



The Alberta Wildlifer

Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society

Fall 2004, Vol. 15, No.2

Editor: Dave Hobson

President's Message

Summer Greetings. I hope you have all had a restful and enjoyable summer. The Executive of the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society have continued to be active over the summer months.

The Conservation Committee has finalized an ACTWS position paper on Access Management on Public Lands. The chair of the committee (Mike Norton) and our Past-President (Mark Boyce) have requested a meeting with the Deputy Minister's of the Department of Energy and Sustainable Resource Development to discuss our position and to ask for the Alberta Governments vision of access management. The position paper is now posted on the website.

The Executive has also been involved in a Freedom of Information and Privacy request concerning the transfer of public lands in southern Alberta to private individuals. These lands were native grassland prairie and of high wildlife value. ACTWS is concerned that Albertans will not be receiving land of equal wildlife value in return and have asked the government to provide evidence that the lands are of any wildlife value at all.

The Executive is currently reviewing a paper circulated by The Wildlife Society's head office, which discusses the negative impact that our increasing human population/consumption rate of material goods is having on wildlife habitat. TWS has asked each State/Provincial Chapter to provide a response to the papers content and goals. I would encourage all members of ACTWS to review the abstract of a new TWS publication *The Relationship of Economic Growth to Wildlife Conservation*, which can be found at <http://www.wildlife.org/publications/index.cfm?tname=pubs&pubid=pub21> and a supporting document (pdf format) available at http://www.wildlife.org/publications/WSB2801/2SC_CZECH.pdf and provide their comments to me (Kirby.Smith@gov.ab.ca).

The ACTWS received a request this spring to present a position paper on Chronic Wasting Disease to an expert panel convened by the Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Health Centre in Saskatoon Sask. We had little time to respond but I am happy to report that Bill Samuel, an unanimous contributor and myself were able to prepare a short document that appeared to be well received. The paper is now available on the ACTWS website.

Finally, I would encourage each and every member to attend the TWS Conference in Calgary this September. An opportunity like this may not come along for a long time. As an added attraction, ACTWS has thrown together a group of musicians who will be performing immediately following the student/professional mixer. Hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Kirby Smith

Editors Note

Normally, in the Fall newsletter, we would be informing our membership of the upcoming AGM and conference in the spring. The regular schedule is all out of whack due to the TWS conference next week. Therefore, I'm producing a shortened newsletter with some articles that may be of interest to the membership and hope to get play catch up with the next issue.

In this issue, I'd like to thank Genevieve Goggin, Lisa Priestley, Lorne Fitch, Norine Ambrose and Mike Norton for coming to my rescue and providing interesting feature articles for this newsletter. I'd also like to thank Ken Crutchfield for bringing Mike Sullivan's award to my attention.

In case anyone didn't know. Our President, Kirby Smith, has just earned his Masters degree. He will now be known as Master President.

Chapter News

Be Apart Of The ...

11th Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society

Calgary, Alberta

September 18-22, 2004

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

It's still not too late...

The volunteer subcommittee is looking for enthusiastic wildlife students, wildlife professionals and TWS members willing to volunteer for the 2004 TWS conference in Calgary. We are in need of approximately 80 participants willing to aid in the registration desk and at each paper session to ensure the conference is a success!

What benefits will you receive as a volunteer?

- Volunteer reimbursements
- Student Chapter Fundraiser(s)
- Volunteer Mixer

If you are interested, then contact Jim Allen, Paula Bentham or Cory DeLeMare at the Hyatt Nielson 2 room in Calgary.

Feature Articles

Facts on the new *Species at Risk Act*

Conservation of species at risk is an important part of conserving biodiversity and requires the participation and cooperation of many people and organizations. The Government of Canada has adopted a three-part strategy to protecting species at risk. This first is to encourage stewardship and provide incentives through programs such as the Habitat Stewardship Program. Secondly, a collaborative approach to protecting species at risk is required and hence a multi-jurisdictional Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk has been endorsed by federal, provincial and territorial governments. The third and most recent tool is the new federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

SARA complements the work being done through provincial and other federal laws by setting a standard. Species listed in SARA are protected through various mechanisms and SARA provides for a final “safety net” protection if provincial, territorial or stewardship activities are inadequate.

How are listed species and their residences protected?

There are prohibitions against the killing, harming, harassing or taking of endangered, threatened and extirpated species listed in Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) and against the damage or destruction of their residences (e.g. nest or den). These prohibitions now apply to:

- all endangered, threatened and extirpated species listed in Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) found on **federal lands** such as national parks, national wildlife areas, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration pastures, Aboriginal reserve lands and military training areas.
- all endangered, threatened and extirpated **migratory birds listed in the *Migratory Birds***

Convention Act (MBCA), 1994, listed in Schedule 1 of SARA, anywhere they occur.

- All endangered, threatened and extirpated **aquatic species** listed in Schedule 1 of SARA, anywhere they occur.

For endangered, threatened or extirpated species listed in Schedule 1 of SARA other than the species or places listed above, the prohibitions for non-MBCA and non-aquatic species may apply on provincial or private land if provincial legislation does not effectively protect the species and its residence, and cooperative stewardship does not succeed. In such a case, consultations would first be held with the provincial government prior to this “safety net” being applied. Many species currently are protected under other laws.

What is critical habitat and how does the Act protect it?

Critical habitat is the habitat necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed endangered, threatened or extirpated species on Schedule 1 of SARA. Critical habitat will be described within recovery strategies or action plans over the next few years. These strategies and plans will be developed in co-operation with various agencies and in consultation with people who are directly affected.

Once critical habitat has been described, it needs to be protected. There will be a prohibition against destroying any part of critical habitat for any species found on federal lands and of any aquatic species anywhere it occurs within six months after it is described. For any other species (i.e. non-aquatic species) on private or provincial land, the intent of SARA is to protect critical habitat as much as possible through voluntary actions, stewardship measures or provincial law. If these measures do not succeed, a “safety net” prohibition against the destruction of critical habitat may be applied.

What is the Habitat Stewardship Program?

The Habitat Stewardship Program develops agreements with conservation agencies such as the Alberta Conservation Association, Nature Conservancy Canada, and the Alberta Fish and Game Association to cooperatively protect species at risk and their habitats.

About \$2 million each year is awarded to organizations to help landowners with species at risk projects across the Prairies.

For more information on the Habitat Stewardship Program or on species at risk in general visit the Species at Risk website at www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca or our regional website at www.pnr-pnp.ec.gc.ca/nature/endspecies/index.en.html. For the legal list of species at risk, COSEWIC assessments, recovery strategies, action plans, regulations and orders go to the SARA Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca.

Genevieve Goggin

Volunteer Alberta Raptor Nest Cards – Data Capture and Analysis

The volunteer raptor nest card program was initiated in 1988 by the Alberta government, for raptor banders and researchers to collect information on nest locations of birds of prey. The program was not maintained, however some raptor banders in central Alberta continued to fill out nest cards. All the data was stored in binders with Beaverhill Bird Observatory and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development in Edmonton.

The purpose of this project is to compile these long-term datasets and enter them into a database for analysis. The goal is to further develop the program and to make it compatible with other regional and national nest card schemes. Results will include a better understanding of habitat use, productivity, and phenology (timing of nesting), which will help with status assessment and management.

The objectives of this project in 2004-2005 are to:

- 1) enter all backlogged data that has been collected since the mid-1990's
- 2) establish a full time volunteer-based raptor nest card program, where members of the public can report raptor nests, and participate in banding,

- 3) produce an information pamphlet on raptor nests and the monitoring program and how the public can get involved in collecting information,
- 4) conduct educational presentations on birds of prey and their importance in the environment,
- 5) analyze data and write reports on distribution of breeding raptors, habitat requirements for nesting, and phenology of nesting.

The new Raptor Nest Card is presently available from the Beaverhill Bird Observatory website at www.beaverhillbirds.com or by contacting Lisa Priestley at (780) 918-4804 or E-mail: lisa@beaverhillbirds.com.

Lisa Priestley, Beaverhill Bird Observatory



young red-tailed hawk

Lisa Priestley

News Flash: New Evaluation of Stewardship Delivery from Cows and Fish

“It’s not only what you do, it’s how you do it and, does it count”. The Cows and Fish program has been in the business of delivering the elements of stewardship for over a dozen years. The elements of stewardship (awareness, ethics and action) are delivered in a circular process involving five linked and repeated steps. This pathway begins with awareness and follows through team building and tool building to community-based action and monitoring. Dozens of community and watershed groups have found this a useful format to follow, to build a cumulative body of information, to empower and motivate community members and to provide measuring sticks of progress. Cows and Fish has a commitment to evaluating program success. The results of the latest evaluation may be of interest to you and your organization.

Programs are delivered by people, to people; it is crucial to understand what characteristics program deliverers should have and if those characteristics function to enhance learning and practice change. Through an independent evaluation we asked three questions:

- Do the deliverers of Cows and Fish achieve trust and credibility to enable messages to be accepted?
- As a result of the way messages are delivered, does that enhance or increase awareness?
- As a result of using the Cows and Fish process, and characteristics of staff, is a change in management occurring, what is the rate of change and over what time span does it occur?

Participants in the evaluation were landowners (both rural and urban), agency staff (municipal, provincial and federal), conservation agency staff and industry. Over 200 people participated in the exercise. Representation included all parts of Alberta.

What are the key findings of the evaluation that relate to stewardship delivery?

1. The community-based approach used by Cows and Fish is a constructive forum to effectively work with landowners (and others) because it appears the format allows more interaction, better relationship building and greater acceptance and adoption of new information. Consistently, people part of watershed/community groups rated Cows and Fish staff higher on key characteristics, acquired new information at a greater rate, and made more management changes based on the information and interaction than did people not part of these groups.
2. There is successful engagement and interaction with people when message deliverers are trusted and seen to be credible – understanding the practicalities, knowledgeable about management and able to motivate. There are nine key characteristics that respondents viewed as essential for Cows and Fish staff to demonstrate in interactions with people. Cows and Fish staff scored highly on all these necessary characteristics.
3. Building a foundation of awareness/education is a fundamental step in the Cows and Fish process. Awareness programming is formed from basic ecological principles and processes and is delivered in non-threatening, non-controversial ways. On average, 82% of respondents learned new information or raised their awareness as a direct result of contact with Cows and Fish. Respondents noted that most of the knowledge acquired related to ecological function, relationships between land use and function, and vegetation attributes. The most important strategy learned about was how to recognize and assess riparian health.
4. The ultimate goal of a stewardship initiative is to achieve stewardship – people using information to make responsible decisions about how to use and protect landscapes. On average, 58% of respondents adopted new management, changed management, or saw others making changes as a direct result of contact with Cows and Fish (64%

of landowners who were part of community groups made land use changes). The majority of practice change described how people stood back, saw a larger landscape picture and then planned and applied the principles of riparian management.

5. It takes time to build relationships in which barriers, and solutions to practice change, can be identified; contact with Cows and Fish was an important fixture in this process. Patience and persistence are virtues of Cows and Fish. It takes about 3 to 5 years from initial contact for most people to make the first practice change. In that time span, and beyond, Cows and Fish staff provides a diverse array of mechanisms to accommodate change inclusive of information, encouragement, motivation and reinforcement.

For those that have been, or are, financial supporters of Cows and Fish we hope these evaluation results provide some tangible evidence your resources were invested wisely to accommodate the delivery of stewardship actions. We are grateful to those who have supported us, in many cases for many years. Continuity and persistence, coupled with successful engagement of people, the key constituents of the Cows and Fish program, are possible only with such long-lived support. The evaluation results indicate that not only is change possible, to better care for landscapes, it is occurring.

For those engaged in stewardship delivery, we hope this evaluation provides important lessons about the mechanisms of delivery and aids you in your particular initiative.

The full report *Cows and Fish Staff Interaction Evaluation Report* (Report No. 025) will be available on our website as a pdf file in the near future. If you would like to review a copy sooner, please contact us and we will send you an electronic version. If you would like a presentation on these results and the link to stewardship delivery we would be pleased to accommodate your request.

We want to thank our partners and our long-term funders for their ongoing commitment and support to Cows and

Fish that enabled us to achieve the results outlined in the evaluation:

Producers and Community Groups, Alberta Beef Producers; Trout Unlimited Canada; Canadian Cattlemen's Association; Alberta Sustainable Resource Development; Alberta Environment; Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration; Alberta Conservation Association. Funding Associates: Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture, Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund, Canada-Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund.

Visit our web site for more information about Cows and Fish: www.cowsandfish.org

Look at our Publications page for other materials, and the full report evaluation will be posted soon.

Lorne Fitch and Norine Ambrose

ACTWS weighs in on Access Management

The ACTWS is concerned that the proliferation of linear access and uncontrolled use of such features by people for motorized access to remote areas is causing harm to Alberta's fish and wildlife populations. Industrial resource development sectors continue to build many new access routes such as roads, pipelines, seismic exploration lines, and power transmission lines. Motorized access along these features for recreational purposes is rarely controlled. The ACTWS is particularly concerned with the situation in the forested 'Green Zone' of the province.

The Conservation Committee of ACTWS identified access management as a priority issue for action. The committee (Mike Norton (chair), Blair Rippin, Larry Roy, Elston Dzus/Simon Dyer, Chris Shank, Kirby Smith) has drafted a position paper on the subject. The

paper outlines the basis for our concerns, and some specific, actionable steps that we recommend to help address the situation. The paper will be used as the basis for a series of meetings, which are planned between ACTWS members and senior government officials, industry groups, and other relevant groups. The position paper is available on the ACTWS website.

Mike Norton

Upcoming Events

16th International Conference on Ecological Restoration: Restoration on the Edge.

August 24 – 26, 2004 / Victoria, B.C.

For more information:

http://www.serbc.info/public/ser_seminar

Interdisciplinary Research and Management in Mountain Areas (IRMMA) Conference.

September 23 – 26, 2004 / Banff, Alberta.

For more information:

<http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/mtnconferences/irmma/>

9th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network (CARCNet).

September 24 – 27, 2004 / Edmonton, Alberta.

For more information:

<http://www.carcnet.ca/>

Monitoring the Effectiveness of Biological Conservation.

November 1 – 5, 2004 / Vancouver, B.C.

For more information:

http://www.fcsn.bc.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=conference.s.display&conference=monitoring&CFID=1624629&CF_TOKEN=8606630

Canadian Water Resources Association Second Annual Workshop on Integrated Water Resources Management: Building Capacity for Watershed Stewardship

November 2-3, 2004 / Regina, Saskatchewan

For more information:

http://www.cwra.org/CWRA_News_and_Events/IWRM_2004/iwrm_2004.html

NALMS 2004 - 24th International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS): Lakes: Habitat for Fish, Habitat for People

November 3-5, 2004 / Victoria, British Columbia

For more information:

<http://www.nalms.org/symposia/victoria/index.htm>

2004 A. D. Latornell Conservation Symposium: Watershed Stewardship - From Strategies to Action

November 17-18, 2004 / Alliston, Ontario

For more information:

<http://www.latornell.ca/>

National Science Meeting of the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN): Monitoring and Evaluating Sustainability in Communities, Cities and Watersheds

November 30-December 4, 2004 / Quebec City, Quebec

For more information:

<http://www.eman-rese.ca/eman/reports/meetings/national2004/>

Forest Leadership Conference: Partnerships towards Sustainability

March 1-4, 2005 / Toronto, Ontario

For more information:

<http://forestleadership.com/>

90th Ecological Society of America (ESA): Ecology at Multiple Scales

August 7-12, 2005 / Montreal, Quebec

For more information:

<http://www.esa.org/montreal/>

Earth System Processes 2: Ancient Earth Systems, Modern Earth System Processes, and Earth System Futures

August 8-11, 2005, Calgary, Alberta

For more information:

<http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/esp2/>

Recently Published

Please send any references of recently published articles to dave.hobson@gov.ab.ca. Articles of interest include those authored by ACTWS members on Alberta wildlife.

"John Post, Craig Mushens, Andrew Paul and **Michael Sullivan** were recently announced as the winners of the American Fisheries Society 2003 Best Paper Award. Their paper "*Assessment of Alternative Harvest Regulations for Sustaining Recreational Fisheries: Model Development and Application for Bull Trout*" was deemed by a diverse, highly-qualified group of fisheries scientists as the best of all the papers published in the North American Journal of Fisheries Management. Examiners used much the same criteria as that common to peer review journals. Their paper was deemed to be a clearly written significant contribution to fisheries management science incorporating existing knowledge that was scientifically sound and technically reliable. The authors are to be congratulated for raising the standard for fisheries management within Alberta. They also stand out as excellent representatives for the academic competence within Alberta as well as the benefits of an active interaction between academics and practitioners for advancing fisheries management science within Alberta.