



# NEWS FROM ALBERTA

## President's Report

By Victor Benz

*President*



I attended all 5 AFGA Zone Spring Meetings through April and May, with Mark Olson attending 3. These first in-person meetings in over 2 years gave us the opportunity to introduce Mark, share the relatively strong financial

position of the AFGA as it came out of the pandemic, address important current issues, share our plan for the rest of the year, and answer questions raised at the meetings. Over the same period, I was also able to make the same presentation to a number of Af-

iliated Clubs that requested it.

A key component of the plan was the AFGA Executive Strategic Planning Retreat held on the weekend of June 17-19. Not all members of the Executive were able to attend, and they delegated that responsibility to local club members. A big thank you to all who joined us.

At its April virtual meeting, the AFGA Executive approved the MFPP December 2021 as a foundational document for the rejuvenation of the AFGA. The Retreat attendees agreed to use this MFPP Report as our initial roadmap. Skillfully led by the strong facilitation skills of both Mark Olson and his colleague Norm Dreger, your team was led through a consensus process to set the immediate priorities for the remainder of this year. Work has been ongoing for many of these.

### Recruit The New Executive Director

A straw-dog profile was developed at the June Strategic Planning Retreat. This led to a job posting on a recruitment website in early July. The entire AFGA executive will be involved in assessing a candidate short list, resulting in the hiring of our new Execu- ▶

### MOVING?

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tive Director targeted for the end of August 2022.

### Continue To Address Communication Gaps

Through the AFGA Communication Committee chaired by 2nd Vice-President Dave Doonanco, this is an ongoing activity.

### Create And Resource An AFGA Fund Development Plan

The AFGA is currently assessing the justification for another staff position dedicated to fundraising, either full-time or part-time employee or a contractor. The final approach will depend on the skill set of the new Executive Director.

### Conduct Process For Affiliated Club Review And Approval Of Proposed Objects

As mentioned earlier, a complete set of proposed new Objects for the AFGA was part of the MFPP December 2021 report. They have now been forwarded to the Canada Revenue Agency's Charities Directorate to ensure that they continue to meet charitable registration requirements. The Directorate's response is expected no later than November 1, 2022. Assuming no issues, I would hope to have this set of proposed new Objects before the delegates as a Special Resolution at an SGM before the end of 2022.

### Conduct Process For Affiliated Club Review And Approval Of Proposed Bylaws

A set of proposed new Bylaws for the AFGA (revision 2) was posted on the AFGA website before the end of 2021. Feedback from all interested AFGA parties was requested. The AFGA received about 25 queries and suggestions over the following 3 months. Almost all could be classified as clarifications and simple enhancements. The AFGA Governance

Committee is reviewing them, with the intent of being able to share the final proposed AFGA Bylaws by early September.

Unfortunately, Alberta Corporate Registry no longer offers a review of new bylaws before they are passed as a Special Resolution within the AFGA. Following a roll-out process yet to be determined, I hope to also have the proposed AFGA Bylaws before the delegates as a Special Resolution at an SGM before the end of 2022.

Please note that these new AFGA Bylaws must first be registered with the Alberta Corporate Registrar before they can be put into effect. Assuming that no changes are requested by the Alberta Corporate Registrar, registration should be completed by mid-2023.

### Re-Brand The AFGA (Logo & Positioning Only For Now)

The AFGA has received a strong groundswell of support for a formal re-branding of the AFGA, starting with a new logo and specific Alberta outdoor market positioning. Although discussion continues on this topic, serious work and effort will begin with the hiring of a new Executive Director.

### Address The AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund Structure

The Wildlife Trust Fund continues to be viewed as the marquee conservation activity of the AFGA. It was the driver to the AFGA becoming a federally registered charity in 1981.

Through our partnership with the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), the AFGA's tax liability has been addressed, and the ACA has taken over management of many of the properties. The Land Steward programme is still in place, alive and well. It is currently being handled by AFGA Communications. This interim solution needs to be replaced with a

permanent one that includes land acquisition and greater interaction with the Wildlife Trust Fund board and the land stewards. Work will begin on this aspect with the hiring of a new Executive Director.

### Investigate Options To Manage The Affiliated Club Membership Process Directly Through The AFGA Website

The current Affiliated Club membership process is clumsy, cumbersome and time-consuming. The time interval between an Affiliated Club member joining the club and paying for it and the final receipt of the associated Affiliation Due by the AFGA is too lengthy, and has created serious AFGA business funding challenges in the past.

Several ideas have been put forward to address this. They will be formalized as options and discussed with the Zones and Affiliated Clubs this year, targeting implementation of a new system for 2023.

### Create An AFGA Policy Development Model

The AFGA has a long-outdated employee Personnel Manual that is currently being updated by the Executive Director. It has never had a Volunteer Policy Manual, dealing with topics such as expectations of an AFGA volunteer, interaction with AFGA staff, insurance while an AFGA volunteer (as opposed to volunteering for the home club or zone), etc. Many of the topics seem to be the same for both staff and volunteers. Should/could the policies be the same? Initial work began on this with the AFGA Governance Committee in early 2021. It needs to be finished.

Please contact your Zone Directors for the presentations made at the Zone Meetings, the output from the Retreat, and the AFGA priorities for the remainder of this year. 



## 1st Vice-President's Report

By **Faran Schaber**

*1st Vice-President*

**A**s I write this article, we are approaching the Canada Day long weekend. Seeding for me this year was an adjustment from previous years; after purchasing a new to me air drill, it showed up later than was expected. We then found that we had to do some repairs before we could start seeding. Once seeding started for us we were only shut down a couple of times, once for rain, and once for an AFGA event: now it has started raining and we have had a whole summer's worth of rain in the last 2 weeks.

I hope everyone got their draws in and by the time you read this you should know if you were lucky on any applications.

I attended the AFGA Wildlife Awards banquet in Lacombe put on by Zone 3, it was the first in person event for the AFGA and was well attended. The food was excellent, and the planning by those involved was superb. Hats off to the planners of this event.

While working at the Edmonton Sportsman's show, Brad Palister of Len Thompson Bait and Tackle dropped in for a visit and invited me for a tour of the plant. I took him up on his offer, and Victor Benz and myself toured the 2 trout pond facilities as well as the plant. It was an entertaining and informative tour. There is a lot of history in their museum, if you get the opportunity, it is not a long tour, but well worth the time.

I attended the strategic planning session in Red Deer, along with a dozen or so other individuals from various areas

of the province within our AFGA family. It was good to meet in person, share some ideas, and see how we align with plans for moving our organization forward. There have been documents developed by the office as a result of the planning sessions at this meeting.

Today, Victor Benz, Dave Doonanco, and myself will be meeting with AEP. This will be an in person meeting with them, to present our concerns, and open the door for more open discussions of concerns as they develop. This is the first meeting that we have had with them. It had been different than before, with COVID restrictions and all. Now with the restrictions being lifted, we can start working on communication.

The AFGA Executive is planning our August meeting as a weekend in person get together. This will be held at the Battle Lake 4-H Centre. Looking forward to having a meeting in person like we have done in the past. 

## 2nd Vice-President's Report

By **Dave Doonanco**

*2nd Vice-President*

**I**t is certainly good to see in person events continuing to take place within the clubs, zones and provincial association. From gun shows, to fundraising events, "Kids Can Fish" events and summer camps like the Narrow Lake Youth Camp. I am looking forward to hearing more about all the activities clubs are putting on across the province as we continue to get back to normal.



I would like to request a favor of each of the clubs and that is to include, as part of your monthly meeting agenda items, an "AFGA Update". It will be the responsibility of the AFGA Executive to provide the highlights of the monthly meeting and the issues or programs that are being dealt with. Hopefully this, along with the zone town hall meetings, will help keep the membership informed and in a timely manner. In turn the AFGA Executive

and in particular the Communications Committee would like to hear from your club and the events and projects that are being planned during the upcoming year.

Back at the end of June some members of the senior executive met with Alberta Environment and Parks staff, Travis Ripley and Tom Davis. The purpose of the meeting was to rebuild the relationship between the AFGA and AEP. This improved relationship will involve the development of lines of communication between the organizations as well as the timely discussion and sharing of information on topics of concern with AEP and AFGA. By the time you have read this article we should have had a couple of the scheduled monthly meetings between the AFGA executive members and AEP representatives. If the meetings continue to be as open and honest as the first planning session meeting I



believe we are well on our way to developing a greatly improved relationship that can benefit both organizations and more importantly the angling and fishing communities and the resources that they hold dear to them. We realize that we will not agree fully on all matters, but it is equally important to understand each other's positions when that happens.

As mentioned above another initiative that should have cut its teeth by the time this article goes to print is that of the zone town hall meetings. At the time of writing Greg Bird, the Zone One Director, is set on initiating this program. Hopefully he has met with success and the other zone directors will have gotten their zones and their members on board. The idea of the town hall meetings is to give the members and clubs the opportunity to hear what AFGA is up to and also a chance for the members and their clubs to share some of their thoughts on what is happening in the outdoor community. Having these take place shortly after

our monthly AFGA executive meetings will hopefully reduce the information lag that you see in some of our current, more traditional media platforms.

The 2023 Conference and AGM is starting to be worked on and as I mentioned in previous articles you may see a little different twist to some of the activities and how things are presented. I think it is important to take a look at how things have been done in the past and enhance the areas that were successful and revamp areas that were not.

Speaking of successful events, the 2022 Wildlife Awards were a huge success. Thank you to Zone 3 Director Harold Drok and his dedicated committee of volunteers for a job well done. They are in the planning stages to once again hold the 2023 Wildlife Awards and I look forward to being able to attend them this year. They are developing guidelines and a program to follow so that in the future other zones or clubs can easily transition into taking over this yearly event.

One other initiative we are working on is the possibility of using the AFGA website to promote clubs and the sales of their memberships. At the time of writing it is simply an idea. We will look at the logistics of this, the costs and of course the desire by the membership to do something of this nature. Our thoughts are that providing the opportunity for people to purchase their club membership on the AFGA website would enhance the opportunities for clubs who already sell their memberships online. For those clubs who still currently rely on in person sales it will provide another avenue for sales that may also help younger Outdoor Community members to join their organization.

We will continue to expand our social media presence across the entire outdoor community and through this and other lines of communication we will endeavor to represent your views and interests. Thanks again for your continued support, together we are stronger. 

## Fishing Chair Report

By Darryl Smith

*Fishing Chair*

### Social Media & The Connection To Mandatory Angling Education

As scroll though Facebook or other online social media platforms, one can be overwhelmed by the myriads of posts and pictures regarding sportfishing. The number of anglers following various organizations, groups, blogs, and influencers shows that the interest in sportfishing continues to be widespread. The topics are varied and cover the whole gamut of the sportfishing world. There are numerous online groups representing many interests. Some are educational such as how to fly tie. Others are information oriented such as posting latest fishing conditions or needed information for the angler. Others are more social in nature, showing latest catches or searching for information.

I do not post on social media platforms, but instead use as a sounding block to increase understanding of the issues within the angling community, particularly as they relate to Alberta. Comparing then with what gleaned from "real world" observations and discussions where personally involved, have recognized there is much commonality. What have I learned?

The number of followers in the various platforms vary depending on the group, ranging from a few to thousands. Collectively they would add up to significant proportion of the angling community in Alberta. Have begun to refer to many of these groups as pseudo-online organizations as a common theme of the need to belong and share. Their advantages appear to be lack of



commitment, whether financially, as a volunteer, or to share information. The other observation is limited connection or crossover often with the formal mainstream organizations such as the Alberta Fish and Game Association, Trout Unlimited, or Alberta Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. The big dilemma for the mainstream organizations is such groups represent untapped potential membership and needed volunteers. How do we collectively have them become engaged in the important conservation, education, and programs each organization sponsors?

There are frequent postings that struggle with as they show reoccurring themes that negatively impact fish, habitat, or the perception of sportfishing. These involve concerns related to fish handling, identification of fish, invasive species, angling regulations, conservation misinformation, ethics, and environmental stewardship. There are many positive pictures such as the younger generation and new Canadians be introduced to the pastime, sharing of best practices, and amazing photographs highlighting the wonders

of angling in Alberta. Other issues such as the need for more shore based and urban access to sportfishing opportunity or ongoing habitat degradation are identified. Cornerstones to address such issues are the angler's responsibility which is tied to awareness, knowledge, education, and involvement.

In 2018 the Alberta Fish and Game Association circulated through out the angling community and Government of Alberta, Redefining Fisheries Management in Alberta "Call for change from the Alberta Fish and Game Association". The "call for change" was a result of Government of Alberta moving forward with North-Central Alberta Native Trout Recovery Plan which was circulated in December of 2017 and the January 2018 Northern Pike and Walleye Management Frameworks. What transpired was a third-party science review of the North-Central Native Trout Recovery Plan, but reality would suggest little has changed. The reasons can largely be summed up as recommendations within the document becoming lost in political or bureaucratic inertia along with internal resistance to change. Today when review the document, the recommendations continue to hold merit. Want to highlight recommendation number 3 found on page 29.

#### 4. Environmental education, communication and awareness must be part of any ongoing plan

This must occur within the contemporary education system, within government at all levels and between branch- ▶



es, with stakeholders and the public. Among these would be the following:

- a. Mandated environmental education courses (similar to current safety course requirements) for companies and individuals working on public lands
- b. Mandated angler education (perhaps analogous with the current Conservation and Hunter Education Program requirements).

At the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, then Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks Jason Nixon made available the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association (AHEIA) their online Alberta Fishing Education Program. This was followed by Identification of Alberta's Game Fish Quiz. Having reviewed both, can ensure they are excellent and regardless of your angling ability or knowledge you will learn a great deal. They currently remain free and can be accessed through <https://aheia.com/online-training>.

Based on what see within social media, direct observation, and during discussions within the angling community the time to phase in mandatory Angling Education as a condition of obtaining a Sportfishing Licence in Alberta is upon us. The hunting community has accepted and endorsed this requirement for decades. Education may be the first step in exposing the new, casual, and even diehards within the angling community to the responsibilities associated with the pastime. These are tied to our collective stewardship role when partaking in outdoor recreational pursuits. Hopefully it will also encourage more of the angling community to become volunteers and support the mainstream organizations working on our behalf! Bob Gruszecki, President of AHEIA has long been advocating for Alberta to remain the leader in the conservation education arena. Moving forward with a mandatory angling education program would only enhance that vision. 🐾

## Hunting Chair Report

By Brian Rudyk

*Hunting Chair*



It seems that being a rainy day is a common theme for me as I finish off another article for Outdoor Canada West. It just happens to be Canada Day and even though there is much going on in our country that I don't agree with, I appreciate how very fortunate that my family and I are to live here and especially in the province of Alberta. A place where, for the most part, we are free to be who we are and enjoy the lifestyle we wish to lead. A place of freedom and opportunity founded upon honest, hard work to the benefit of those who accomplished it. I only hope the leaders of today understand the wisdom of those long past.

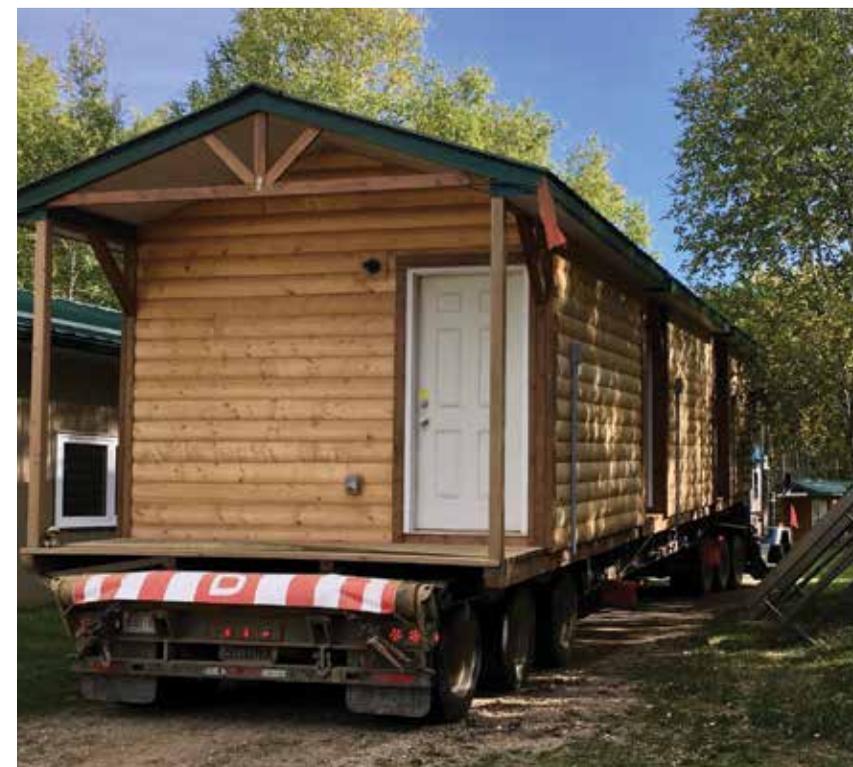
The Narrow Lake Conservation Centre is also on my mind today. For the first time in a couple of Covid plagued years, this summer will see two, full to the brim youth camps and a Becoming an Outdoor Woman program held at the

centre. It takes a lot of hard work from a relatively small group of highly dedicated volunteers and financial support from a multitude of sponsors, including the Alberta Conservation Association and Fish and Game Clubs, to keep the centre operational and run programs. NLCC is one of the shining stars of Fish and Game and holds a special place in my heart. I have been involved with the camp since the early 1980s when it was still operated by Alberta Fish and Wildlife. The vast number of students, especially the youth, who have taken programs at the camp have been a huge reason why the number of hunters in Alberta continues to grow and keeps our hunting heritage alive. This summer my oldest grandson will be fortunate to experience this great outdoor education opportunity at this special place.

Although the traditional summer programs have not operated at NLCC for a couple of years that does

not mean the efforts to maintain and improve the facility have stagnated. Due to very generous donations from clubs, we have a new armoury (Barhead Fish and Game), first aid facility (Stony Plain Fish and Game) and barrier free cabin (Athabasca Fish and Game) that fill some much needed infrastructure requirements. Many other clubs stepped up to provide additional funds for transportation and setup costs. Contributions from clubs, private organizations and businesses have allowed the NLCC Board to start a savings account to fund a new washroom/kitchen/dining area facility to replace well used, tired structures. Even though a good start has been made, at today's costs this is a major undertaking which will require serious fundraising and support. Once completed however, it will greatly enhance the versatility of NLCC. It has troubled me to hear rumours about personal use of the camp outside of its intended purpose that could possibly influence support for the centre. Camps like this and the programs offered promote and preserve the future of our outdoor lifestyle. I encourage anyone interested in learning more about this gem to contact me, Zone 4 or 5 chairs, any other NLCC Board member or better yet come out to see what NLCC is all about in person.

The last few months have been very meeting heavy. The Mule Deer Management Plan is starting to come together and the goal is to have a draft plan ready for feedback sometime this fall if all goes well. The shift from Chronic Wasting Disease control to managing for hunter success rate and age structure on the landscape has made for a few new challenges to address. One challenge is how to determine the age of harvested animals. The best method is to age teeth but the process would add one more task to Alberta Environment and Park's already strained resources. I believe



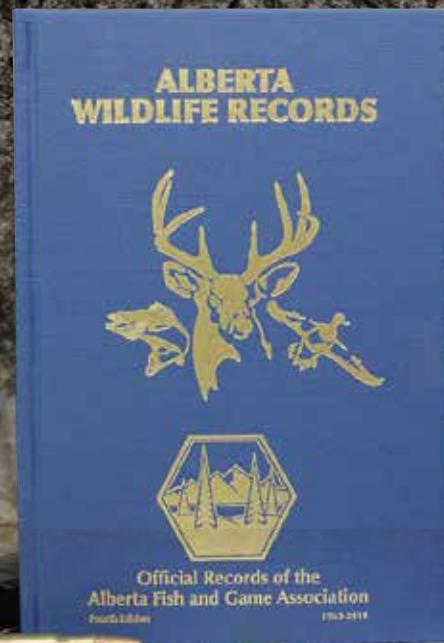
many would rather see improvement to CWD testing result timelines then add another submission. Nothing that a sub committee and full committee meeting or two shouldn't iron out.

One of the positive signs of all these meetings is it seems that lines of communication silenced by Covid are starting to open up again. Regular meetings with AEP are being scheduled to discuss areas of concern and improve our working relationship. We have also had input into the Porcupine

Hills Pilot Project in WMU 304 dealing with access to hunting areas and game recovery using designated tails that includes the use of OHVs. It is important for those hunting this area to complete the surveys regarding this multi year project to have your voice heard. Todd Zimmerling, President and CEO of the Alberta Conservation Association invited AFGA to a discussion with various stakeholders about their planned projects for the year and to provide suggestions as to other >

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potential initiatives they may want to consider. Current ACA projects are included in their Conservation Magazine which you can subscribe to on their website. For all of these interactions to be effective it is important that we maintain two-way lines of communication within AFGA so our membership is properly represented.

Speaking of communication, we have had some discussion about our AFGA articles in OCW. Although I have received some feedback on my submissions, it has been very limited. The question has primarily been as to whether the content of our articles is what members are wanting to see and provides something of value. From my perspective I have tried to provide an update on the issues I am dealing with, information that may be helpful to members and a bit of a personal touch with my thoughts on the importance of being an AFGA member. There have been suggestions that perhaps readers would rather have something different such as how to or practical articles instead. If you would prefer a different approach or have suggestions for these articles send me an email with your ideas.

By the time this arrives in your mailbox you should have received results from your draws and the early hunting seasons should be upon us. Hopefully the news is good and hunts are being planned. If not, one advantage of being an Albertan is that there will be opportunities to get out for some cherished time in the great outdoors. I have my fingers crossed for my archery antelope draw while my worn-out old knees can still move me around and my torn-up shoulders can still draw my bow. If anyone knows of a sensory challenged pronghorn buck in WMUs 150-152 let me know. Enjoy the remainder of the open water fishing season. I hope everyone has a fulfilling hunting season and maybe get a chance to welcome someone new to the hunting fraternity and Alberta Fish and Game. Our future depends on it. 

## Environment Chair Report

By Glenn Heather

Environment Chair

**T**he Feral Horse count has been completed for 2022, with the number being just under 1200 Feral horses counted, this winter/spring.

The largest concentrations are in the Sundre Management Zone at 642 feral horses and Ghost River Management Zone at 353 feral horses. AEP has been given the Feral Horse Management Plan and is awaiting final approval. At that point, the Management of Alberta's Feral Horses will officially be adopted and implemented. Once AEP approves this plan, it will be available on the AEP website. As previously mentioned in other articles, Feral Horses do pose a significant risk of habitat destruction, if overpopulation occurs.

**Feral Pigs (Swine)** — Albertans are talking about Feral Pigs and recognize that it is an invasive species, but here are a few reasons why, we should be concerned about these Feral pigs and their impact to Alberta's Habitat.

Feral pigs are one of the most damaging invasive species. Wild pigs are the most prolific invasive mammals on Earth and cause extensive damage to agricultural crops, native ecosystems, and livestock, and wild pigs are host to 89 bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases which can be transferred to livestock, wildlife, and humane reservoirs of disease.

Common diseases of concern transmitted from wild pigs to livestock are swine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, pseudorabies, and classical swine fever. Transmit parasites (i.e., lice, American dog ticks) to humans and other animals.

Due to the elusive and often nocturnal behavior of wild pigs, their preferred habitat comprised of thick cover in wetlands and forests. Feral swine directly



impact threatened and endangered species by preying on the nests, eggs, and young of ground-nesting birds and reptiles. They actively hunt and consume small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. They compete for important resources such as food, water, and habitat, often displacing other wildlife. Additionally, wildlife are vulnerable to many of the diseases and parasites feral swine carry. The most far-reaching impact feral swine have on native wildlife is habitat change and destruction through their rooting, wallowing, trampling, and feeding behaviors. Feral swine are ecosystem engineers, which means they can change their environment by altering water quality and runoff in wetlands, shifting plant composition and distribution in grasslands, and decreasing tree diversity in forests. Wild pig activity in streams reduces water quality by increasing turbidity (excessive silt and

particle suspension) and bacterial contamination. In time, turbidity and added contaminants affect a variety of native aquatic life, most notably fish, freshwater mussels, amphibians, and insect larvae.

The widespread success of wild pigs is explained by their extremely high reproductive potential, early sexual maturity, long lifespans and highly adaptive nature. Reproduction rates — 6 young per female, therefore the population grows rapidly.

In some streams in the USA, feces from wild pigs have increased fecal coliform concentrations to levels exceeding human health standards

This is why we Albertan's need to be concerned and try to control the irradicate the influx of Feral pigs we are now starting to see in our Province

Until next issue, stay safe, take care and protect our Environment 



# ZONE REPORTS

## ZONE 1 REPORT

By Greg Bird, Zone 1 Chair

Welcome everyone and thank you for taking the time to read the AFGA reports, always a source of current information about the AFGA and affiliated clubs. By the time this goes to print, many of you will have already been out fishing, hunting, and enjoying the outdoors. It sure is an opportunity to re-set and relax with family and friends.

Zone 1 held its AGM on the 29th of May down at the Lethbridge Fish and Game clubs shooting facility. Our current President, Victor Benz and interim Executive Director Mark Olson were able to attend and gave a very thorough and in-depth presentation on the current status of AFGA and where we are headed as an organization. We had advertised in advance that they would be attending and although the attendance was somewhat light, all that were able to make it clearly were informed and got their respective questions addressed. Should any of you have any questions on our club, please reach out either of them directly or myself. We also held an executive meeting in Red Deer the weekend of June 17th. The focus of this meeting was to review and approve the report presented by the MFPPC committee using survey and zone meeting report feedback. We also established short-term priorities going forward and began the outline for a longer-term business plan.

Also, we are in the process of hiring a new permanent Executive Director for the organization as Mark was

hired on as an interim consultant basis and will be returning to his full-time role at the conclusion of his term with us. He has proven invaluable in assisting us to get on track, vision for the future, and lay the groundwork for change and modernization. More to come on that! Unfortunately for us, Rhonda our office administrator has decided to take the next step in her career and accepted a position with ACA. She has been a valued part of our team and will surely be missed. That said, she is not far away and is still lending a hand remotely during the transition. Kristina Curry has been hired and is in place to take over the administrative managers role, please reach out and say hi if you get a chance.

We have heard that communication has been an issue with the membership, rest assured we are working on this and hoping to establish a lot more "grass roots" discussions as we adapt and change within our organization. That said, I would really like to stress that this cannot be successful with a one-way communication line. We really value and need to hear from the various clubs and be able to report on each of your successes, so please keep me in the loop for future editions. I would really like to highlight a club or two in each issue, so let's chat and see what we can report on together!

Hopefully each of you will be able to fill the freezer and, in the process, make some lifelong memories with fellow conservationists like yourself. Good luck to you all, it will be a rewarding fall by all accounts. I look forward to attending your club functions, but in the meantime, please reach out and say hi!

## ZONE 2 REPORT

By Joe Baranyay

Here we are into the fall. Where has spring and summer gone? As Zone 2 Director, I have been busy representing the zone at the AFGA casino in Edmonton for a couple of shifts on May 5th and 6th and on May 7th the AFGA Wildlife Awards in Lacombe. It was a great evening and two years of awards were presented to winners in all of the categories. Lacombe Fish & Game did a great job putting on the event and raising some funds for their club. It was well attended — job well done Lacombe!

On May 15th Zone 2 held our annual AGM. We had representatives from seven of our eight clubs in our zone along with all of our executive and chairpersons. The first few hours of the meeting were spent on presentations by AFGA President, Victor Benz and Interim Executive Director, Mark Olson on AFGA's status on past, present and future business. There was a good deal of questions from zone club members and at the end of the session, a lot of good dialogue took place. The takeaway from the meeting was that the members present appreciated Victor and Mark answering some difficult questions and having some good answers to clear up major concerns. We then proceeded to take care of zone business and elected our zone directors and chairpersons. We are in the process of looking for a new treasurer as Janet Rivard is taking a leave of absence. I am happy to report that our meeting went well and some of our club and chair reports were informative. Our next zone meeting is scheduled for October.

On June 17th and 18th, AFGA had a strategic planning session in Red Deer that was attended by Stephanie Briggs from our zone. August 19th to 21st, I will be attending an executive retreat — our first in-person meeting since covid, as all of our monthly meetings have been on zoom.

The Big Horns of Standard ran a hunter education course with the help of local AHEIA instructor and member Phil Faubion and had ten kids successfully take the course. At their local awards night and supper two young ladies (both youth) won awards for top youth and top mule deer. Also one of their senior members took top moose, whitetail, bear, antelope and overall for the year. So it was a clean sweep between the youth and senior showing everyone else how it is done.

Hussar Fish and Game had a successful casino event on June 18th and 19th and have made some more additions to their pistol range in the form of drop-down blinds between stations. They are back to their regular Sunday afternoon trap shoots and all are welcome. Please contact Barry Traxel, President, if you are interested in attending. They are still accepting new members.

On May 24th, Sarcee Fish and Game held a fun archery night at Jim Bows Archery and on June 19th, a Father's Day trap shoot was held at the Calgary Firearms Center in Dewinton. The club sent out surveys to all members for input into ways to increase membership and encourage more club participation, changes to meetings, club events and giving back to the community.

Calgary Fish and Game has a new President Bob Weir. Their board and members have been working hard pulling together recent projects and events. CFGA has a long legacy of raising and releasing pheasants and at a recent members' meeting they had Dr. Doug Manzer with ACA, give a great presentation on the history, challenges, considerations, best prac-



tices and more with regard to raising and releasing pheasants in Alberta. They have had several work bees to have the pens ready for the arrival of the birds on July 13th. Their McKinnon Flats project is an ongoing partnership program with Alberta Environment and Parks. CFGA has helped fund a new boat launch, parking lot expansion and is currently working on plans for various conservation and restoration projects on this beautiful public land site southeast of Calgary. August 12th -14th was their second annual family jamboree at Alford Lake Conservation and Education Centre for Excellence west of Caroline. Youth and families are a vital part of their club. They are working on exploring a mentorship day of fishing at Pine Coulee and an event with Kids can Catch and ACA. One of their most exciting new initiatives is adding a youth pheasant release day to their already successful pheasant release day.

Okotoks District Fish and Game has sponsored a youth to attend the Narrow Lake Conservation camp this summer. They had an ODFGA rep at the Dad Central Fishing Day event in Okotoks to teach new families about fishing techniques and conservation. They hosted their first wild game banquet on June 24th which went off incredibly well. 92 members and guests were treated to a 10-course meal of donated wild game

prepared by executive chef, Xavier Lacaze and his team of culinary artists at The Ridge. Dishes included lake trout risotto, roast bear porchetta, confit pheasant, smoked elk and mushroom stroganoff and more. Raffles, silent auction, and door prizes kept the night active and it was a great fundraiser for the club. They are planning to expand the banquet next year and make it their club's premiere annual event.

Okotoks Fish and Game wild game dinner fundraiser.

After several months of hiatus due to covid, High River Fish and Game had their AGM and elected Ron Wasyliw as their president. They also discussed plans for their annual wild game dinner fundraiser and special events. Stay tuned for time and dates. HRFG held their annual Special Needs Derby on Sunday, June 5th at a private pond between High River and Longview. The turnout was good with 10 people fishing and 18 volunteers present. The sun was shining bright and the fish were actively biting. Everyone had a blast and took home some beautiful looking rainbow trout.

It's nice to see clubs in Zone 2 being active and looking for new projects and activities post covid. With the hard work of our AFGA executives and zone clubs I believe the future of the AFGA family will be bright and sunny. Keep up the good work. ▶

## ZONE 1 REPORT

By Harold Drok

Today is July 2nd and as I sit to write the Zone 3 report, I am reflecting the difference one year can make. Last year we were still in the middle of all of the COVID 19 restrictions and we missed a lot of activities that we had taken for granted. Central Alberta had hardly seen any run-off from the snow or spring rains. This year we seem to be trying to catch up on what we missed the past two years and it hasn't stopped raining in June. The ponds in Central Alberta are almost at normal levels from previous years.

Zone 3 successfully put on the Alberta Fish & Game Association Wildlife Awards in Lacombe on May 7, 2022. Awards were passed out to the winners from the 2020 and 2021 entries. We had an excellent turn out of guests and also had several special guests attend the banquet including Grant Creasey, City of Lacombe Mayor, Blaine Calkins, Member of Parliament, Red Deer / Lacombe and The Honorable Jason Nixon, Ministry of Environment and Parks. Thank you to Dean Bromberger, the Provincial AFGA Trophy Chair for determining the winners from the many, many entries and for announcing the winners at the banquet. Thank you to the 2022 Award sponsors including Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and Alberta Hunter Instructor Education Association (AHIEA). Thank you to everyone that donated items for the Silent Auction.

Zone 3 raffled off a Beretta A400 Xtreme Plus Semi-Auto 3.5" 12 Gauge, a Tikka T3x Lite 6.5 PRC – 24.3" Barrel Stainless Steel – Synthetic, a Benelli Super Nova, Pump 3.5"12 Gauge - 26"Barrel, and a Robert Bateman print. Proceeds from



the raffle will go to Zone 3 club projects.

Zone 3 offered to host the 2022 AFGA Wildlife Awards in the spring of 2023. At the June AFGA Executive Meeting a motion was passed to have Zone 3 host the awards again in 2023. The Banquet Committee has decided to attempt expanding the 2022 raffle to include more tickets and make them available online.

Zone 3 clubs will be busy for the remainder of 2022. Youth camps are planned at Camp Pofianga hosted

by the Ponoka Fish & Game. The Central Youth Conservation Academy will be holding a camp east of Morningside. Innisfail is working on securing property for an Archery Range. Rimbey is building a club house and archery range on the old Rimbey Golf Course south of Rimbey. Red Deer is moving the Alberta Youth Peasant Program to the Red Deer Fish & Game Habitat Land and are currently attempting to build a pen in between rain storms. 🐦

# Wildlife Trust Fund Program

## FEATURE PROPERTY

# POMRENK HOMESTEAD PROPERTY

By Natalie Horne

**T**hanks to you, our Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) members, who through your membership, continue to play an active role in conserving vital habitat throughout Alberta, by way of our Wildlife Trust Fund properties. As a part of the Wildlife Trust Fund, Alberta's oldest and most well-respected land trust, we hold or share title to over 100 properties that stretch from the extreme southern reaches of our province, all the way north to Manning. These properties encompass over 50,000 acres of important fish and wildlife habitat and offer protection for healthy, sustainable populations into the future. In addition to conserving critical habitat, Wildlife Trust Fund properties continue to provide recreational opportunities for all outdoor enthusiasts.

In this edition of our Wildlife Trust Fund Program feature, we are highlighting the Pomrenk Homestead Property (D4-136). This 160-acre site is 3km southwest of the hamlet of Ranfurly and located on quarter section NW-04-051-12-W4M, it is accessible on the west side from Range Road 124. The land was donated by Friedl Pomrenk, with the support of his family, who had farmed the land for 114 years. Though much of the quarter is currently leased for crop production, the site also holds many patches of forest either around



Pomrenk Homestead aerial

the old farmyard and wetlands, or as shelterbelts throughout the field. The northeast portion of the property is slightly higher in elevation and slopes down towards a creek that flows through the south and south-

west portion of the site. Wildlife in the area includes moose, white-tailed and mule deer and grouse.

The property is managed with our partners, the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and falls under >



Pomrenk Wetland

Historically the land had been used for agriculture and at the time of acquisition, approximately 125 acres was being used for crop production. The long-term management of this property includes plans to restore and promote healthy and diverse biological systems on the site, while providing safe and sustainable recreational use for non-motorized foraging, hunting, and hiking opportunities. While the restoration plan is implemented, haying opportunities continue to be made available, to bid on these, or other opportunities please visit: <https://www.ab-conservation.com/programs/land/agricultural-opportunities-for-producers/>



Scrap Metal

address was included for the ACA's new Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fencing.

Our thanks go out to all those involved in making this property accessible to those looking to enjoy the variety of wildlife that frequent the area. The AFGA also gratefully acknowledges Friedl and his family for their generous donation of land and the spirit in which it was given. Through their dedication to conservation, they have left a lasting legacy for all Albertans to enjoy.

If you are interested in donating land to Alberta's oldest and most well-respected land trust, please contact Natalie Horne, Communications Director, via email to [communications@afga.org](mailto:communications@afga.org). Looking to volunteer as a Land Stewards with the AFGA and assist us in monitoring our extensive network of properties? We'd love to hear from you! Contact Natalie with your details and get active and involved! 🐦

Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 238. 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 always being respectful in their use of this area.

In 2017, at the age of 106 years old, Edward Pomrenk, or 'Friedl' as he was known, approached the AFGA and offered to donate his family homestead land to AFGA's Wildlife Trust Fund. Friedl was a lifelong supporter of conservation practices and throughout his time living and farming the land, had planted a variety of trees as shelterbelts for wildlife frequenting the area. The donation of land was made under the condition that it would be conserved and only used for wildlife, wildlife habitat conservation and education, enjoyment and enhancement programs related to wildlife or wildlife habitat. Although Friedl passed away during the donation process, with the support of his family, Friedl's donation of land was finalized in 2017, ensuring the Pomrenk Homestead Property will be conserved for local wildlife and posterity for future generations to enjoy and learn about nature.



Friedl Pomrenk



Farm Equipment

As Friedl lived and farmed the land for most of his life, when donating the property, there was a variety of farm equipment, scrap metal and other materials located throughout. The ACA and AFGA undertook the responsibilities of yard clean up, and in 2018, ACA arranged for the Viking Historical Society and nearby friends and neighbors to remove farm equipment and materials from the homestead. Remaining large metal objects were collected by a metal recycling company and the remaining equipment, buildings and garbage was disposed of off-site.

to demonstrate the effectiveness of wildlife-friendly fencing to area landowners. Two signs were erected along the fence line explaining the concept of wildlife-friendly fencing and a web

To help prevent vehicle trespass on the property, AFGA's TJ Schwanky, who was also an integral part of the acquisition of the Pomrenk Homestead Property, spearheaded the installation of new wildlife-friendly fencing along a portion of the west boundary. With the assistance of ACA and AFGA grant funding, and volunteers, a four-strand smooth wire fence was constructed with wires spaced at 40, 28, 23 and 18 inches to facilitate easier movement of ungulates while still serving as a barrier for vehicle trespass. This fencing also acts as an educational opportunity



Pomrenk Homestead Sign



Equipment and School Buses



Wildlife friendly fencing



## Alberta Fish and Game Association

*Your voice in conservation since 1908*

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Knowledge that you are supporting the largest conservation organization in Alberta

Being part of the acquisition and protection of over 50,000 acres of our Wildlife Trust Fund properties; available for hunting, angling and outdoor pursuits

Opportunity to participate in youth and women's camps in Alberta

Opportunity to participate on numerous conservation projects, such as Volunteer Land Stewardship or Pronghorn Corridor Enhancement

\$5,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment benefit while participating in hunting, fishing, trapping or authorized AFGA club activities

\$5,000,000 personal excess liability insurance

Discounts on the purchase of personal insurance through BrokerLink (1-888-826-9427)

Yearly subscription to *Outdoor Canada West* magazine (regular newsstand price \$7.99 per issue, 6 issues per year)

10% discount on Marks merchandise

