of helping to develop communications amongst the members.

So what else did we learn? We learned that we could conduct civil

discussions about generally hot topics without letting emotions and anger get in the way of decision making. I saw this take place during the Zone 5 town hall meeting that was held prior to the virtual AGM, where club members had their chance to hear each other's opinions on the special resolution. We also learned that an informal town hall style meeting may be something that could benefit the organization in the future. With that in mind as we move forward, it may be in the interest of each Zone to conduct a town hall type of Zoom virtual meeting where each club can share their ideas and concerns on a host of topics within their respective Zone. This doesn't mean that the twice a year, in-person meetings don't take place to deal with the required business of each Zone, but the Zoom/ Google Meet/Teams meetings would be a supplemental activity that would help to strengthen the lines of communication between the individual clubs and the Zone, ultimately improving communication across the province.

We do have many other ideas that we will be working to implement throughout the year and we look forward to your participation, support and feedback on these initiatives.

The conference webinars took place back in April and I must first thank Victor and the rest of the Executive for taking up the slack when I was put out of commission for that week. I did take the opportunity to listen to each of the presentations and caught myself on several occasions wanting to ask a question even though I was listening to a pre-recorded message. If you haven't heard them, go to the news and media section of the website and you will find them there.

I am a real believer that things happen for a reason and the short notice for guests resulted in an information gathering session for Environment Chair Glenn Heather. There may not have been a large number of people



Elk hunting what feels likea few centuries ago!

involved in the meeting, but I was certainly impressed by the quality of the people involved and the topics and concerns that they brought up. I did see it as a positive for that reason, and I believe we can continue to use a similar format of webinar to gather input from our members on various topics within the outdoor community. So thank you Glenn for that awesome idea, that we will work to develop further.

The fishing session was also very informative with another excellent guest speaker thanks to Fishing Chair Darryl Smith. Dr. Cook's information was illuminating and relevant to the issues faced by anglers and fish populations in Alberta and across the country. Some great questions with open and honest responses, based on scientific information found to date.

I had listened to Dr. Mark Boyce back when he first arrived in our neck of the woods and was impressed back then and continue to be impressed by the work that he does. Once again an excellent selection of a guest speaker, thanks to our Hunting Chair Brian Rudyk. Great questions from the participants and equally informative responses from Dr. Boyce.

Listening to all the presentations and hearing all of the other studies going on, has gotten the hamsters spinning to the point I may have to change the bearing on the hamster wheel. With our Communications Committee we shall continue to develop some more of these informative and educational sessions with the goal to branch out into the many different interests that our membership encompass.

Thank you to Zone 3 for taking on the AFGA Annual Wildlife Awards and running a successful event. I wasn't able to make it out to the event as I had already committed to running another event for my own club, but from all accounts it was a job well done. Thanks again to everyone who helped make this one of the first in-person events of the year. We are looking forward to seeing the clubs getting back on track with all the activities and events that they have been so instrumental with in their communities.

As we move forward with the revitalization of the AFGA, it is imperative that we continue to stick together, ask the hard questions that need to be asked of your Executive, and as members we need your assistance in making sure your interests and the interests of future generations continue to be represented by the largest conservation organization in the province.

Get involved, which means different things for different people. Sometimes getting involved simply means becoming a member. Through that membership you have taken the first step towards ensuring that the outdoor activities you enjoy will continue to be enjoyed by future generations.



## **Hunting Chair Report**

By Brian Rudyk

Hunting Chair

s I finish off the composition of this Outdoor Canada West article, it is a cool, rainy 1st of May. I am not sure why spring is so tardy making its way to Northern Alberta. Last year at this time my fall planted, moose sausage making, garlic supply had poked itself from its earthly, winter hibernation. But this year, my garden still slumbers under a blanket of snow. Maybe this cool weather is an indication of some high-quality, rub free hides yet to come once the big boars get a little less cautious later on in the season, when the rut is in full swing. Posts of bear activity at baits and pictures of beaming, successful hunters are already flooding social media so it is looking like a great spring bear season.

Despite winter clinging to the landscape, lots of Snow Geese have made an appearance on their migration to the summer brooding grounds in the Arctic. Reports of sick and dead birds from a new strain of Avian Flu are becoming quite common. Perhaps this is Mother Nature's way of dealing with overpopulation of the species. Although this H5N1 strain of the Avian Flu is having a more deadly affect on the snow geese than normal, they are still safe for humans to hunt and consume. The highest risk is in transferring the flu to domestic poultry so care needs to be taken in handling and cleaning the harvest. Use disposable gloves and double bag the offal and feathers for disposal to ensure an adequate seal to prevent potential spread. Proper cleanup with soap and water and the disinfection of utensils, footwear and clothing is crucial especially if you will be in contact with other domestic or wild birds.

By the time of publication, many inperson events including the AFGA Wildlife Awards Banquet and a variety of local club banquets and fundraisers will have taken place. Although the AFGA Executive have worked hard to provide on-line meetings, webinars and communications to carry on the work of the association, I believe that getting together makes us stronger and more unified. Hopefully, you have been able to attend one or more of these events. COVID has been especially disruptive at a time when the organization is going through a crucial period of modernization. Through this phase, where brainstorming and idea sharing is so important, it seems that many of our affiliates have become inactive and some have even drifted away from the fold. If we are to successfully complete this rejuvenation, we need input from all to insure a broad and diverse representation of those with outdoor aspirations. While views will differ, it is important that we collaborate and find consensus on a way forward that provides growth and sustainability. The survival of our lifestyle depends on it.

Every aspect of our operation requires deliberation and compromise. Some positions of the AFGA are long standing and often have policy statements associated with them, but in an everchanging world even those require periodic review. As Hunting Chair, I find it difficult to represent the association at times, especially on issues where there is no established position and a variety of opinions on the subject. I look to the excellent work accomplished by long-term volunteer and current Fishing Chair, Darryl Smith, and the group he has established to scrutinize fishing





related concerns and set direction. On the hunting side, although there is discussion with the executive, Zone Hunting Chairs, members volunteering on a variety of committees for the association and a number of individual members regarding specific concerns, there is no formal group established to meet regularly. I feel that the establishment of such a group would serve us well and welcome those interested in getting involved to contact me.

A current example of a topic that would be great to have input on involves the Mule Deer Management Plan and the Chronic Wasting Disease Strategy. When allocations for antlerless mule deer were increased last year as a strategy to slow the increase and spread of CWD, I saw a wide range of opinions expressed on a variety of platforms and at committee level. Personally, I believe that what we have done, or haven't done, until now has fallen far short and am open to considering alternative measures. Maybe it is already too late for Alberta, but I fear that pinning our hopes on a possible vaccine, potentially five years down the road, will have CWD in every WMU in Alberta unless we implement means to buy some additional time. While I support the efforts to develop a vaccine, I am genuinely concerned about the potential damage to our wildlife populations until it arrives.

Thanks for Zone 2 Director, Joe Baranyay's, and other's work on another hot topic being resident access to leased Crown Lands. Joe represented AFGA at the Real Property Rights meeting in his area and presented a statement of concerns. As a committee member on this matter, Bonnyville – Cold Lake – St. Paul MLA David Hanson attended these meetings across the province and consistently heard concerns in line with those Joe presented. MLA Hanson brought these concerns before the House. Video footage of MLA Hanson's questions is available on his Facebook page. Perhaps with these concerns reaching the House floor we will see some action taken in addressing them.

The Mule Deer, Elk and Bighorn Sheep Minister's Special License raffle tickets are selling well. Be sure to get



yours before end of sales July 26th and best of luck come draw time. Maybe this will be your lucky year. Funds raised go to many important causes to preserve our hunting and angling heritage. Hopefully, you have also got your hunting draws entered for the 2022 season. Increasing wait times in many WMUs and for many species make it even more important that you don't miss an opportunity to be drawn or build priority. Again, I encourage everyone to check out the My Wild Alberta allocation reports for your favourite WMUs and examine the historical draw information

and required priority for a successful application on Alberta RELM. Please let me know about any issues you may have with the data you find, but it is also important that you share your concerns with your local MLA and the Alberta Environment and Parks Department and Minister. Grassroots effort is still the best method to initiate change.

Congratulations to all who had a successful spring hunt, whether for black bear, snow geese or turkey. I hope that you are able to get out for some open water fishing and before you know it, we will be busy planning our fall hunts. Have a great summer and maybe I'll see you on a quiet, backcountry lake somewhere.

## Fishing Chair Report

By Darryl Smith

Fishing Chair

## **Grizzly Bears & Native Trout**

n April, research on Alberta's grizzly bear population was released. The report shows that grizzly bear numbers are increasing in Alberta. Most of us who venture into grizzly bear habitat would concur with the findings of this research. Generally, the media coverage around this research was positive. At the same time, those opposed to hunting were already sounding the alarm bells, rallying the troops, to ward off any thought of reinstating grizzly bear hunting in Alberta.

Fast forward to the Alberta Fish and

Game Association (AFGA) Webinars as part of the AFGA Virtual Conference. Dr. Mark Boyce presented on the dynamics of predator prey relationships titled Elk Harvest Increase Despite Large Carnivore Populations. The exception was along the East Slopes where grizzly bear predation on elk was a limiting factor. It points out the complexity of ecosystem function and the implications at an individual species level on population dynamics. This prompted a question from the audience. If grizzly bears are near carrying capacity and the population has reached sustainability objectives, should not limited managed hunting be allowed? Dr. Boyce's answer was that it is not a biological question but one that is social political. My take is that the amount of political capital that would need to be invested regardless of who the governing party is in Alberta, will mean that hunting will be off the table for grizzly bears at least in the foreseeable future.

While grizzly bear and native trout recovery have parallels, they are not the same. Implementing ecosystembased timber harvest can improve the habitat for grizzly bears in short time



frames. Improving habitat for native and naturalized trout is more complex. Trout benefit from unimpacted landscapes. They require cold water. When the combination of climate change and development across remaining trout habitat is considered, the goal must be to retain what remains. Recognize that local site-specific projects can enhance, restore, and protect critical reaches of some streams. Water crossing remediation (hanging culverts) is one example, but in the big picture represent minor gains. Watershed productivity is tied to complex intertwined factors. No single action, such as manipulating timber harvest at landscape level will guarantee the ongoing productivity of trout streams throughout Alberta. Neither will managing just anglers, create the conditions for recovery of native trout.

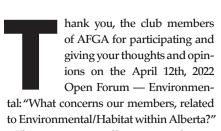






By Glenn Heather

Environment Chair



This was an excellent, open discussion forum, from a wide array of participants. This webinar gave me guidance on topics to pursue.

These were the topics of discussion:

- Clear-cutting by Chip Lake
- Wind turbines environmental impact
- Grazing near waterways
- Wetlands
- Trails' Act
- Invasive Species

I have been researching, trying to get factual information on all these topics. In this magazine issue, Chip Lake and wind turbines will be discussed. These topics are far from being fully explored, and there will additional information shared as it come to light.

Chip Lake clear cutting!! A member brought this forward, and suggested checking out the Let's Go Outdoors, You-Tube video on Chip Lake. After reviewing this clip, I was speechless. How could this be proposed; where was the consultation and more so, why? Why would Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, want a request for proposal for clear-cutting on the north shore of Chip Lake? I quickly starting to search for any documents, surveys, studies or public review of this proposal. I have been unable to find anything . Michael Short's Let's Go Outdoors"Chip Lake –To Be Clear Cut?" was the only information I could find to date. I will continue to inquire and pursue the rationale of this proposal with the government. It is disappointing that our Alberta Government continues

to make proposals to deplete our natural resources. AFGA is not against science, in fact your AFGA supports science and concepts which will enhance habitat, not destroy it.

Now for wind turbines. I made a promise to the member, who asked about the environmental impact of Wind turbines that I would research European countries which have been using wind turbines for many more years, and if they had produced best practices or concepts that would reduce the impact of wind turbines. Well, there are hundreds of papers and documents discussing wind turbines. However, I have found no studies that state environmental impacts can be significantly reduced from what we are seeing here in Alberta.

Through this research, wind turbines are a decent renewable resource. Yes there is an environmental impact, however, if we are required to harness energy, wind is a pretty good source. We hear of birds and bats, which are killed in significant numbers, and are victims of wind energy. However overall, wind turbines are less impactful than just about all other sources of energy. I believe what we all are not excited about, is seeing out landscape being filled with wind turbines. They stick out and are not eye-pleasing, although as long as we rely on electricity, wind turbines will be part of our future. Best practices which our Alberta Government must be held accountable to, are wind turbines in remote locations. All species living within that proposed wind turbine area, must be identified and a management plan developed to reduce the impact of the wind turbines. Migration paths and sensitive ecosystems are to be avoided.

Keep the inquiries coming, let me know what you hear and what concerns you. Email me at *envirochair@afga.org*.

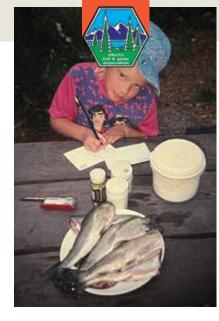


Siloes within the Government of Alberta must come down. Until all ministries are doing their part, it will not be possible to address the habitat conundrum. Habitat is paramount for survival of species. The Alberta Native Trout Recovery initiative is a positive first step: https://albertanativetrout.com/. The problem is that the commitment across government from agencies such as Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Energy, Alberta Energy Regulator, Natural Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Infrastructure,

Another presenter in the AFGA virtual conference was Dr. Steven Cooke. His presentation was titled The Science of Catching and Releasing Fish. It captured the essence of what as anglers, our responsibilities are which are directly tied to stewardship. The need for selective harvest, releasing fish with greatest chance of survival, and making conscious decisions on how and when we fish, were at the forefront.

and Public Lands is vague.

There are critical roles for anglers to play in the management of our fisheries resource. One of the most important is reducing indirect mortality due to the required release of fish. This is an issue that can be addressed through regulations, education, mentorship, and ethics. Modelling suggests that indirect mortality is the major limiting factor in the recovery of native trout under moderate to high angling pressure in many



systems. Even naturalized trout populations such as in the Bow River are under severe stress of which angling pressure is one of the major concerns. I would urge everyone to take the time and view Dr. Cooke's presentation at https://www. afga.org/media/ as it outlines how each of us can do our part.

In my AFGA Annual Provincial Fish Chair Report that presented at the end of the webinar asked,"Are you observing the following trends in the angling community?"

Acceptance of anglers to embrace more restrictive angling regulations regardless of motivation

Focus on quality of experience regardless of angler motivation

Average angler becoming less involved in advocacy, engagement, stewardship, or citizen science (dominance of special interests)

Anglers recognize that the intrinsic values of the pastime are the major reason we fish. While the occasional harvest of fish for a meal remains important, it must be done selectively based on species and determined by sustainability at a waterbody level. The first two bulleted trends create the environment to achieve sustainability objectives, provided they are accompanied by equal focus on habitat. Sustainability does not necessarily imply "harvest." Sustainability is about creating the conditions that allow fish to thrive which is directly tied to habitat. The result is that anglers will be able to pursue their passion, even if in some cases this will mean only catch and release regulations are possible.

Many of today's anglers do not remember being able to harvest a bull trout in Alberta. This is due to a zero-retention limit being implemented province-wide in 1995. This highlights the reality that if the only tool that is used to recover species is angling regulations, when habitat is equally critical, this will lead to not achieving our goal of recovery.

It must be recognized that Alberta's human population is now 84% urban. Most have no connection with the wild other than what they hear within their inner circles or through social media. Many Albertans are passionate and engaged on social issues; hunting is one such issue. Fortunately, not all is negative. Reconnecting with the land, seeing nature as a sustainable source of food, and for adventure is leading Millennials and Gen Z to consider taking up hunting and fishing even if it was not part of their social upbringing.

We need to take advantage of such trends. For those of us that are Baby Boomers or Gen X, it is essential that as anglers and hunters we do our part to introduce and expose our neighbours to hunting and fishing. The Membership Focus Priorities Programs Committee (MFPP) recognized that stewardship which includes education, training, mentorship, citizen science, and ethics has always been a strength of the organization.

source of food. The real concern for me is the third bullet. While most hunters are also anglers, the reverse is not true. Hunters, or those that both hunt and fish are far more engaged despite the reality that they represent only a part of the outdoor fraternity (Approximately 350K anglers and 130K hunters in Alberta). Engaging those that are anglers only is critical. How to unleash this untapped potential is the question.

It must remain a critical cornerstone as AFGA moves forward. https://www.afga.

org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/December-13-2021\_Final-Version\_MFPP\_Report-

I thought I would share a couple of

photos from thirty years ago. Panfrying wild trout over an open fire with my kids on a camping trip stir memories.

Do I expect this scene to be repeated

in the near future? No, but I believe it

must be the goal when recovering spe-

cies. For this to happen will mean that

all the players must do their part, not just anglers! It is about innovation and

being prepared to use tools that go be-

In the meantime, there are still fish to

be harvested elsewhere; many close to

where each of us live. So that shore lunch

of fresh fish is not a dream from the past.

Programs such as the put and take trout

stocking in the province are even more

important but must be viewed as an es-

sential component of native trout recov-

ery. While the next generation of anglers

approach the pastime, perhaps with

different expectations, at the same time

they see nature as providing a natural

yond angling regulations alone.

Recommendations.pdf.

Perhaps the first step is mandatory Angling Education as a condition of obtaining a licence. The hunting community has accepted and endorsed this requirement for decades. Education may be the first step in introducing the casual angling community to the responsibilities associated with the pastime, which are tied to stewardship. https://aheia.com/products/4533-albertafishing-education-program.





# AFGA

## ZONE REPORTS

#### **ZONE 2 REPORT**

### Joe Baranyay, Zone 2 Director

By the time this article is read we will be well into our summer months and many of our Zone clubs will have had their spring activities well underway. The Zone 2 AGM will be completed as of May 15th and we may have some new volunteers on the board.

I know that with COVID rule relaxations, Calgary Fish and Game (CFGA), Onoway and District Fish and Game (ODFGA), High River Fish and Game (HRFGA), and Wheatland Conservation and Wildlife Association (WCWA) have had their horn scoring events. I attended High River's and it was well received with good participation. CFGA had their wild game dinner, awards night, and fundraiser on April 30th. It was a sold-out event and I was glad to be able to attend. The food was fantastic and the live auction was a lot of fun as directed by auctioneer, Brody Malek. The club trophy awards were presented and the winners were youth which is nice to see. Clayton Russell cleaned up with the largest mule deer — 173 6/8", pronghorn — 64", and the Youth Hunter award. Lindsey Stewart harvested a fantastic whitetail buck - 157" and also received the Huntress award. Jordan Dorozio took home typical elk — 216 2/8", cougar — 14 8/16" and the Archery award. Congratulations to you all and CFGA for putting on a great event. They had a presentation on their McKinnon Flats Stewardship Project and their Pheasant Rearing Legacy. Great to see what hunters and club volunteers can do in the name of conservation. Congrats to all.

ODFGA will be hosting their inaugural wild game dinner and fundraiser on June 24th and their committee has been working hard to get it launched.

WCWA had their annual AGM and Troy Blackley is their new president with Bruce Martland, their vice president. I am sure the other clubs are busy but have had no correspondence from them.

Over the past couple of months I had the privilege of representing AFGA and Zone 2 on Recreational Access to Grazing Dispositions put on by Alberta Environment and Parks, and the Select Special Committee on Real Property Rights put on by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Thanks to Curtis Reed from the Innisfail Fish and Game club for bringing this to my attention. It was very interesting and an eye opener to say the least. My Highwood MLA was the Committee Chairman and after a meeting with RJ Sigurdson I found out that there were a few in-person meetings left on the schedule. On April 12th I attended a town hall meeting in Fort MacLeod. I presented on behalf of AFGA and its members, our concerns of access to Crown grazing leases. Curtis Reed did the same on April 14th in Eckville. All of the meetings that took place are recorded online and can be accessed through www.assemblyonline.assembly. ab.ca. Scroll down to Quick Access, pick Assembly Dashboard, click on Committees then Previous Meetings and find Real Property. Click on whichever session you would like to watch or read the transcript. As our members have applied for draws issued by the government to harvest and manage government owned wildlife, it was interesting to see what Lindsye Murfin, the leaseholder's representative had to say:

the proposed amendments to ALSA in Bill 206. It proposed to add the right to compensation for holders of statutory consents when a regional plan impacts the property rights of said statutory consent holder. This recognition of the property rights associated with statutory consents, specifically grazing dispositions is long overdue. All statutory consents in Alberta, which include grazing dispositions, have value: they can be bought, they can be sold, they can be borrowed against. This is the foundation of commerce and attracts investment to Alberta. Grazing lease holders pay the property taxes on these leases as well as annual

"I want to start by speaking to one of

Does this mean that they believe they own the property? According to the government these are just leases not deeds.

rent. These facts stand as evidence that

grazing dispositions are property."

There are approximately 5,700 grazing leases in Alberta covering over eight million acres. Crown land grazing lease holders operate on lands with a multiple use mandate and are required by law to give reasonable access to Alberta residents.

After the town hall meetings, MLA Hanson addressed the Assembly with several questions to the Environment Minister regarding lease land uses. His concerns were answered by Energy Minister Sonja Savage and this can all be seen on David Hanson, MLA Facebook. Very interesting — I would recommend that you look it up. Here is an insert from the Hansard, April 19, 2022:

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Energy has risen.

**Mrs. Savage:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans do enjoy using our Crown land, and we're for-

tunate to live in such a beautiful province with access to these beautiful, scenic landscapes. If the member has heard from someone who has been unrightfully blocked from access to a grazing lease, the department and the minister would be more than happy

to work with them to resolve their dispute about conflicting land use. Environment and Parks always encourages reasonable access to recreation for grazing lease, and for grazing lease holders who unreasonably deny recreational access, they can see those leases

 $shortened, renewed, or \ even \ cancelled.$ 

I think our concerns are being heard but we still have to work hard to pursue our rights to access Crown leases.

I hope you all have a great summer. Happy camping and good fishing; enjoy our environment.

### **ZONE 5 REPORT**

#### Cynthia Pawliuk, Zone 5 Director

Good Day Everyone,

I hope we all have gotten over this up and down Mother Nature weather and are enjoying the brighter days of summer.

This issue, I'd like to let you know what the Narrow Lake Conservation Centre (NLCC) is all about, and what it has to offer to all AFGA Clubs.

The Centre is nestled up in one of the nicest places in Alberta, about 25km south of Athabasca on the east side of Narrow Lake. It is a great training place for any youth groups, schools, Junior Forest Wardens or adults.

Education is one of the biggest parts of utilizing and enjoying the outdoors. NLCC has a board that consists of 20 members including four Senior Executive. There are four meetings a year with the AGM each spring. That being said, if anyone would like to sit on the board, please let your Zone 4 or Zone 5 Directors know.

The club season starts in May/June when Zone 4 and Zone 5 come together, and with a couple of volunteer work bees, get the camp up and rolling for the season. There are always things that need to be done, repaired or replaced, but with lots of hands on deck, the work gets done quickly. Over the years there have been lots of additions; there's a lecture hall, 11 cabins with sleeping accommodations, 1 barrier-free cabin, a new barrier-free washroom, full kitchen, kayaks, canoes, an archery range and lots more.





Every year in July, NLCC hosts two youth camps, each one week long, for kids from ages 12-17.

The kids take part in many programs such as ethical hunting, fishing, the proper handling of firearms including storage, outdoor life skills, overnight survival, canoeing, kayaking, and lots of other leadership programs. Every child that has attends enjoys each and every moment and many return year after year. The food is also amazing! Thank you to Ian and his list of volunteers. We have also held winter camps in the past.

There are also the Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) camps which run as two, one-week programs similar to the kid's camp but for the ladies out there. So, for all you hubbies, if you want to give your Missus a great week away, why not send her for a wilderness adventure? She will love it and there are







lots of great friendships made as well as outdoor skills acquired, all sponsored by AFGA. The Camp is also available for bookings up until November.

Without all the dedicated people that have put in countless hours of hard work, we would not have such a precious gem for future generation to enjoy.

Hope you all have a great summer!



# Wildlife Trust Fund Program FEATURE PROPERTY GORDON LESLIE MEMORIAL PROPERTY

By Natalie Horne

s an Alberta Fish and Game member, we thank you all for being a part of the lasting legacy of our Wildlife Trust Fund Properties. The pride and passion our membership have in these properties can be felt in each and every conversation surrounding them. In this edition, we feature the Gordon Leslie Memorial Property.

This 960-acre site is approximately 14 km northeast of Marwayne and consists of six quarters of land, five of which



are together in the north at NW/NE/SW/SE-04-054-02-W4M, NE-05-054-02-W4M, and one in the south at SW-28-053-02-W4M. The property is managed with our partners, the Alberta Conservation Association and falls under Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 256. Access is day use only with no open fires and as with the majority of all Wildlife Trust Fund properties, foot access only. We thank all visitors for being respectful in their use of this area.

The terrain across this property is undulating with aspen stands and



mixed grasslands; active grazing and haying activities exist on both the north and south quarters and we ask visitors to respectfully close any gates when accessing the property. Wildlife in the area includes white-tailed and mule deer, black bear, the occasional moose, fox, coyote, badger, Richardson's ground squirrel and a variety of bird species.



The Gordon Leslie Memorial Property was willed to the AFGA by the late Gordon Leslie in 2002, with the instructions that the lands were "To be left in their natural state, such that these lands are available for wildlife and such that these lands are also available for the benefit of Albertans as a place where they can study and enjoy nature, hunt, trap, hike, crosscountry ski, and generally enjoy the peace and quiet of their natural environment."— Gordon Leslie.

Gordon was an avid outdoorsman who grew up on the family farm on this property, where his parents had a homestead. He lived in the Parkland area and loved to fish, hunt and trap. Gordon was familiar with the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund program through the late Alex Kurash, past president of the Clandonald and District Fish and Game Association. Alex was very passionate about conservation of wildlife habitat and his enthusiasm and hard work inspired Gordon Leslie to provide the gift of land to the AFGA.

The AFGA gratefully acknowledges the Gordon Leslie Estate for the gen-

erous donation of land and the spirit in which it was given. The planning and progressive thinking of this donation allows the wildlife and people of Alberta to perpetually benefit from the lands that Gordon and his family carefully managed for years.

Integral to the continued trust that Gordon Leslie placed in the AFGA, is our dedicated Volunteer Land Stewards, and in particular, Garry Cunningham who has been regularly inspecting the property for over 20 years. Garry is an active member of the Lloydminster and District Fish and Game Association (LFGA), and the countless hours of time over the years, spent at this property have ensured it remains a haven for wildlife in the area.



Garry was mentored in his stewardship of the property by Stan Daniels, who was also a member of the LFGA when this property was donated. Both Stan and Garry, along with other members of the LFGA, including Darrell Bacon, were instrumental in getting this property established as wildlife habitat through inspections, work bees, tree planting and general habitat restoration. They also created a pull-in parking area for the property, making access safe for anyone looking to recreate on the property.







Both Garry and Stan speak very fondly of their time inspecting and recreating on the property, with Garry successfully harvesting a white-tail deer and fellow members harvesting saskatoons. Scattered throughout the property you'll also find birdhouses, built and installed by Walt Backer.

We thank the LFGA, Darrell, Stan and in particular Garry, who continues to visit and inspect the property as a Land Steward. It is through their dedication that the Gordon Leslie Memorial property continues to serve as



important wildlife habitat for future Albertans to enjoy, just as Gordon

If you, or any of your friends or family are interested in volunteering as Land Stewards, and helping the AFGA in monitoring properties in the Wildlife Trust Fund, Alberta's oldest and most well respected land trust, please contact us via email to communications@ afga.org. The Wildlife Trust Fund includes over 100 properties that stretch from the extreme southern reaches of the province all the way north to Manning, encompassing nearly 50,000 acres of important fish and wildlife habitat. Without volunteers like Garry, protecting and conserving these properties would not be possible.





## ALBERTA FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION WILDLIFE AWARDS

### **WINNERS 2020 COMPETITION**

SPECIES	SCORE	NAME	SPONSOR	WHERE TAKEN
BIG GAME AWARDS				
Whitetail Deer	192 6/8	Paul Marc Villeneuve	Stony Plain FG & Wabamun Gun Club	Seibert Lake
Non-typical Whitetail Deer	203 4/8	Brady N L Merriam	Sherwood Park FG	Pigeon Lake
Mule Deer	191 7/8	Mark Pinske	Red Deer FG	Irma
Non-typical Mule Deer	230 4/8	Chad Putzi	Devon FG	WMU 108
American Elk	336 4/8	Simon Landhausser	Rimbey FG	Boyle
Non-typical American Elk	449 4/8	Shawn O'Shea	Millet FG	Minburn Count
Canada Moose	204 2/8	Shane M Eleniak	Whitecourt FG	St Michael
Pronghorn Antelope	85	Rhonda Peake	Foremost FG	Hanna
Bighorn Sheep	191 3/8	Will Sargent	Innisfree & District FG	WMU 402
Cougar	15 9/16	Jack Suggett	Fort MacLeod FG	Castle River
Wolf	16 15/16	Arnold Winkler	Fort Saskatchewan FG	Virginia Hills
Black Bear	21 7/16	Derek Estabrook	Dunvegan FG	Peace River
Grizzly Bear		No Season	Ft Saskatchewan Fish & Game	
Largest Big Game - Archery	449 4/8	Shawn O'Shea	Sundre FG	Minburn Count
argest Big Game - Blackpowder	149 7/8	Joe Winter	Okotoks FG	Sherwood Parl
Master Big Game	192 6/8	Paul Marc Villeneuve	Edmonton FG	Seibert Lake
Chase Heck Memorial Award	19 8/16	Justin Biro	The Chase Heck Family	Saddle Hills
BIRD AWARDS	KG			
Canada Goose	8.41	Bob Mascarin	Provost & District FG	Provost
Hungarian Partridge	0.43	Rylan Fedoruk	Red Deer Gun Show (Interim)	Taber
Mallard Duck	1.94	Dan Mosier	Leduc FG	Wetaskiwin
Ruffed Grouse	0.78	Arnold Winkler	Barrhead FG	Leduc County
Sharp-tailed Grouse	1.12	Bob Mascarin	Picture Butte FG (Interim)	Provost
Snow Goose	3.63	Dan Mosier	Medicine Hat FG	Bruce
Spruce Grouse	0.57	Greg Crosland	Spruce Grove FG	Calling Lake
White-Fronted Goose	3.71	Bob Mascarin	Wheatland Conservation & Wildlife	Provost
	СМ			
Merriam's Turkey	23.81	Norman Suvan	High Level Sporting Association	Beaver Mines
Ring-necked Pheasant	104.78	Bob Mascarin	Calgary FG	Holden
FISH AWARDS	СМ			
Arctic Grayling	42.50	Jimmy Yu	Lamont FG	McLeod River
Brook Trout	50.80	Brendan Oskam	Robert Loewen Memorial Brook Trout Trophy	Butcher Lake
Brown Trout	71.12	Brendan Oskam	Dickson FG	Waterton Rive
Bull Trout	81.92	Brendan Oskam	Rocky Mountain House FG	Oldman River
Burbot	102.00	Peter Chen	Willingdon & District FG	Ghost Lake
Cisco (Tullibee)	40.50	AJ Alberda	AFGA	Lesser Slave La
Cutthroat Trout	56.20	Brendan Oskam	Lacombe FG	Lower Kananaskis
Golden Trout	38.74	Kit Daryl Malabunga	AFGA President	Southfork Lake
Goldeye	45.72	Ryder Nielsen	Lethbridge FG	
Lake Sturgeon	157.48	Mya Nielsen	Thorsby FG	Oldman River
Lake Trout	94.62	Arnold Winkler	Morinville FG	Lake Athabasc
Lake Whitefish	67.94	Brendan Oskam	Edmonton Oldtimers Fishing Club	Travers Reserve
Mooneye	33.00	Mark Den Biesen	AFGA	Red Deer Rive
Northern Pike	121.29	Terry Jacobson	Vegreville Wildlife Federation	Lake Newell
Rainbow Trout	67.31	Aaron Kasprick	Beaver River FG	Ft Sask Lions Po
Rocky Mountain Whitefish	55.25	lan Stettner	Ponoka FG	Rock Lake
Sauger	56.52	Kirk Keller	Southern Alberta Outdoorsmen	Milk River
Tiger Trout	59.05	Brendan Oskam	Lacombe FG	Lower Chain La
Walleye	84.46	Duncan Baldie	Beaver River FG	Rolling Hills Reser
Yellow Perch	36.83	Glen Dolynchuk	St. Albert FG	Snipe Lake
Master Fish	38.74	Kit Daryl Malabunga	Sarcee FG	Southfork Lake
Largest Trout taken with a fly	91.44	Taylor Irwin	Edmonton Trout Fishing Club	Waterton Lake
		·	-	
PHOTOGRAPHY	n/a	Adele Armstrong	Dunvegan FG	
Wildlife Photography				

### **WINNERS 2021 COMPETITION**

SPECIES	SCORE	NAME	SPONSOR	WHERE TAKEN
BIG GAME AWARDS				
Whitetail Deer	179 3/8	Andre Kammrath-Bartels	Stony Plain FG & Wabamun Gun Club	James River
Non-typical Whitetail Deer	208 3/8	James Derek Boe Robinson	Sherwood Park FG	Carrot Creek
Mule Deer	195 6/8	Dennis Wilson	Red Deer FG	Pine Lake
Non-typical Mule Deer	202 3/8	Owen Wade Brown	Devon FG	County of 40 Mile
American Elk	371 1/8	Jon Jonker	Rimbey FG	WMU 254
Non-typical American Elk	331	Brad Fenson	Millet FGA	WMU 359
Canada Moose	196 6/8	Billie Harvey	Whitecourt FG	Grande Prairie
Pronghorn Antelope	83	Kyle Janz	Foremost FG	Cessford
Bighorn Sheep	179 4/8	Ryan Mitchell	Innisfree & District FG	Pickle Jar Lakes
Black Bear	21 8/16	Brandon Wilk	Dunvegan FG	Saddle Hills
Grizzly Bear		No Season	Ft. Saskatchewan FG	
Largest Big Game - Archery	203 6/8	Logan Daniel Johnson	Sundre FG	North Sask. Rive
argest Big Game - Blackpowder	134 4/8	Jack Snow	Okotoks FG	Strathcona Count
Non-current Big Game	162 5/8	Brandon Ridley	Camrose FG	Buffalo Lake
Master Big Game	208 3/8	James Derek Boe Robinson	Edmonton FG	Carrot Creek
Chase Heck Memorial Award	18 4/16	Noah Nuttall	The Chase Heck Family	Peace River
			,	
BIRD AWARDS	KG			
Canada Goose	7.02	Bob Mascarin	Provost & District FG	Provost
Mallard Duck	1.48	Conrad Fennema	Leduc FG	Leduc County
Ruffed Grouse	0.82	Arnold Winkler	Barrhead FG	Millet
Snow Goose	3.12	Robert Hanes	Medicine Hat FG	Vegreville
Spruce Grouse	0.60	Arnold Winkler	Spruce Grove FG	Virginia Hills
White-Fronted Goose	4.03	Clayton Parker	Wheatland Conservation & Wildlife	Provost
	СМ		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Merriam's Turkey	23.34	Jason Gauthier	High Level Sporting Association	WMU 302
Ring-necked Pheasant	105.41	Bob Mascarin	Calgary FG	Holden
51011 AMARDO	014			
FISH AWARDS	CM	D 1 01		A.I. I. D.
Arctic Grayling	39.37	Brendan Oskam	Lamont FG	Athabasca River
Brook Trout	60.96	Chase Bohning	Robert Loewen Memorial	
Brook Trout Trophy	Pierre Gray Lake			
Brown Trout	87.63	Krystal Cuttell	Dickson FG	Obed Lake
Bull Trout	86.36	Chase Bohning	Rocky Mountain House FG	Athabasca River
Burbot	75.00	Martin Fung	AFGA (Interim)	Calling Lake
Cutthroat Trout	52.71	Brendan Oskam	Lacombe FG	Oldman River
Golden Trout	34.93	Brendan Oskam	AFGA President	Rainy Ridge Lake
Goldeye	50.48	Brendan Oskam	Lethbridge FG	South Sask. Rive
Lake Sturgeon	134.62	Mike Jamieson	Thorsby FG	South Sask. Rive
Lake Trout	91.44	Jake Funk	Morinville FG	Waterton Lake
Lake Whitefish	67.95	David Robson	Edmonton Oldtimers Fishing Club	Fickle Lake
Northern Pike	129.54	Jake Funk	Vegreville Wildlife Federation	Badger Lake
Rainbow Trout	83.00	Steve MacKenzie	Beaver River FG	Swan Lake
Rocky Mountain Whitefish	55.88	Chase Bohning	Ponoka FG	Athabasca River
Sauger	64.77	Josef Schwabenbauer	Southern Alberta Outdoorsmen	North Sask. Rive
Tiger Trout	61.00	Steve MacKenzie	Lacombe FG	Tiger Trout
Walleye	86.36	Lyle Schaffrick	Beaver River FG	Athabasca River
Yellow Perch	36.83	Glen Dolynchuk	St. Albert FG	Snipe Lake
Yellow Perch	36.83	Gilbert Magnan	St. Albert FG	South Buck Lack
Master Fish	60.96	Chase Bohning	Sarcee FG	Pierre Gray Lake
Largest Trout taken with a fly	86.36	Chase Bohning	Edmonton Trout Fishing Club	Athabasca River
PHOTOGRAPHY				
Wildlife Photography	n/a	Adele Armstrong	Dunvegan FG	



### **Alberta Fish and Game Association**

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