

THE ALBERTA WILDLIFER

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ACTWS President's Report

Robin Gutsell

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The new executive 2

Executive Bios 3

Canadian Section Update 8

Conservation Committee Update 11

Under the Bo-real Forest 14

Award Winners 17

Upcoming Events 23

Well, spring seems to have finally arrived; the American Robins are building a nest in my back yard, while dodging the Cooper's Hawks that seem to be nesting somewhere nearby as well. Wildlife goes on doing its thing, and so do the province's wildlife biologists. And what an interesting, talented and dedicated crowd of wildlife biologists this province has! Since beginning my career in Alberta, I have been amazed and heartened by meeting many of the people that ply their trade as wildlife professionals here. And I have met so many of them through the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS). The Chapter plays a central role in bringing wildlife professionals together, stimulating conversation among us and giving us opportunities to learn from each other.

The ACTWS has long been sustained and supported by its members and especially by those that step forward to serve on the volunteer executive. I want to take a moment to acknowledge those folks, who are so generous with their time and energy. Just to mention a couple of recent stars, outgoing Past President Jason Fisher just finished three years in the big "P" category (President-Elect – President – Past President), which were preceded by two years as Director. Current Past President Larry Roy not only organized last year's conference as President-Elect, but did double duty while president to make sure that the 2017 conference could go ahead when 2016's President-Elect had to step down. Curtis Stambaugh was just most deservedly honoured with the Kristina Nordstrom Dedicated Service Award for his years as Secretary-Treasurer. Margo Pybus has been involved with Chapter executive and/or committees in one capacity or another pretty much the Chapter began. The list goes on - so many talented people have served on this executive and on volunteer committees, organizing conferences and moving the Chapter's agenda forward over the years (if you haven't done so already, I invite you to check out the "Chapter History" link on the Chapter's web page under "About Us"). As this year's President, I am highly aware of the stars who have preceded me, and I will seek, humbly, not to let them down.

Also stepping into new roles are Everett Hanna, President-Elect; Joanna Burgar, Director and Joseph Litke, Director – a warm welcome to you! We wish farewell to Jason Fisher as well as to Elston Dzus and Brian Kopach – it's not farewell at all as I am sure we will see you all in the future. Thank you so much for your leadership and dedication. Members can learn more about the Chapter Executive team from our web site and through a feature in this newsletter.

Another relatively new face around the executive halls (figurative though those halls may be) is our freshly minted Executive Director, Delinda (Dee) Ryerson, who has been working half time since January in support of the Chapter. Previous executive members worked

hard to make the dream of this position become a reality, and finally it was made possible by the generous donation to the Chapter made by the estate of a man named Larry Norman Comin. Dee has already proved her worth with her tireless work in conference organizing and in developing the informative email campaigns that members have been enjoying of late. Dee comes to us with a wealth of experience working on wildlife and fisheries projects in the province and, what is perhaps even more valuable, she brings us her infectious enthusiasm, boundless energy and an amazing ability to get things done!

The 2017/2018 Chapter executive has already had its first meeting and is already planning for the next year and the next conference. Margo Pybus and the Executive are updating various background documents that the Executive uses in their operations, and the Education and Outreach committee is working on an updated Communications Plan. Stay tuned for announcements about next year’s conference location and theme.

One thing that the executive wants to explore is the idea of offering more opportunities for hands-on experiences for members. It is not only students who can benefit from the chance to learn skills from those members who have such experiences. If you haven’t already, please answer our short survey about what you would like to see in the way of workshops and field trips. We would love to hear your ideas.

The New Executive

President	Robin Gutsell
President-Elect	Everett Hanna
Past-President	Larry Roy
Secretary-Treasurer (Until 2018)	Samantha Morris-Yasinski
Director (until 2018)	Lisa Takats Priestley
Director (until 2018)	Michelle Fournier
Director (until 2019)	Joanna Bugar
Director (until 2019)	Joseph Litke

ACTWS Executive Committee



Robin Gutsell – President

Robin has been involved with the ACTWS executive since being a Director in 2005. Robin grew up in a big city but followed her love of all things wild and obtained a B.Sc. in Zoology from the University of Guelph and a M.Sc. from Simon Fraser University focusing on the behavioural (foraging) ecology of great blue herons. Not long after, Robin gravitated to Alberta, joining Alberta Fish and Wildlife in early 1999, when the province's Species at Risk program was just beginning to expand. Robin has worked as a biologist with the program ever since, coordinating the detailed status program but also co-leading Alberta's recovery team for whitebark and limber pines and representing Alberta as an alternate on the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Robin lives in Edmonton with her family and Norwegian moose dog (a.k.a. elkhound), and hikes, camps, cross-country skis and gardens whenever she can.



Everett Hanna – President-Elect

Everett earned a diploma as a Fish and Wildlife Technician (Fleming College), an advanced diploma in Fish and Wildlife Technology (Fleming College), and an HBSc in Biology (Trent University) where he studied the incubation rhythms of Mallards and Northern Pintails nesting in southern Alberta with Ducks Unlimited Canada. He then started his MSc research with Long Point Waterfowl and Western University, focusing on the foraging and staging ecology of Eastern Population Greater Sandhill Cranes, collecting the first provincial population estimate for the previously extirpated species. He transferred to the PhD program in 2011 and is now set to defend his dissertation in June 2017. Beyond academia, Everett has worked across North America in capacities ranging from field technician to data analyst to senior wildlife biologist for provincial/state entities, non-profit organizations, and consulting firms. Everett has a passion for post-secondary education, having taught courses in fish and wildlife ecology and management at Western University, Fleming College, and, in his current role, with the Natural Resources Technology Program at Portage College in Lac La Biche, AB. At Portage, Everett constantly strives to design unique, applied learning opportunities for his students with the goal of collecting useful biological data. Everett is also a Certified Wildlife Biologist® (CWB) with TWS and a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) with the BC College of Applied Biology.



Larry Roy – Past President

Laurence (Larry) D. Roy, HBSc (Zoology, Laurentian University), MSc (Wildlife Resources, University of Idaho) has been a technologist, wildlife ecologist and a program leader for 4 decades with Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Environmental Centre and the Alberta Research Council and is now a retired manager of the Ecosystem Management Portfolio at Alberta Innovates Technology Futures. His earlier focus has been problem wildlife management in both agricultural and forestry settings and recently management of applied research in: Water Management, Environmental Economics and Planning, Reclamation, Biodiversity Monitoring and Conservation Management Programs. His experience and interest in sustainable industrial development has provided him with insight on developing practical solutions that seek a balance between economic realities and environmental health. Larry has been a member of the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society since its inception.



Samantha Morris-Yasinski – Secretary & Treasurer

Samantha is a wildlife enthusiast and works as a wildlife technician with Alberta Environment and Parks. In combination with previous wildlife positions, she has developed a strong familiarity with Species at Risk and currently works in wildlife management out of Spruce Grove. Sam holds a BSc. in Environmental Sciences, with a specialization in Conservation Biology, from the University of Alberta and is presently working to-

wards her MSc. in Environmental Practice through Royal Roads University. Outside of her work and studies she enjoys spending time exploring the outdoors by watching wildlife, hiking, camping, and traveling. Sam has volunteered in South Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia with vulnerable and endangered wildlife such as cheetahs, vultures, elephants, orangutans, macaques, sun bears, and Bali starlings.



Michelle Fournier - Director

Michelle works as a wildlife biologist for Bear Tracks Environmental Services out of Lethbridge. She received her BSc.(Hon) from the University of Alberta, and has worked a variety of wildlife contract positions in many different sectors of wildlife management. Michelle has worked in the field throughout Alberta, BC, and New Zealand; she is always seeking diverse ecological and wildlife management experience

that will add to and provide a cohesive background for her career in wildlife conservation. She is very interested in environmental communication and bridging the gap between research and public awareness. When she isn't hiking and birding for work, she is likely hiking and birding for fun, with her dog by her side as she explores the (new to her) areas in southern Alberta. As a Director for ACTWS for 2016-2017, she hopes to provide a fresh outlook on wildlife concerns and topics in Alberta, and help to engage ACTWS member involvement further.



Lisa Takats Priestly - Director

Lisa has been involved in wildlife research and monitoring for over 20 years. She completed a technical diploma in biological sciences at NAIT, a Bachelor of Science at the University of Alberta, and her Master's thesis was on the ecology of Barred Owls in the foothills of Alberta. She developed various monitoring programs for the Alberta Conservation Association and Alberta Environment and Parks, and [Guidelines for Nocturnal Owl Monitoring in North America](#) for the Beaverhill Bird Observatory.

As the Prairie Program Coordinator, for Bird Studies Canada, Lisa developed a national volunteer nocturnal owl survey and marsh monitoring program for the prairies. She served as the Executive Director of Beaverhill Bird Observatory for 10 years, coordinating the bird banding operations, education programs, bat and mammal monitoring, and the Alberta Nocturnal Owl Survey there. She and her husband Chuck own and operate STRIX Ecological Consulting who specialize in monitoring, inventory and assessment studies on birds, mammals, bats, and amphibians.



Joseph Litke - Director

Joseph is an owner, and managing director at Fiera Biological Consulting, where he has worked as a wildlife biologist providing research, monitoring, and management services throughout Alberta since 2003. He has been a Professional Biologist with the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (ASPB) since 2004. He has a college diploma in soil and water conservation and reclamation, and a bachelor degree in biology, specializing in ecology.

Joanna Burgar - Director

I am currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria, specializing in wildlife and restoration ecology. Previously, I lived and worked in Fort McMurray, Alberta as an area Wildlife Biologist with the Government of Alberta, Lower Athabasca Region. I was fortunate to experience the landscape first hand, conducting moose, caribou and bat surveys, and the inner workings of government, by sitting on caribou committees, managing moose populations and liaising with trappers. I have been inspired and motivated to conserve wildlife in Alberta's beautiful boreal ever since. Despite moving provinces, I am still very committed to wildlife conservation in Alberta; I continue to be involved with the Alberta Bat Action Team and my academic research is focused in northern Alberta, including regular visits to the field.

Nicholas Parayko

Born and raised in St. Albert, Alberta, Nick completed his B.Sc. in Ecology in 2014 from the University of Alberta. He is back at the UofA researching the effects of energy infrastructure on ferruginous hawks for his M.Sc. Between degrees, he took a year off, splitting his time working in environmental consulting and for the Government of Alberta. When not busy working on his thesis, Nick spends as much time outside as possible, where he enjoys hiking, birding, and (mainly) wildlife photography. Nick joined the ACTWS executive in 2016 as the Student Director, as he continues to expand the Chapters' network via connections with TWS student chapters in

Alberta and British Columbia.

Delinda Dee Ryerson – Executive Director

Delinda has a B.Sc. from University of Alberta and more than two decades of experience in fisheries and wildlife-related research and management in Alberta. Always driven by her love of wild places, wild critters, and her aspirations to contribute to the conservation of them, Dee is a fervent advocate of scientifically-informed land and wildlife management.

Somewhat gregarious, Dee recognizes the importance of effective communication and engagement with the public relating to conservation and management of wildlife. She is honoured to be serving as the Executive Director of such a prominent and professional organization in wildlife stewardship, comprised of respected scientists and conservationists.

Margo Pybus – Historian

Dr. Margo Pybus spent the better part of a life-time learning from wildlife. She was schooled early in life among the fields, forests, and marshes of southern Ontario and later in the prairie, foothill, mountain, parkland, and boreal landscapes of Alberta and beyond.

Margo received a B.Sc. in Fish and Wildlife Biology and M.Sc. in Wildlife Parasitology, both from the University of Guelph. She holds a PhD in Wildlife Parasitology from the University of Alberta and is currently an adjunct professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, UofA. Margo is on staff with Alberta Fish and Wildlife as the first Provincial Wildlife Disease Specialist. She leads high profile provincial wildlife disease surveillance and management programs, including chronic wasting disease, West Nile virus, avian influenza, and rabies.

Alberta TWS member since the Chapter founding in 1989. Former Chapter newsletter editor, President, student mentor, Dedicated Service and Rowan Distinguished Service award recipient, and ongoing reference/repository for many things chapter-related.

Matthew Pyper – Conservation Affairs Committee Chair

Matthew is an Ecologist and Science Communicator who works to connect knowledge to practice in the fields of forestry, conservation biology and land restoration. He has been involved in the production of over 75 knowledge exchange publications. He was the lead author on guidance related to linear restoration in woodland caribou habitat, and is a co-author of the Draft Provincial Restoration and Establishment Framework being prepared for the Government of Alberta. Matthew is currently the Chair of the ACTWS Conservation Committee and believes the ACTWS plays a critical role in lending a science-based voice to key conservation challenges in Alberta.

Alina Fisher – Education and Information Committee Chair

Born in Romania, Alina's early childhood memories revolve around feeding wildlife, exploring forests & beaches, and bringing home any wild animal she could find. This included snakes, frogs, mice, birds, & polecats - much to her mother's chagrin. Her love of the natural world led Alina to study population and community ecology in diverse ecosystems including: yucca-yucca moth pollination system, mycorrhizal fungi associated with Jack Pine, the impact of escaped farmed Atlantic Salmon in Pacific coastal streams, and species recovery efforts of the Western Bluebird to Vancouver Island.

As a science communicator, the prevalence of pseudo-science and fake science on social media led Alina to undertake a Master's degree in Communications, to study the barriers to effective science communication. Alina expects to complete her research by mid-2017.

Kristie Derkson – Education and Information and Conservation Affairs Committee Member

Kristie works as a wildlife biologist manager in Edmonton and manages the ACTWS Facebook page and represents the Conservation Committee on the ALPAC Land Advisory Group. She has been involved in The Wildlife Society since her days in university and the education and connections she's received from it have been a solid foundation for her career. In her off days she enjoys bird-watching, bicycling, and spending time with her son who is both the source of her passion for conservation and a constant supply of cheesy jokes.

Layla Neufeld – Education and Information Committee Member and Webmaster

Layla is a caribou biologist with Parks Canada in Jasper National Park, and has been the ACTWS webmaster since 2007. Layla grew up in rural Alberta adjacent to Alberta's green zone (without a lot of neighbours, but with a lot of sticks, rocks, and wildlife). She received her B.Sc. and M.Sc. at the University of Alberta, and is a former president of the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Layla's M.Sc. thesis examined dynamics of Little Smoky caribou and wolves in west-central Alberta. Her work with Parks Canada takes her to picturesque locations throughout Canada's National Parks and she's a key member of the caribou research, monitoring, and recovery team in the Canadian Rockies National Parks. Layla enjoys hiking, biking, music, travel, biology, and loves the outdoors; she is looking forward to re-exploring favourite places with her two young children in coming years.

Lisa Wilkinson – Education and Information Committee Member and Co-Editor of the Wildlifer

Lisa is a Species at Risk Biologist and Provincial Bat Specialist with Alberta Environment and Parks, and has been involved with the ACTWS in a variety of capacities for about 15 years. She believes that sharing our passion for nature with the public is the first step towards engendering stewardship. Lisa lives with her family in Edson, where she is near the mountains and able to enjoy camping, hiking, climbing, canoeing, and cross-country skiing;

Dave Hobson – Education and Information Committee Member and Co-Editor of the Wildlifer

Dave works as a Regional Biologist for the Alberta Government out of Edson. He has a Forest Technology Diploma from NAIT, a BSc in Zoology from the U of A and a BEd, also from the U of A. He has had a varied career in both Government and with Consulting Companies working on everything from wildlife disease management, furbearers, bats, ungulates and grizzly bears to fisheries. Presently, his duties involve industrial application reviews, ungulate surveys and hunting management. In his free time he likes to commune with the spirits of Bill Mason and Sigurd Olson.



Glynnis Hood – Awards Committee Chair

Dr. Glynnis Hood is a Professor of Environmental Science at the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus in Camrose, AB. Her research examines aquatic ecology and human-wildlife conflicts as they relate to habitat availability and wildlife management. Current research projects examine the influence of beaver-created landscapes on biodiversity, the role of adaptive management in reducing human-wildlife conflicts, and the ability of wetlands to withstand repeated droughts. She is the author of The Beaver Manifesto.



ACTWS sends a HUGE thank you to Sponsors!



Canadian Section Representative's Report

Art Rodgers, Ontario Ministry
of Natural Resources

Canadian Section Update

The mid-year TWS Council meeting was held in Spokane, Washington, 5-6 March 2017, in conjunction with the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. Here is a brief summary of some of the highlights and outcomes;

The Executive Board of the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society approved the petition to establish a student chapter (interim status) of The Wildlife Society at University of British Columbia Okanagan. TWS Council approved formation of the student chapter for interim status effective December 21, 2016.

Thanks to a highly collaborative and successful effort between Wildlife Programs Coordinator Mariah Simmons and Council over the past few months, just seven organization units (six student chapters and one working group) received one-year dissolution letters. With the rebuilding of the BC and Ontario Chapters, all Canadian subunits are in compliance.

Council approved this year's recipients for the Group Achievement Award and TWS Fellows at the March Council Meeting. It gives me great pleasure to tell you that 2 Canadians will be recipients of the Fellows Award at the Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, NM. Congratulations to both Canadian nominees and many thanks to those who made the time to nominate these deserving people, and especially to Evie Merrill who has been a driving force behind the CSTWS Awards Committee these past 2 years.

Shane Mahoney updated Council on the Canadian Wildlife Congress to be held in Kananaskis, Alberta, November 28-December 1, 2017. Shane noted that Congress coordinators and facilitators have been identified, sponsorship categories developed, and conference themes provided. Interest in Canada is very high, and several topics will be of relevance to TWS; the intent is to provide a broad North American perspective. Funding for conservation in Canada remains a top priority. The extent of TWS Canadian Section involvement still needs to be determined.

John Organ reported that the Universidad Andrés Bello in Chile would be unable to co-host the next International Wildlife Management Congress. He suggested this opens the possibility for TWS to consider other options, including the possibility of holding the next event in Canada as part of the broader Canadian initiative.

The application period for the 2017 Leadership Institute closed with 43 applications. Coordinator Laura Bies is working with the LI Committee to review applications and determine this year's cohort. She is also finalizing this year's LI curriculum and assignments. Best of luck to our Canadian applicants!

The Executive Director Search Committee met immediately prior to the March Council meeting to interview finalists for the Executive Director position. Thirty-one applications were received from individuals with a wide spectrum of backgrounds and talents. Subsequently, TWS Council named Ed Thompson as its new Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer. Ed is currently the Society's Chief Operating Officer, with more than 20 years of experience running membership organizations, including three years at TWS. Ed begins his new duties July 1.

CEO Williams reported at the March Council meeting on TWS finances from July 2016 through the month of January 2017. For 2016-2017 fiscal year, the approved budget included a surplus, part of which was targeted by Council to cover expenses associated with free journal subscriptions for TWS members. As of January, operational income was running ahead of the projected surplus for 2016-2017.

CEO Williams presented a budget for 2017-2018 that was discussed, refined and then approved by Council. The budget includes a projected surplus that depends on final agreement about salary costs and benefits for the new Executive Director starting July 1. Specific items that may be covered if the projected surplus is higher than expected include resources for enhanced activity in Canada.

Chief Operating Officer Ed Thompson reported that, as of the end of January, TWS membership had increased by 878 members (+10.1%). Out of that total, 411 are 6-month free memberships through the Give Back Program that launched in December; since then, 2,592 members have renewed online and 592 (23%) have nominated an individual for a free six-month membership. The program appears to be working but there is room for greater participation.

The Publications Committee sought Council approval for Merav Ben-David as editor-in-chief of Wildlife Monographs. Council approved her appointment and also approved another two years for Paul Krausman as editor-in-chief of JWM.

The 2017 Annual Conference planning is advancing according to the schedule. The Call for Proposals for the conference in Albuquerque closed on March 10 and the Education and Training Committee is in full swing reviewing 55 proposals (29 symposia, 22 workshops, four panel discussions). It appears there may be as many as 14 concurrent sessions.

The TWS online member directory is now up and running, and appears to be functioning very well, with monitoring of any issues that may arise.

Additional details will be provided on Council-approved actions in the *eWildlifer* and full minutes of the mid-year TWS Council meeting will be posted on the TWS website.

Following up on the Canadian initiative that I first reported to you after the conference in Raleigh last fall and further communications with the meeting participants and discussions by Council in Spokane, Executive Director Ken Williams gave a presentation and participated in a conference call with Rick Baydack, Erin McCance, Art Rodgers, and Dee Patriquin with the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee, at the beginning of April. The intent was to update the Directors on recent developments in TWS and the Canadian Section, and more specifically, the benefits to their agencies of TWS membership. It appears to have been well received and we are hoping to see greater participation by provincial, territorial and federal wildlife biologists in the coming months.

Arrangements for the Canadian Section AGM, to be held in conjunction with the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution meeting in Victoria, British Columbia, May 7-11, 2017, are well underway and I hope you will be there. It's also time to make plans to attend the 24th Annual TWS Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 23-27, 2017.

Sadly, I must end by reporting that TWS suffered a huge loss with the passing of Jane Jorgenson in March. Jane was TWS's finance and office manager for over 30 years. She had very broad responsibilities in the Society, including bookkeeping, financial tracking and reporting, human resources, and contract administration, in addition to serving as the Society's institutional memory. Most of you will never have heard of her and few of you may have had the pleasure of meeting her but you all benefitted from her extreme dedication to TWS. As stated by Executive Director Ken Williams "The Society is where it is because of Jane." Words will never be enough to honour her memory but Thank You Jane.



Photo by Dave Hobson

Conservation Committee Update



Committee Members

- Matthew Pyper
(Chair)
- Mark Boyce
- Kristie Derkson
- Lorne Fitch
- Larry Roy
- Ken Crutchfield
- Kirby Smith

Conservation Committee 2017 – Taking the ACTWS pulse

Keep up the good work. The Conservation Committee often receives this type of feedback, and it was recently reaffirmed at the ACTWS Annual General Meeting in Lac La Biche. Indeed, ACTWS members have been active on a range of committees and have helped lend an ACTWS voice to important conservation matters in the province. As we transition to a new Chair and we position ourselves for continued influence in 2017, we are taking the pulse of the membership and we want to hear from you. Specifically, we want to hear about pressing conservation matters that you think warrant the attention of the committee.

Certainly, there is no shortage of conservation matters we could focus our efforts on in 2017-2018. Our goal is to inventory a range of topics and refine this list into items on which we believe we should act. The following topics are currently on our radar and will be discussed at an upcoming planning and prioritization discussion:

There are several dialogue opportunities being held across the province to discuss forest management (specifically, Ecosystem-Based Management). Individual members are encouraged to participate and the Conservation Committee is considering additional engagement.

With significant advances being made on the caribou habitat restoration file, it seems timely to encourage the Government of Alberta to continue this good work and consider the merits of a regional access plan for OHV users to protect restored areas.

Members have informed us that the federal ban on using strychnine for pest control was recently lifted. This has potential implications for Species At Risk which we are exploring further.

Continuing discussions about the Castle Wilderness area and broader discussions about striking a balance between conservation interests and OHV use throughout the public lands in Alberta.

But surely the list is not complete. We want to know, what is important to you? Are you aware of pressing conservation topics that would merit consideration by our committee? If so, please be sure to forward them for our consideration. Suggestions can be sent to the Conservation Committee Chair, Matthew Pyper:

matthew@fuseconsulting.ca.

Response to letter re: Castle Wildland Provincial Park



84395

Mr. Laurence Roy, President
Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Box 4990
Edmonton AB T6E 5G8

Dear Mr. Roy:

On behalf of Environment and Parks, thank you for your comments on the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park Draft Management Plan. We appreciate your time in sharing your insights.

Over the last few weeks, we have heard from thousands of Albertans who love to camp, fish, hunt and hike with their families in southwest Alberta. The Castle Wildland and Provincial Parks were created so Albertans can have a place to do the things they love for generations to come.

We have updated the draft parks management plan to reflect comments we have heard so far. Public consultation was extended an additional month until April 19th to provide extra time to examine the new draft plan.

The revised plan includes the following considerations:

- Alberta hunters will be permitted to recover game through limited use of trail networks during hunting season.
- Alberta ranchers will see grazing permits managed by rangelands staff. The province will continue to work with permit holders on a formalized agreement.
- Alberta anglers will see Alberta's fish populations protected through fish recovery strategies, including the threatened Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout.
- Albertans with mobility issues, including the elderly, will be given special consideration to ensure park access is inclusive.

When it is finalized, the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park Management Plan will help protect of our valuable natural and cultural resources. It will provide the foundation for long term economic benefits to the people of Alberta through increased tourism. To that end, we have committed to an investment of more than \$20 million over the next four years to the Castle Parks.

In addition to an updated draft management plan, the Government of Alberta recently initiated a series of targeted public information sessions and stakeholder meetings that began March 8 to kick off the Southern Alberta Recreation Management Planning Process. Please watch our website and local media over the next few weeks to see how you can engage.

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Enforcement and education will be a critical part of a finalized Castle Parks Management Plan and the Southern Alberta Recreation Management Planning Process. Over the last decade, a lack of planning and investment in parks infrastructure and enforcement has created serious issues on public land costing Albertans millions of dollars each year. Last year, Conservation Officers and Fish and Wildlife Officers made more than 77,000 public contacts. This resulted in nearly 7,000 infractions – the majority of which relate to irresponsible use of public land, illegal camping activities and off highway vehicles. We have increased enforcement activities and will continue to make this a priority.

If you have not done so already, I encourage you to participate further in the consultation by completing the online survey at https://talkaep.alberta.ca/CastleManagementPlan/survey_tools/castle-provincial-park-and-castle-wildland-provincial-park-management-plan-survey.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts on this exciting initiative.

Sincerely,



Shannon Phillips
Minister



Photo by Dave Hobson

Dave Hobson

A biologist of the dark side.



Under the Boreal Forest

There are those biologists who prefer to do their work and enjoy their life in the clear light of the sun. Then there are those few that have chosen the dark side. And when I say the dark side, I mean the deep dark side, where even the moon and stars cannot be seen. I confess I am one of them.

This last February, along with 2 researchers with the Alberta Batcavers organization, Greg Horne and Dave Critchley and a Conservation Officer from Alberta Parks, George Semeniuk and with funding from The Wildlife Conservation Society Canada and Alberta Environment and Parks, I flew into a small creek in north central Alberta, about an hour's flight east of High Level. From an Archeologist, I had learned of a cave here in the karst landscape of northern Alberta and the possibility of an undiscovered bat hibernaculum far from the caves of the Rockies where almost all other known Alberta bat hibernacula are. The only other known boreal bat hibernaculum in Alberta is within Wood Buffalo National Park and is a cold cave with only a few bats hibernating.

From the air, we located what appeared to be the cave entrance and landed. A narrow, ice frosted entrance led into the cave. The cave required a belly crawl to squeeze into and then a duck walk to move around inside under the low ceiling. The smell of sulphur emanated from a shallow pool that covered the floor of about half the cave. Greg Horne recognised this as a rare type of cave created by a weak sulphuric acid solution that had eaten through the limestone formation to form the cave. Greg and Dave, with dry suits, left George and I behind on dry land and entered the pool to explore further. With a lower ceiling, at times only their faces were above the weak sulphuric acid pool and the fumes left their eyes and noses irritated.

But we found bats. Two hundred and thirteen were counted. From the looks of it, they were *Myotis lucifugus* or little brown bats. We collected guano to confirm the species identification. As well, we deployed Roostloggers, acoustic recorders, to record vocalizations when the bats exited the cave in the spring and temperature/humidity loggers to collect data over the next year.

It was the cave temperature that was the most interesting thing about this cave. In all the other known cave hibernacula in Alberta, the temperature hovers around +2 to +4°C year round. Cave temperatures tend to reflect the annual average ambient temperature of the surrounding climate. Spot checks in this cave, however, showed temperatures of about +10°C. Well above expected temperatures. I suspect this is due to the sulphur springs in the cave which, although not hot springs, is probably warmer than a standard spring would be.

Research on the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, the causative agent of white-nose syndrome, had demonstrated that the fungus grows best in temperatures around +10°C and grows more slowly in lower temperatures. This could mean that the bats in this cave might be more susceptible to the ravages of white-nose than other cave bats in Alberta. At this point in time, we are unsure of what effects white-nose will have on bats hibernating in the cold temperatures of a normal Alberta cave.

Meanwhile, a rumour of another boreal cave east of Fort M^{ac}Murray has surfaced and started singing its siren song to biologists of the dark side, calling us into its depths.



Greg Horne in the pool of sulphuric acid.

Photo by Dave Critchley



Greg Horne and Dave Critchley deploying a Roostlogger.

Bats in the boreal cave.



Greg Horne exiting the cave.

Photos by Dave Hobson

ACTWS 2017 Conference Award Winners

ACTWS Technical Publication Award: Robin Steenweg, Mark Hebblewhite, Roland Kays, Jorge Ahumada, Jason T Fisher, Cole Burton, Susan E Townsend, Chris Carbone, J Marcus Rowcliffe, Jesse Whittington, Jedediah Brodie, J Andrew Royle, Adam Switalski, Anthony P Clevenger, Nicole Heim, and Lindsey N Rich. Scaling-up camera traps: monitoring the planet's biodiversity with networks of remote sensors.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/fee.1448/full>

ACTWS Popular Publication Award: Lorne Fitch. Beaver: Our watershed partner

<http://cowsandfish.org/publications/documents/BeaverOurWatershedPartnerWEB.pdf>

ACTWS Larry Norman Comin Photo Award: Connor Charchuk. Photo: White-breasted nuthatch

ACTWS Outreach Award: Gordon Court

ACTWS Kristina Norstrom Dedicated Service Award: Curtis Stambaugh

ACTWS William Rowan Distinguished Service Award: Michael Sullivan

ACTWS Special Recognition Service Award: Evie Merrill and Mark Boyce

Student Award Winners

Student presentation

1st - Connor Charchuk \$250

2nd - Kara MacAuley \$150

3rd - Julia Shonfield \$100

Student grad poster

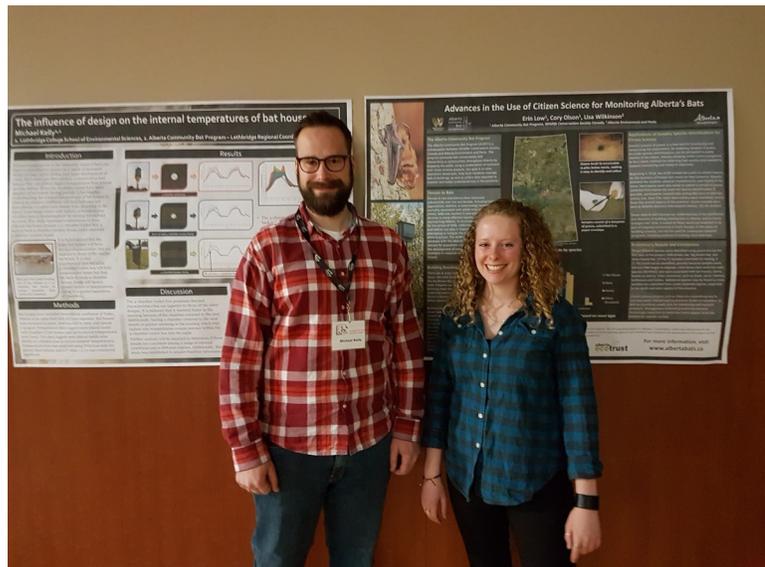
1st - Sean O'Donovan \$250

2nd - TJ Gooliaf \$150

3rd - Gillian Fraser \$100

Undergrad poster

1st - Michael Kelly \$250



Michael Kelly and Erin Low

Award Winners

Nomination
provided
by Brad Stelfox
and Lorne
Fitch

William Rowan Award—Dr. Michael Sullivan

The William Rowan Distinguished Service Award recognizes those whose career achievements in the arena of wildlife biology are stellar across a broad suite of performance metrics. These include the highest standards of research, teaching, and the application of wildlife management principles to wildlife management practices. In all respects, the career of Dr. Mike Sullivan embodies these high standards. Mike's contributions to the profession of wildlife biology in Alberta has been of highest quality, has extended across 4 decades, and has improved the management of Alberta natural resources in a profound manner.

To many in Alberta, Mike is known as a superb fisheries biologist and research scientist. But that is to grossly mis-classify him. Mike is first and foremost an ecologist, whose interests and contributions are as wide as the discipline itself. He is equally comfortable discussing the gastro-intestinal tract of moose, the meta-population dynamics of a struggling cutthroat trout population, the taxonomy of blue grouse, predator/prey dynamics of caribou and wolves, and cumulative effects of overlapping land uses in the North Saskatchewan River basin. As a trained systems dynamist, Mike is comfortable and adept at seeing Alberta for what it is, a bio-system with innumerable moving and interacting components. Over his lengthy career, Mike has been continuously intrigued by the social, economic, and environmental pieces that collectively define Alberta. He revels in tackling "system" problems that confront resource management in Alberta.



William Rowan Award, continued....

For Mike Sullivan, research has always been a fascinating means to an end, and that end is applied resource management that can improve the sustainability of Alberta's natural resources. This applied professional goal has led Mike to devote boundless energy on improving fish and wildlife management policies and regulations. To ensure that these learnings have a meaningful legacy, Mike has worked hard to convey knowledge and scientific approaches to the next generation of Alberta's resource managers. These Sullivan protégées are now well embedded in Alberta resource agencies, in consultancies, in environmental groups, and in academia. An enduring commitment to resource management has been to mentor younger biologists. This recognizes a fundamental truth, that successional planning is key to successful advancement of fish and wildlife research, of resource management and of maintenance (and restoration) of landscape integrity.

During his distinguished career, Dr. Sullivan has studied fish and wildlife species across all natural regions of Alberta, ranging from prairies to parklands and alpine to boreal deltas. These studies have led to innumerable articles, reports, public and professional presentations, peer reviewed articles, and book chapters. In the arena of fish management, Mike is a global authority – a recognition that falls to those few whose insight, effort, publications, and accomplishments cause a generational impact.

The Rowan Distinguished Service Award was created to recognize special people who have made special contributions to the profession of wildlife and fish management in Alberta. Dr. Michael Sullivan, and his career accomplishment, deserve such recognition.

Larry Norman Comin

Photo Award Winner:

Connor Charchuk

White-breasted nuthatch



Award Winners

Nomination by
Jason Fisher
and Margo Py-
bus

Kristina Nordstrom Dedicated Service Award— Curtis Stambaugh

Curtis works as a wildlife biologist for Alberta Fish and Wildlife in Whitecourt. Curtis holds a diploma from Lakeland College, and a B.Sc. and M.Sc. from the University of Alberta. Curtis has served as Secretary-Treasurer (ST) since 2012. As we all know, the ST is the real workhorse of the Society; he is responsible for budgeting, accounting, banking, meeting minutes, communication with the membership, the membership portal, conference registration, conference budgeting. In addition to all of that, Curtis has always enthusiastically waved the ACTWS flag high and proud for all to see.



The work he has invested in this Chapter over the last several years has been – without hyperbole – phenomenal. I fear we shall not see his like again, as he steps down this year. I can think of no one more fitting to receive the *Dedicated Services Award* this year than Curtis, as a token of our respect, and our gratitude.

Mystery Photo

Name the species.



Photo by Dave Hobson

Special Recognition Service Award—Evie Merrill and Mark Boyce



Our Chapter honored Evie Merrill and Mark Boyce with a Special Recognition Award in March at our Annual Conference. One could write a book of accomplishments to the fields of conservation and wildlife biology for this amazing Alberta-Canadian couple. Evie and Mark came to Canada and the University of Alberta in September 1999 and their positive impacts since have been mind boggling to say the least. As Elston wrote in his presentation at our conference, Evie and Mark are “Two people who are pretty impressive separately, but together they’re a true force to be reckoned with, and that takes a special kind of magic”. They both have extensive research portfolios that include mentoring many of our brightest graduate students and PDFs. Their commitments to ACTWS, formation and success of the Canadian Section TWS, and the parent TWS (with some awards thrown in) include: ACTWS (President-both; Rowan Award-both; Kristina Nordstrom Award-Evie, plus many many other contributions including Mark’s leadership and getting our first student chapter off the ground); CSTWS (President-both plus many other contributions); and TWS (J. Wildl. Manage. Editor in Chief-both; Fellows-both plus many other contributions). In summary let us all do our best to never let this true power couple and provincial treasures retire.

Outreach Award—Gord Court

Nomination by Lisa Wilkinson

The Outreach Award was created in 2014 to recognize people who excel in their contributions to public outreach. Previous award winners include Lorne Fitch, Michael Sullivan and John Acorn.

Gord is a species at risk biologist with AEP, and has long been recognized for his expertise in raptor biology. Gord has actively supported conservation outreach for many years. He is tireless in giving talks and attending public events, some of which he does through his job, but the majority are done on his own time on weekends and evenings. While recognized as a distinguished speaker at major conservation events, Gord will readily visit schools and small town events, often travelling for several hours to an event. For example, he has attended the Edson Bioblitz three times, given a talk to a naturalist group in Hinton, and attended an event at a Red Deer nature centre. He likely gives dozens of talks a year.

Gord keeps a barred owl and peregrine falcon (they cannot be returned to the wild) for education purposes, and his birds are usually present at outreach events. The popularity of these birds has put Gord in high demand, and he does his best to attend every event to which he is invited. I am continually amazed at how Gord manages to spend so much time on outreach with unflagging enthusiasm, and has been doing so for many years. He is excellent with the public (kids and adults), engaging people in conversation and inviting questions.

Gord is an excellent wildlife ambassador – he is passionate, affable, approachable and engaging. I admire his commitment to wildlife and how much time he spends on outreach. Gord is modest about his accomplishments and contribution to outreach, which is why some biologists are not familiar with his outreach efforts. He simply does his best to promote wildlife conservation, and what a great job he does!

At past ACTWS meetings we have discussed the need for wildlife biologists to communicate their knowledge and passion for wildlife conservation to the public. There are many wildlife professionals who engage in outreach, and Gord is one of the best. He exemplifies what this Outreach Award represents.



Upcoming Events

The Wildlife Society

The 24th Annual Conference will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on September 23-27, 2017.

<http://wildlife.org/learn/conferences-2/>

The 66th WDA Annual International Conference

Chiapas, Mexico. July 23-28, 2017

<http://www.kalaankab.org/>

<http://www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/CONFERENCES/UpcomingInternationalConference.aspx>

25th International Conference on Bear Research & Management

November 12-17, 2017
Quito, Ecuador

<http://www.bearbiology.com/index.php?id=conf01>

23rd Eastern Black Bear Workshop

April 24-27, 2017
Ligonier, PA

<http://www.bearbiology.com/index.php?id=conf01>

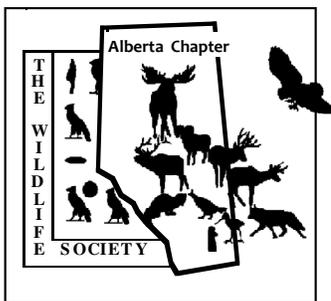
51st North American Moose Conference/Workshop

Ingonish [Cape Breton], Nova Scotia, Canada, 28 August to 01 September 2017

<http://alcesjournal.org/index.php/alces/announcement/view/20>



Photo by Dave Hobson



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Photo by Dave Hobson



Don't forget we are also
on Facebook

Footnotes from the Editor



If you have wildlife and trail camera photos that you would like to share please send them to Lisa or Dave for inclusion in the newsletter.

Like I'm running out of my photos now!! It's somebody else's turn to show photos.

Mystery photo:

Dolichovespula maculata
Bald-faced Wasp

Hey...insects are wildlife also!