

## **ACTWS – Conservation Committee – November 2013**

Members of the Conservation Committee include: Mark Boyce, Larry Roy, Matthew Pyper, Lorne Fitch, Kristie Derksen, Blair Rippin and Tammy McMillan. **Additional members are welcome!**

ACTWS has representation on 5 external committees:

**Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division Regulation Change Advisory Group** – Evelyn Merrill, Larry Roy - *no meeting to report*

**Endangered Species Conservation Committee** – Doug Collister, Kirby Smith are ACTWS representatives -

- Doug Collister, the ACTWS representative to the provincial Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC) attended the latest meeting on 17 October 2013 in Edmonton. The Scientific Subcommittee presented status evaluations for Hare-footed Locoweed and Western Grebe followed by the ESCC Secretariat presenting draft Conservation Action Statements including the recommendation to designate Hare-footed Locoweed as Special Concern and Western Grebe as Threatened. Recovery plans for Stonecat, Whitebark Pine and Shortjaw Cisco were also presented to the committee.

**Alberta Fisheries Management Round Table** – Ken Crutchfield, ACTWS representative attended the October 19<sup>th</sup> – Edmonton – key findings:

- ESRD is taking initial steps to review and update the 1982 “Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta” . Review lead contacts are: Matt Besko and Jim Allen – there are internal teams being assembled to work on different aspects of review – public involvement early in 2014 with tentative target for political endorsement by late summer 2014

- Alberta Conservation Association – ESRD memorandum of agreement (MOU) discussions are on-going. Minister has deferred decision on possible levy changes to hunting and fishing licenses pending finalization of MOU. Government is working to have definition of performance outcomes as basis of delegation administrative organization agreement. No intent to change legislation under the Wildlife Act and Regulation.

- Alberta Fisheries Management Strategy – long awaited update to the 2006-11 document is slowly making its way through ESRD Executive approvals.

**Alberta Pacific Forest Industry (Alpac) Landscape Advisory Group (LAG)**- Kristie Derksen, ACTWS representative reports: the Al-Pac Land Advisory Group met on Oct 10.

- Discussed Al-Pac’s Forest Management Plan (FMP) – due for update and in planning stages – items of particular interest include the importance of Community Engagement and type of potential audiences

- presentation on the Community Stewardship Report- they have compiled it to 4 pages so that it is user friendly. Please email me if you’re interested and I can get a copy of the full report for feedback if you’d like.

- discussion on the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement and Caribou Alpac are investigating how they can minimize harvesting in the caribou range. Zonation with oil, gas, and forestry was presented as a step in the process.

- discussed the Caribou National Recovery Strategy. The GOA has a deadline of 2015 to submit action plans to the federal government and AI-Pac's 2015 FMP will outline their plans for caribou. AI-Pac is looking at coordinating linear features with industry, and recognizing wolf control.

- AI-Pac was found to be in slight non-conformist mode with Forest Sustainability Council(FSC) they are working on bringing themselves back up to operating standards.

**North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance** – Ken Crutchfield and Larrie Roy are ACTWS, principal and alternates representatives, respectively. Ken Crutchfield was elected to the position of Vice President of the NSWA. NSWA is one of 11 watershed and planning advisory groups within Alberta. It is designated a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the North Saskatchewan River under the Government of Alberta's **Water for Life Strategy**. It is linked to the Alberta Water Council. ACTWS members may wish to visit the NSWA website (<http://www.nswa.ab.ca/>) for more info as well as the Alberta Water Council website (<http://www.awchome.ca/AboutUs/tabid/54/Default.aspx>).

#### **GENERAL items under discussion by the Conservation Committee**

**Alberta Wetland Policy** – ([http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/documents/Alberta\\_Wetland\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/documents/Alberta_Wetland_Policy.pdf)) was released September 10<sup>th</sup> – Larrie Roy is taking the lead to prepare a statement on behalf of ACTWS. Members are encouraged to pass along comments to Larrie ([larry.roy@albertainnovates.ca](mailto:larry.roy@albertainnovates.ca))

**Bison Re-introduction to Banff National park** – Banff National Park officials are calling for comments regarding a proposed bison reintroduction proposal (<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/banff/plan/gestion-management/bison.aspx>) Conservation Committee members are discussing the merit of the proposal, however there are concerns that the proposed fencing could have serious consequences to elk at Ya Ha Tinda (provincial lands). Fencing appears inconsistent with the Park's ecological-process management. Migratory elk in particular will be negatively affected but on the surface it appears National Parks managers find elk to be more of a problem than an integral component of the ecosystem. Members are encouraged to submit comments to: [opinion@pc.gc.ca](mailto:opinion@pc.gc.ca) ( 403 760 1342) or the Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Environment, with your reply: [leona.aglukag@parl.gc.ca](mailto:leona.aglukag@parl.gc.ca)

#### **TWS Conservation Affairs Network Guidance Document**

TWS Sections and Chapters are currently reviewing a guidance document to improve their collective effectiveness in presenting and effecting decision making pertaining to wildlife management and conservation. Plans are to have the guidance document accepted in early 2014. Contact Ken Crutchfield if you desire more information: [kvcrutch@telus.net](mailto:kvcrutch@telus.net)

#### **Endangered species**

ACTWS members may find interest in reviewing a short film recently released by the Operations Grassland Community (OGC) on the merit of cattle grazing as a surrogate of historical grassland grazers in support of retaining species at risk. For more information on the Conservation Caravan and to join the growing conversation, visit [www.grasslandcommunity.org](http://www.grasslandcommunity.org) and follow them on twitter @OGC\_AB. Contact: Mara Erickson, Communications Director ([mara.e.erickson@gmail.com](mailto:mara.e.erickson@gmail.com)); Kerry Grisley, Executive Director ([kerry@afga.org](mailto:kerry@afga.org))

## Neonicotinoid Pesticides

Glen Fox spent his career in the Canadian Wildlife Service Division Toxicology Division and recently alerted associates across Canada to a review currently underway by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency concerning the on-going certification of neonicotinoid pesticides (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/decisions/rev2012-02/index-eng.php>).

It is an insecticide used as a coating on seeds of many crops grown in Canada. It has been linked directly to deaths of honey bees across the continent. The chemical also persists in aquatic environments and is suspected as a widespread cause for declines in many species of insects, amphibians, and birds. The "Pest Management Regulatory Agency" (PMRA) has initiated a public review with a deadline of December 12, 2013. Email: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/cps-spc/pmra-arla/pmrapub-eng.php>. You must provide your name (and organization), phone number, and mailing or e-mail address along with your ...comments.

## Private Wolf Bounties

Dwight Rodtka directed a query at Dee Patriquin as ACTWS President concerning ACTWS awareness of private bounties being offered for wolves and the apparent indifference of the government wildlife managers to address the matter as well as the use of snares. **As a consequence of a Conservation Committee review we recommended that beyond reporting information to members, there is no consensus for ACTWS taking further steps.** However, ACTWS members will be encouraged to take individual initiative should they have strong views on the matter.

**So what you ask.....**this query has raised a point often discussed by ACTWS concerning when and what advocacy roles it should take. I have raised this item with ACTWS Executive during our discussions of a ACTWS Strategic Plan and I believe there is a consensus that ACTWS advocacy should be focused on science based concerns. Many decisions about wildlife management and conservation are "value" based. ACTWS has a diverse membership and likely a wide range of opinions on how best to apply science in favor of one or more values. To that end the intent here is to make ACTWS members aware of the issue of bounties, how it is being accepted within the realm of wildlife management of wolves and ***leave it to individual ACTWS members to pursue action on the matter.*** Under ACTWS Terms of Reference for the Conservation Committee, position papers are generated by consensus and presented to the ACTWS Executive for affirmation, i.e. no consensus = no position paper.