

## ALBERTA FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION 2017 RESOLUTIONS

*Below are the responses, provided by Alberta Environment and Parks, to the Resolutions submitted by the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA). The Resolution Briefs (in italics) have been added to their responses by AFGA for additional information.*

*Following these, are the responses provided by the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) to those Resolutions submitted to the ACA by AFGA.*

### **GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-1-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop a control program that would reduce the number of Double Crested Cormorants.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*Double Crested Cormorants have a major impact on fish availability in many Alberta lakes. The large numbers of cormorants reduce the amount of fish available to anglers, as they consume up to two pounds of fish daily. Cormorant numbers are significant on many Alberta lakes and could be reduced.*

*A 10-year cormorant control program in Lac La Biche reduced the population from over 16,000 to 2,500. Similar programs should be developed in other areas. As well Wildlife Damage Permits could be issued to reduce the cormorant numbers.*

*Cormorant control efforts are occurring in other provinces and northern states and in so doing allowing more fish for human consumers.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Cormorants are an indigenous species that have always been part of the aquatic ecosystem in Alberta. During the post-war era, cormorants nearly disappeared from Alberta until dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) was banned. Cormorant numbers have since recovered though not likely to historic levels.

In North America, many people correlate cormorant recovery with the collapses of fisheries. As a result, some jurisdictions have instituted cormorant culls in an attempt to recover fisheries. However, the majority of evidence suggests that the collapse of fisheries is human-related, cormorants subsequently increase in response to collapsed populations of predator fish (for example, walleye and pike) and that cormorant culling is generally not an effective tool for recovering fisheries in comparison to reducing the harvest of sport fish. A provincial cormorant control program is not being considered at this time; however, it may be identified as a recommended action in specific situations.

The input of the Alberta Fish and Game Association in fisheries management is valued. Nonetheless, consultation with a broader range of stakeholders will be required in order to assess

and implement options for changes to fisheries management objectives, angling regulations and other management actions.

### **GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-2-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop regulations that prohibit transportation of all boats, from high risk, invasive species jurisdictions, being brought across Alberta borders without a certificate of disinfection.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*The large number of boats being brought into Alberta from waters that have unwanted invasive species (i.e. zebra mussels) pose a high risk that would likely lead to such harmful aquatic life inhabiting Alberta's waters. By prohibiting all boat entry without a certificate of disinfection, the risk would be minimized.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Because many provinces and states do not conduct watercraft inspections or provide watercraft decontaminations (particularly in high risk jurisdictions), it is not feasible to require watercraft from these jurisdictions to arrive in Alberta with a certificate of disinfection. For this reason, Alberta has been taking efforts to inspect all boats entering the province, and to mitigate the risk of introducing aquatic invasive species by performing inspections of all watercraft, and decontaminations when necessary. As monitoring efforts across jurisdictions vary so much, and because these invasive mussels can be difficult to detect, Alberta is considering all boats that have been used out of province to be a high risk moving forward.

Aquatic invasive species pose one of the greatest threats to Alberta's freshwater resources. Impacts from harmful species such as zebra and quagga mussels range from outcompeting native species and removing vital nutrients, to negatively impacting the economy, decreasing property values, and changing aquatic communities including native fisheries important to Albertans.

#### **Additional Information:**

The Ministry of Environment and Parks has put in place many measures to address threats to Alberta's freshwater resources by aquatic invasive species, through the Aquatic Invasive Species Program. Integral to the program are key partnerships and prevention efforts, including:

- Updates to the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* to provide for a more robust Aquatic Invasive Species Program, including mandatory watercraft inspections, mandatory reporting of detected aquatic invasive species, and the 'Pull the Plug' rule.
- Thirteen mandatory watercraft inspections province wide.
- Alberta has augmented monitoring and inspection efforts along the southern border, as well as working closely with Canadian Border Services Agency.
- Working with the new 'Inter-Provincial-Territorial Aquatic Invasive Species Agreement' and associated Working Group.
- Educational campaigns – 'Clean Drain Dry' (targeting boaters and anglers) and 'Don't Let it Loose' (targeting aquarium and horticulture hobbyists and industry, anglers and intentional release).

- The monitoring of over 70 waterbodies for the presence of invasive mussels (with all results negative to date).

It is currently mandatory for all watercraft to stop at watercraft inspection stations. Inspection stations inspect the watercraft, trailer and equipment for invasive species, and provide opportunities for face-to-face education. Also, three trained ‘conservation canines’ support the inspection stations. In 2016, more than 21,000 watercraft were inspected. Seventeen were found to have invasive mussels present; these watercraft were quarantined and disinfected.

#### **GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-4-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta establish an annual check-off of \$1.00, from existing fees on each wildlife certificate and angling license, payable to the Alberta Fish and Game Association.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*The AFGA believes that our organization, established in 1908, is unique in representing a large number of both hunters and anglers throughout the Province. With over 100 clubs and 6 zones spread across Alberta the AFGA truly represents grassroots citizens throughout the Province. The provincial, zone, and club executives and AFGA members represent the concerns and interests of these Albertans in numerous government, industry, and varied agency task groups, committees, and requests. The AFGA provides this unique service for all Albertans.*

*AFGA manages large numbers of lands that have been acquired for fish and wildlife conservation and does conduct some habitat programs and projects. Additionally, our role of advocacy is of utmost importance to all Albertans in securing these natural resources in the future.*

*We believe our organization is unique in Alberta in delivering such a necessary role for Albertans. With 25,000 members across all parts of Alberta, we represent both fish and wildlife interests and thus are unique. Additionally, as Alberta’s representative to the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF), the AFGA serves the Province in national issues and interests associated with hunting, angling and conservation. These are unique contributions to the long-term natural resource conservation interests of Albertans.*

*AFGA believe that there are numerous precedents for establishing such a financial plan and our proposal describes some of those other check-off agreements or grants. Organizations such as the Alberta Professional Outfitters Association, the previous Commercial Fisherman’s Association and the Alberta Trapper’s Association receive annual funds from either license fees or grants. We believe our Association should also receive such consideration.*

*AFGA have proposed a \$1.00 contribution to the AFGA from each wildlife certificate and each angling license on an annual basis. Such a fee could certainly be taken from the existing fees and no increases to license fees would be required.*

**RESPONSE:**

In 2016, over \$14.4 million in license revenue was collected and distributed to the Alberta Conservation Association in the form of licence levy fees. The Alberta Conservation Association employs an annual grant application program designed to allocate licence levy revenue to support a variety of projects involving community education, research and biodiversity. Many of Alberta Fish and Game Association's valuable programs and projects have utilized this opportunity to leverage licence levy dollars. Alberta Fish and Game Association clubs are encouraged to continue to participate in this valuable program and to continue to leverage licence levy revenue to deliver their programs.

**Additional Information:**

In recognition of the Alberta Fish and Game Association's longstanding and important role regarding the programs that the Alberta Conservation Association delivers as a delegated administrative organization, the Alberta Fish and Game Association strategically and intentionally holds a Director position as a member agency on the Alberta Conservation Association's governance board. This inclusion of the Alberta Fish and Game Association is intended to ensure that the Alberta Fish and Game Association's membership's priorities are represented regarding Alberta Conservation Association's program delivery and ultimately decisions affecting expenditure of annual licence levy revenue.

**GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-6-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta maintain the practice of legal spear and atlatl hunting in the Province of Alberta.

***BRIEF:***

*These forms of hunting have been used traditionally by the native population in the Province of Alberta for hundreds of years.*

**RESPONSE:**

Currently, the *Wildlife Act* (and Regulation) identifies items prohibited for hunting big game in Alberta. As a component of the Wildlife Regulation review which was undertaken in 2014, Albertans were consulted on developing a list of permitted weapons for the hunting of big game in Alberta. The majority of respondents did not support the use of spears and atlatl for hunting big game.

In the spring of 2016, a video was posted on YouTube of a hunter legally harvesting a black bear in Alberta using a spear. Alberta environment and Parks received a substantial number of comments regarding the use of spear for hunting in Alberta.

As a result of stakeholder input obtained during the Wildlife Regulation review and from the negative public reaction to the YouTube video which was posted, Alberta Environment and Parks explored two options; a) creating a permitted weapons list, and b) developing a regulation specific to the prohibition of spear hunting. At this time, no decision has been reached on

whether to adopt either of the two previously outlined options or to maintain the status quo of listing items prohibited for hunting big game in Alberta.

**GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-7-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association support all legal forms of hunting outlined in the most current hunting regulations booklet.

***BRIEF:***

*Some types of hunting may not be what each of us would choose to participate in. This does not and should not preclude us from supporting all other legal means.*

**RESPONSE:**

See the response to resolution G-6-2017.

**GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-8-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association support all legal forms of fishing outlined in the most current fishing regulations booklet.

***BRIEF:***

*Some types of angling may not be what each of us would choose to participate in. This does not and should not preclude us from supporting all other legal means.*

**RESPONSE:**

This is acknowledged. Alberta is not undertaking a review of the legal forms of fishing as outlined in Alberta's Guide to Sportfishing Regulations.

**FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-1-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop and implement a plan endorsed by the public that increases the consumptive and/or recreational use of Alberta's underutilized fish resources.

***BRIEF:***

*Some of Alberta's fish resources are currently underutilized and with reduced or changing economic conditions in Alberta, diversification of the employment opportunities is needed to keep Alberta children working at home. There are a number of waters and fish species that are currently not being used as food items. Developing a plan that protects existing users and especially the health of the fish resources could provide economic diversity and also increase the value and importance of fish resources and fish habitat to all Albertans.*

*By increasing the value and use of fish resources, it is expected that the protection of fish habitat will become more important to government and the general public.*

**RESPONSE:**

Alberta's fisheries resources experience a level of use which is much greater than elsewhere in Canada. Despite human population growth and limited productivity and availability of fish-bearing waters, Alberta's fisheries support an increasing number of anglers. Alberta does not limit the sale of angling licences generally or on specific waters, and consequently does not restrict the recreational use of this province's fishery resources. There are no plans to apply any such restrictions. The sale of angling licences has increased from roughly 200,000 in 2005 to about 300,000 in 2016, with corresponding increases in the per cent per capita sales of angling licences. Albertans catch more fish than in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The economic and social benefits of Alberta's fisheries are greater now than they have ever been.

Variations in level of use are primarily a consequence of accessibility and amenities, such as roads, campgrounds, and boat launches. Such variations contribute to the diversity of recreational experiences available to Albertans, which is desired. A plan to increase accessibility and amenities is not currently being considered; however, such activities may be planned by local and municipal governments.

Fish harvest is provided by healthy, resilient fish populations. Efforts have been underway for many years to increase opportunities to sustainably harvest fish. These efforts, where fully implemented, have resulted in dramatic successes. Widespread collapses of many walleye fisheries have been averted with the implementation of angling regulations to protect and recover depleted populations. Extirpated populations of walleye at Lac La Biche and Wabamun Lake are being restored through stocking efforts, combined with protective regulations. The unsustainable commercial gillnet fishery, which was the lowest priority for allocation of fish, was closed in August 2014. The fish formerly harvested by commercial nets are re-allocated to other, higher priority uses. The commercial fishery closure has already resulted in observed increases in pike and walleye populations.

By policy, the use of fish, including both consumptive and non-consumptive, is allocated by priority. Once conservation needs are met, the highest priority for the allocation of Alberta's fish is to persons with rights, such as First Nations peoples and Métis persons recognized as harvesters. This allocation supersedes the use of fish by individuals with privileges, such as recreational anglers. Therefore the harvest of fish caught by recreational fishers can be provided once conservation needs are met (fish population is not a high risk state) and the needs of Indigenous rights holders are also understood to be met.

Generally speaking, at this time, harvest opportunities for recreational fishers are limited by the status of fish populations. With the exception of lake trout, Alberta's native trout and Arctic grayling are considered at risk and are being protected by catch and release regulations. Recreational fisheries for these species remain open. Efforts focused on recovering populations of those species are underway, with particular focus on bull trout, Athabasca rainbow trout and Westslope cutthroat trout in watershed along the East Slopes. Harvest opportunities for non-native trout in flowing waters are present in many watersheds. With regards to walleye and pike, the general intent is to provide harvest opportunities for all users. As a result of the recoveries of walleye fisheries observed over the past 20 years, these opportunities are expected to increase. Pike populations are overall not as strong; however, more effective management is expedite to increase pike populations and with that, increased angler success and harvest opportunities.

Harvest of yellow perch, lake whitefish and burbot is, for the most part, widely available with little practical restriction. While they are an invasive species and their presence is not desired, the dramatic spread of Prussian carp in southern and central Alberta is also providing recreational fishing and harvest opportunity, and this is being exploited to an increasing degree.

Opportunities for anglers to provide input into the setting of management objectives, particularly for many walleye and pike fisheries, will be made available during the summer and fall of 2017, and on an ongoing basis.

The input of the Alberta Fish and Game Association in fisheries management is valued. Nonetheless, consultation with a broader range of stakeholders will be required in order to access and implement changes to fisheries management objectives, angling regulations, and other management actions.

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-2-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop and implement a plan endorsed by the public that increases the availability of tiger trout and splake to the list of fish species permitted for aquaculture on private fish farms.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*Some fish species such a tiger trout and splake are available from fish hatcheries and such species could be added to the list of fish species that could be stocked and utilized in private fish farms at no risk to native fish stocks. By increasing the production of special species in private fish farms for food or recreation would potentially reduce the pressure on fish stocks in public waters but also increase the interest in fish and fish habitat. Increased fishing opportunities in any available waters in Alberta, is considered a plus.*

*By increasing the value and use of fish resources, it is expected that the protection of fish habitat will become more important to government and the general public.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Tiger trout culture and stocking is still in an evaluation phase in Alberta and there is no intent to make tiger trout available for private aquaculture or fish pond stocking at this time. The recent detection of whirling disease in Alberta, in natural waters, private aquaculture facilities and ponds which have been stocked with infected fish from some such facilities, is demanding priority for the focus on aquaculture management for the foreseeable future.

There is no intent to initiate a splake stocking program; however, the interest in this hybrid will be communicated to the provincial fish culture manager.

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-3-2017 and F-4-2017, respectively**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop and adopt a policy that confirms no net loss of fish habitat for Alberta.

**BRIEF:**

*With the recent changes in the Federal Fisheries Act and Federal government policies with no net loss of fish habitat it would be prudent for the Alberta Government to adopt the no net loss of fish habitat as an Alberta Policy.*

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop fish habitat protection and compensation legislation for Alberta.

**BRIEF:**

*With the recent changes in the Federal Fisheries Act and the Federal Government policies with no net loss of fish habitat it would be prudent for the Alberta Government to adopt fish habitat legislation as an Alberta specific legislation. Alberta would assume fish habitat responsibilities relinquished by the Federal Fisheries Act.*

**RESPONSE:**

The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, through the federal *Fisheries Act* and associated regulations, holds jurisdiction for fish habitat decision-making in Alberta and is the authority for any authorizations for serious harm to fish habitat. The federal *Fisheries Act* requires fisheries management objectives be explicitly considered in decisions. Under the federal legislation, to protect fish habitat, efforts should be made to avoid, mitigate or offset harm.

Although not the direct authority for fish habitat, Alberta Environment and Parks is working to build a science-based approach to including habitat considerations in the fisheries management review and regulation cycle. Integration of habitat into Alberta Environment and Parks' review and regulations cycle and associated fisheries management objectives will assist the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to better connect their habitat decisions in the context of our allocation and use of fisheries resources in Alberta. The Fish Conservation and Management Strategy for Alberta (available at <http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/fish-conservation-management-strategy.aspx>) outlines strategic direction for fish habitat protection.

Priorities for fish habitat work are informed by fisheries management objectives. Alberta also continues to participate in the review of the federal *Fisheries Act* to provide feedback on the restoration of lost protection measures and incorporation of modern safeguards with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

**FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-5-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) increase fish habitat by installing and managing winter aeration of numerous lakes that are at risk of winter fish kills.

**BRIEF:**

*The AFGA would request that more money and manpower from AEP and ACA be directed towards fish habitat development with aeration in lakes that are at risk from overwintering fish mortalities. By saving Lake Isle which is within an hour of a million people one could create*



*more fish habitat than the ACA habitat development could do in several years of other fisheries projects. Other lakes like Lower Mann Lakes, Bonnie Beach, Chatwin Lake, Cach lake, Jackfish Lake, Charron Lake, Frenchman Lake, Hastings Lake, Cottage Lake, Sauer Lake, Hasse Lake and the list goes on, would result in large numbers of hectares of productive fisheries.*

**RESPONSE:**

Alberta Environment and Parks will continue to work with the Alberta Conservation Association to evaluate, plan and implement aeration projects to improve overwinter fish survival in situations where the attainment of fisheries management objectives would be supported by such action, in a cost-effective manner that is cognizant of public safety and liability. Consultation with a broader range of stakeholders will be required in order to assess and implement options for changes to management actions in alignment with fisheries management objectives.

Environment and Parks cannot speak on behalf of the Alberta Conservation Association with respect to their response to the resolutions. As per the current memorandum of understanding between the department and the association, we work with the association to develop annual plans and priorities for their programs. The resolutions of the Alberta Fish and Game Association will be considered in discussions with the association pertaining to planning and priority setting, and subsequent project implementation.

**FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-7-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta increase angling opportunities by introducing/stocking yellow perch into the suitable fish habitat waters such as small ponds, dugouts and borrow pits.

***BRIEF:***

*There are a number of small ponds that have been developed (i.e. borrow pits along highways such as Highway 63) that currently may be suitable fish habitat and are currently void of fish. Government programs should be developed to move yellow perch from other locations into such waters. The change in government priorities would allow for self-sustaining yellow perch populations to be developed in such public ponds and would improve provincial angling opportunities and reduce the angling pressure on other public waters.*

*Yellow perch are suited for small ponds and are more tolerant of low dissolved oxygen when compared to salmonids. The source of the yellow perch will require specific regulations that allow specific locations to be acceptable sources of yellow perch.*

**RESPONSE:**

Stocking programs for native fish species are focused on restoration of populations that have been extirpated or nearly so, typically as a consequence of winterkill. There is no provincial perch stocking program. Consequently, perch stocking would require fish capture and transfer from donor waters. Given the concerns with respect to movement of unwanted organisms and diseases, such transfers would only be done under strictly controlled protocols and conditions. This said, the stocking of yellow perch into small ponds for the purpose of increasing recreational fishing opportunities may be considered in certain situations. However, a major

limitation in such plans would be the extremely limited ability of such small waters to produce sustainable fisheries, given habitat limitations and the slow growth of perch to catchable size. The realistic sustainable yields of small ponds would not likely meet the expectations of anglers and would result in their frustration and prompt the diversion of the fisheries management resources from other needs.

The input of the Alberta Fish and Game Association in fisheries management is valued. Nonetheless, consultation with a broader range of stakeholders will be required in order to access and implement changes to fisheries management objectives, angling regulations, and other management actions.

#### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-8-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Alberta of Government and the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) revise fish program priorities to emphasize the protection and development of fish habitat.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*The AFGA would request that more money from AEP and ACA be directed towards fish habitat development that would increase the amount of suitable fish habitat in Alberta and in so doing, over the long term provide increased angling opportunities. Current funding of the ACA (largely from angler license fees) amounts to greater than 4 million dollars per year. The expenditure priorities and direction from government and stakeholders should be revised to clearly create increased fish habitat in Alberta. At the same time the protection of the existing fish habitat should be maintained and not jeopardized. The amount of fish habitat developed annually should be reported to all Albertans. Administrative costs should be minimized.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Improved tools are being developed and incorporated into the development of fisheries management objectives to provide clear direction for decision-makers working with the public and industry in order to better protect and enhance fish habitat. This work will continue into 2017-18.

Environment and Parks cannot speak on behalf of the Alberta Conservation Association with respect to their priorities regarding the protection and development of fish habitat. As per the current memorandum of understanding between the department and the association, we work with the association to develop annual plans and priorities for their programs. The resolutions of the Alberta Fish and Game Association will be considered in discussions with the association pertaining to planning and priority setting, and subsequent project implementation.

#### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-9-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta revise angling regulations to allow for the harvest of walleye and northern pike in underutilized Alberta waters including 40 to 50 lakes in NE Alberta that have had zero walleye catch and keep limits for over 20 years.

**BRIEF:**

*Alberta anglers are generally not certified professional biologists; however, they collectively conduct a census of fish stocks through angling, through fish cameras and through site specific frequent visits to specific lakes. Further, Alberta anglers are aware of the regulations that restrict harvest with zero catch limits, size restrictions, and likely low harvest on several specific lakes.*

*Meetings of large numbers of stakeholders including MLA's, Mayors, Reeves and various community groups and individual people have expressed the need for change in the current angling regulations that would allow for consumptive use but would allow for sustained and healthy fish stocks.*

*With insufficient numbers of government biologists numerous lakes will never be monitored effectively in a reasonable time and in so doing restrictions will never be adjusted to allow for a fish harvest. Underutilized fish stocks will remain.*

*With the elimination of commercial fishing and the continued restrictions on anglers and the inability for government biologists to monitor and assess all the lakes and the fish populations, there is a need to develop angling regulations that will lead to safe harvests. Several options should be considered to establish simplified fish harvests in all Alberta lakes. Several methods should be considered including limiting numbers of fish kept on daily basis, catch seasons restricted to a number of days, catch and keep days limited by groups of lakes and numerous other methods that could simplify the regulations and still allow a safe and reasonable sustained harvest of perch, pike and walleye.*

*Some of Alberta's fish resources are currently underutilized and with reduced or changing economic conditions in Alberta, diversification of the employment opportunities is needed to keep Alberta children working at home. There are a number of waters and fish species that are currently not being used as food items. Developing a plan that protects existing users and especially the health of the fish resources could provide economic diversity and also increase the value and importance of fish resources and fish habitat to all Albertans.*

*By increasing the value and use of fish resources, it is expected that the protection of fish habitat will become more important to government and the general public.*

*Numerous lakes have been identified and include but not limited to the following: Lac La Biche, Heart Lake, Kehiwin Lake, Winefred Lake, Wabamun Lake, Lac Ste Anne, Lac Bellevue, Wolf Lake, Calling Lake, Whitefish Lake, Goodfish Lake, Seibert Lake, Lac Bellevue, Bangs Lake, Barnes Lake, Gull Lake, Ethel Lake, May Lake, Bourque Lake, Gregoire Lake, Ironwood Lake, Hilda Lake, Marie Lake, Touchwood Lake, etc.*

**RESPONSE:**

See the response to resolution F-1-2017

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-10-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta promote and require deep pool fish habitat be developed in fish-bearing watercourses in conjunction with watercourse crossings and road development.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*The development of roads that cross fish-bearing watercourses has the potential for harming fish and fish habitat. For minor costs and specified designs useful fish habitats can be created. The deep pool fish habitats that may occur on the downstream side of culverts are well-known by anglers to provide useful fish habitats. The hydraulic factors associated with road crossing could provide useful flows for the development and maintenance of such deep pool fish habitats. Care must be taken to ensure for fish passage at such crossings.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Pools in flowing waters are caused by the pattern and dynamics of flowing water interacting with landforms. Pools which exist in relation to road crossings are often a problem sign, in which the stream bed is being scoured by water exiting a constriction at increased velocity. This scouring action causes culverts to become perched above stream beds over time, leading to movement barriers and habitat fragmentation. The department is not supportive of altering stream beds in a manner which is problematic and would be considered a harmful alteration of fish habitat.

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-12-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta or the Alberta Conservation Association improve the fish habitat on lakes and ponds that experience winterkill and summerkill mortalities.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*In many years, several Alberta lakes and ponds experience significant fish mortalities in the winter due to low dissolved oxygen levels. Several of these lakes/ponds receive stocked fish and in so doing major financial losses occur along with reduced angling opportunities.*

*Anglers contribute large amounts of money to the ACA and Government of Alberta and some of these funds should be directed at reducing the number of winterkills by focusing expenditures on maintaining fish habitats or improving these fish habitats. More funds should be directed at the improvement and maintenance of these fish habitats through increased projects such as aeration.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

See the response to resolution F-5-2017

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-13-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta change the fishing regulations to allow Alberta residents to harvest northern pike, lake whitefish, yellow perch, burbot and walleye in Wabamun Lake.

**BRIEF:**

*Wabamun Lake allowable harvest of fish has been prohibited for all fish species since 2005 (oil and pentachlorophenol spill from railway accident). As well no commercial fishing allocation has occurred since 2003.*

*Several catch and release anglers have indicated that numbers of lake whitefish, northern pike and yellow perch are present and could be harvested. Some anglers are reporting thin (i.e. poor condition) pike are now evident as are the newly introduced walleye.*

*FWIN testing in 2007, 2010, and 2013 indicate that these fish populations appear to be similar to many Alberta lakes that currently have allowable catch limits for these fish species. Discussions on the fish populations have been occurring with Government of Alberta biologists. Reports are still unavailable on the website.*

*The contaminant levels of the fish tissues have been examined by the Government of Alberta and only large-sized northern pike (>7 pounds) have a guideline on the number of servings per week. All other contaminants are no longer at risk as indicated by the Government of Alberta.*

**RESPONSE:**

Catch and release-only angling regulations were implemented at Wabamun Lake in response to the oil spill which occurred in 2005. A 2013 survey of anglers in the Wabamun area indicated strong support (>80 per cent) for a ‘trophy’ management objective for pike, providing high catch rates and opportunity to catch a large pike at Wabamun Lake. To maintain this type of fishery in proximity to a large human population, a catch and release regulation was supported and implemented. Since then, a restoration objective was set for walleye at this lake. Angling for walleye at this lake remains catch and release in support of the restoration stocking program. The lake whitefish fishery remains catch and release until the population shows it has recovered to offset the year-class weaknesses observed following the oil spill.

Fishing regulations are implemented to achieve defined fisheries management objectives. As such, discussion about regulations should begin with the objectives. The input of the Alberta Fish and Game Association in fisheries management is valued. Nonetheless, consultation with a broader range of stakeholders, including Indigenous communities, will be required in order to assess and implement options for changes to fisheries management objectives, angling regulations, and other supporting management actions. We are committed to consulting with the public on the recreational fisheries management objective for Wabamun Lake this year and have indicated that intent in the Wabamun Lake update posted to the MyWildAlberta site late last winter.

**FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-14-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta disclose the number of Walleye tags available in each lake and each class prior to the beginning of the annual draw application process.

**BRIEF:**

*The persons interested in applying for walleye tags should be able to know the number of available tags for each class and each lake before the application process begins. This would allow people to avoid the draws that have small numbers of tags available.*

**RESPONSE:**

For the 2017 Walleye Special Licence draws, participants were able to view the number of licences available for each water body and size class of walleye, when completing their draw application. In addition, the draw results of Special Harvest Licences and tags from previous years are available through the *My Wild Alberta* website.

<http://mywildalberta.com/fishing/walleye-draws/default.aspx> . Alberta Environment and Parks is committed to making this information available to participants whenever logistically possible.

**FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-18-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request the Government of Alberta to adopt a fishing license fee structure for non-residents that is similar to other Canadian provinces in order to increase revenue.

**BRIEF:**

*We believe that Alberta should attempt to standardize its non-residents fee structures in order to bring our fees in line with the rest of Canada. This would bring more money into the province of Alberta.*

**RESPONSE:**

In 2017, Alberta introduced new fishing licence options for non-Albertans. The new licencing fee structure offers Non-Albertan Canadians three licence options (1-day, 7-day, and annual) and is consistent with those licence offerings in neighbouring provinces.

Approximately six percent of the anglers who fish Alberta's lakes and rivers are non-resident anglers. Regardless of anglers being resident or non-resident, the contribution to the Alberta economy from sportfishing is substantial. In 2016, just fewer than 300,000 fishing licences were purchased; and the economic value of Sportfishing was approximately \$475 million.

Approximately \$161 million can be attributed to the economic categories of food and lodging, transportation, and fishing services.

Alberta's approach to managing fisheries is demonstrably successful. Despite human population growth and limited productivity and availability of fishable waters, Alberta's fisheries support an increasing number of anglers, and Albertans catch more fish than in British Columbia, Saskatchewan or Manitoba. The economic and social benefits of Alberta's fisheries are greater now than they have ever been.

**Additional Information:**

British Columbia freshwater licences are \$80, \$50, \$20 for a non-Canadian resident for annual, multiday, and a single day, respectively.

Saskatchewan fishing licences are \$100, \$50, and \$30 for a non-Canadian resident for annual, multiday, and a single day, respectively

British Columbia freshwater licences are \$55, \$36, \$20 for a Canadian resident for annual, multiday, and a single day, respectively.

Saskatchewan fishing licences are \$75, \$40, and \$20 for a Canadian resident for annual, multiday, and a single day, respectively.

Fee structures for non-commercial outdoor recreation is a balance between the cost of a licence which provides access to the activity on an individual level and the value of the general attributes (for example, time with family, fresh air, interacting with nature) and the specific attributes (for example, catching fish) of the activity anglers gain.

#### **WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-2-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta reduce the number of non-resident trophy bighorn sheep allocations to a maximum of 10% of the allowable harvest

#### ***BRIEF:***

*When outfitter allocations were established, approximately 20% of the bighorn sheep rams harvested in Alberta was taken by non-resident aliens guided by outfitters. Outfitter allocations were established at that level, which did not then impact resident harvests due to low demand by resident hunters.*

*The situation has now changed; resident demand has increased and the portion of the allowable harvest of resource allocated to non-resident aliens must be reduced to a maximum of 10% of the available harvest as is the case with every other species where demand exceeds supply.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Alberta Environment and Parks is currently undertaking the development of a Big Game Allocation Policy for Alberta. The allocation of non-resident trophy sheep harvest and opportunity will be addressed in the allocation policy. The Alberta Fish and Game Association is actively involved in the development of this policy through the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council and the Allocation Sub-committee.

#### **WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-3-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta add a fall cougar season to all 300 series WMU's.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*Many hunters in these zones are seeing increased cougar activity on trail cams and also having encounters while calling elk. We would like the opportunity to harvest cougars during these*

*times of the year and hopefully reduce their numbers to help with the reduced ungulate populations in these zones.*

**RESPONSE:**

In Alberta, the use of fall cougar seasons is limited to those regions of the province where our annual harvest objectives are not met or where population limitation is the management objective (for example, the 200 and 100 wildlife management units). Over the past three years in 300 series wildlife management units, cougar harvest objectives have been met or exceeded. A sustainable harvest model of this valued game species does not support introducing additional human caused mortality into the population.

However, if harvest objectives in the 300 units are not met for a number of consecutive years, addressing this through a fall season would be an option.

**WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-4-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta increase resident waterfowl hunting opportunity by restricting the number of days, or the timing of the hunting season, or other means, that an outfitter may operate and in so doing, reduce the conflict and competition for receiving access to hunt on private lands.

***BRIEF:***

*In the last 15 years, the amount of pressure on Alberta's waterfowl resource by waterfowl outfitters has increased dramatically. This increase has led to unfair and intolerable competition with resident waterfowl hunters – especially young, inexperienced want-to-be hunters. According to AEP statistics, non-resident alien hunters made up 14% of the 14,000 total waterfowl hunters in Alberta in 2013 but managed to harvest 31% of all waterfowl harvested in the province. Nearly all those NRA hunters hunt with the services of 120 outfitters registered with the province. The waterfowl outfitters are managing to get sole access to private lands by various means including virtual leasing of land access from landowners. This problem has resulted in resident hunters in the east central area of the province (most notably WMUs 204, 206, 226, 230, 240 and 242) and the Peace River country not being able to get permission to hunt public birds on private lands. A reduction of the huntable days for outfitters to operate, or reducing non-resident alien seasons would be the first step in alleviating this problem.*

**RESPONSE:**

Alberta Environment and Parks is currently reviewing hunting pressure, competition between commercial and recreational hunters, as well as options to alleviate competition in areas of the province. Hunter day restrictions on outfitters is one tool that is being considered on a wildlife management unit by wildlife management unit basis.



### **WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-5-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta establish a partner license for elk be established similar to the current partner license system for moose draws.

***BRIEF:***

*This would increase hunting opportunities and promote hunter participation.*

**RESPONSE:**

This matter is currently being discussed as a potential change to the regulations as per the allocation policy development process. Most stakeholder groups are in agreement that this is a reasonable exchange for consideration. Once the policy recommendations are submitted to Alberta Environment and Parks by the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council in September, we will consider this as a potential regulation change.

### **WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-6-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta amend legislation to allow hunters to use leashed dogs to track and recover downed game in the field.

***BRIEF:***

*Alberta government legislation currently prohibits the use of dogs in the field, however the legislation is poorly worded and should be amended in order to allow a dog and/or tracking dogs to accompany hunters or recover downed game, in particular, on multi-day hunts. Dogs used in this manner are not intended to pursue game. The use of dogs will allow for more game to be recovered. We therefore, request a review and revision to existing Alberta legislation prohibiting the use of dogs to recover downed game.*

**RESPONSE:**

During the consultation portion of the Regulation Amendment (Wildlife Act) in 2015, it was expressed quite strongly that the use of dogs while hunting big game was not supported. There was, however, more tolerance for the use of dogs while tracking wounded game. Overall, the use of dogs in the field to recover big game is a proposal requiring considerable support from the hunting public, with training standard, regulation for leash requirements, handler requirements, and other elements to ensure public and wildlife safety. If there is enough public support on this issue on a provincial basis, however, we will revisit this proposal in the future.

### **WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-7-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta introduce a policy for mandatory head submission for any ungulate harvested in a CWD zone by all harvesters.

**RESPONSE:**

Currently the regulation for compulsory head submission is for deer, which are the primary vectors and hosts for chronic wasting disease in Alberta. Monitoring deer will provide an accurate distribution and prevalence of chronic wasting disease on the landscape. Beginning this year, additional support for testing all cervids within CWD infected zones will commence. Pronghorn are not susceptible to chronic wasting disease at this time and do not require head testing.

**WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-9-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** if the Government of Alberta will not shorten the game bird season to end November 30 that they limit the pheasant hunting extended season beyond November 30 to release sites only after that date.

***BRIEF:***

*The extended bird-hunting season places stress on bird populations and therefore, have a negative impact on conservation efforts conducted throughout the province. Over-harvest and stress from the cold can cause high mortality and the extended hunting season also diminishes the effectiveness of bird release programs funded and managed by fish and game clubs like Calgary's. The extended season also creates greater stress on landowners.*

**RESPONSE:**

Areas of Alberta that are open to pheasant hunting from November 30 to January 15 are not capable of supporting wild pheasant throughout and between years. In essence, resolution number W-9-2017 is already in place by virtue that only released birds are available to those hunting in a wildlife management unit with open season beyond November 30.

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOLUTION NUMBER E-1-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta develop and adopt a policy that confirms no peatland drainage will be permitted in Alberta unless adequate compensation (wetland policy) replaces these wetlands.

***BRIEF:***

*The value of muskeg for water storage and watershed health that provides balanced drainage of water in the watercourses needs to be recognized and entrenched in Alberta's watershed protection policies.*

**RESPONSE:**

The Government of Alberta released the Alberta Wetland Policy in September of 2013. The policy is applicable to all wetland classes in the province, including mineral wetlands (marsh, swamp, shallow open waters) and peatlands (bogs and fens). The Alberta Wetland Policy was implemented in the province's White (settled) Area on June 1, 2015; Green Area (northern boreal forest, Eastern Slopes) followed on June 1, 2016. Under the Alberta Wetland Policy, any authorized development activity leading to the permanent loss of wetland area (including peatlands) is subject to a replacement ("compensation") requirement. Non-permanent

development activities (those subject to a reclamation requirement) will be held to the highest standards, ensuring that the wetland (including peatlands) is returned to a previous state at the end of project life.

Alberta now has specific reclamation criteria for land disturbance involving peatlands (Reclamation Criteria for Wellsites and Associated Facilities for Peatlands) as well as specific peat reclamation requirements for the peat industry. If peat reclamation outcomes cannot be met, then the activity could be subject to compensation under the wetland policy. In addition, determining direction on peat extraction within caribou ranges is part of the caribou range planning process. Stakeholder engagement on caribou range planning is currently underway.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOLUTION NUMBER E-2-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request the Government of Alberta develop and adopt a policy that requires sedimentation incidents in public watercourses, lakes and wetlands, be reported publicly to ensure government transparency.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*Sedimentation of public waters has an environmental effect on watercourses, wetlands and lakes and could cause long-term cumulative effects. Such information should be available to the public and reported annually.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Environment and Parks is currently working on a number of key initiatives relating to integrated water and watershed management and an updated approach to sand and gravel development on flood plains.

Although the department currently exercises a fairly robust approach to the management and reporting of environmental incidents, particularly as they relate to aquatic habitats, these policy initiatives will provide opportunity to examine potential refinement of existing mechanisms (for example, reporting of sedimentation events) if needed.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOLUTION NUMBER E-3-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta to increase the monitoring and enforcement effort on sedimentation incidents that affect public watercourses, lakes and wetlands.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*Sedimentation of public waters has an environmental effect on watercourses, wetlands and lakes and could cause long term cumulative effects. Monitoring and enforcement of activities that could result in sedimentation should be increased.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Environment and Parks currently manages an extensive network of water quality monitoring stations for major rivers and lakes throughout the province. During spills and other significant

environmental events, these stations are frequently used to assess impacts on surface water quality. As indicated above, Environment and Parks is undertaking intensive work on the development of policy direction relating to integrated water and watershed management in the province. At the same time, the department has increased its environmental monitoring capacity and mandate through the establishment of the environmental Monitoring and Science Division.

The new Roadway Watercourse Crossing Remediation Program is a watershed-based approach to dealing with stream fragmentation and sedimentation problems caused by poorly functioning industrial road crossings at streams in the Green Zone. A directive has been developed which requires that industrial road crossings along the East Slopes be assessed as per a provincial protocol, and remediation plans be developed for approval by the department for implementation according to an agreed-upon schedule. This program is being delivered with the assistance of the Foothills Stream Crossing Program, with participation by numerous companies that have road ownership responsibilities. To date, inspections have been done on crossings at 5,200 priority locations. Sedimentation problems identified at crossings are expected to be mitigated upon detection.

Collectively, these initiatives are expected to reduce the cumulative effects related to sedimentation.

## **RESPONSES FROM THE ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION**

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-5-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) increase fish habitat by installing and managing winter aeration of numerous lakes that are at risk of winter fish kills; carried with approximately 97.0% in favour.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*The AFGA would request that more money and manpower from AEP and ACA be directed towards fish habitat development with aeration in lakes that are at risk from overwintering fish mortalities. By saving Lake Isle which is within an hour of a million people one could create more fish habitat than the ACA habitat development could do in several years of other fisheries projects. Other lakes like Lower Mann Lakes, Bonnie Beach, Chatwin Lake, Cach lake, Jackfish Lake, Charron Lake, Frenchman Lake, Hastings Lake, Cottage Lake, Sauer Lake, Hasse Lake and the list goes on, would result in large numbers of hectares of productive fisheries.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

Based on previous requests from our stakeholders ACA committed to allocating increased funds to our lake aeration in 2015/16. You will note in our 2016/17 and 2017/18 Annual Operating plans that “New Lake Aeration Development” is identified as a specific project. I think it is safe to say that ACA fisheries staff agree with the resolution that increasing aerated lakes can increase fishing opportunities and we are working towards that goal; however, there are some challenges that I think AFGA members should be aware of. First, not all lakes are suitable for aeration For instance, if a lake it too large (such as Lake Isle), there is no practical way to install

enough aeration to adequately improve winter oxygen levels. Second, there is the issue of having power available. Although we have used diesel and propane generators in some cases in the past, this is not a preferred method of running the aerators. As such, we must look at the cost involved with getting power to the site. Once we have decided that we are going to pay to have power brought to the site, we must then deal with the construction schedule of a company such as Fortis to install the power for us. This can lead to delays. Third, we need to gain Government approval for any aeration installation that occurs on public lands

For 2016/17, we installed a new system at Hansen's Reservoir and Police Outpost Lake, and in 2017/18 we plan to install aeration on Winchell Lake and West Dollar Lake. We are also working with GOA on the possibility of aerating Hasse Lake.

We recognize that aeration is an important tool we have to enhance Alberta's fisheries and we will continue evaluate other possible locations as part of an on-going process.

### **FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-8-2017**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Alberta of Government and the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) revise fish program priorities to emphasize the protection and development of fish habitat; carried with no opposition.

#### ***BRIEF:***

*The AFGA would request that more money from AEP and ACA be directed towards fish habitat development that would increase the amount of suitable fish habitat in Alberta and in so doing, over the long term provide increased angling opportunities. Current funding of the ACA (largely from angler license fees) amounts to greater than 4 million dollars per year.*

*The expenditure priorities and direction from government and stakeholders should be revised to clearly create increased fish habitat in Alberta. At the same time the protection of the existing fish habitat should be maintained and not jeopardized. The amount of fish habitat developed annually should be reported to all Albertans. Administrative costs should be minimized.*

#### **RESPONSE:**

ACA is undertaking protection and development of fish habitat throughout the province; however, I would be very open to discussing any specific ideas that stakeholders may have. With respect to fish habitat protection, ACA has recently completed the Owl River Riparian project where we paid-out grazing lease holders and had fence installed to protect the riparian area on approximately 9 km of the river. We continue our Riparian Conservation program where we are leasing riparian areas from landowners to protect riparian habitat in locations such as the North Raven and Raven River. In addition, we made and plan to undertake further land purchases along the Raven and North Raven Rivers to protect both riparian and upland areas and we have just completed (this week) the purchase of a quarter section along a tributary to the Edson River. As well, we are involved in several community watershed initiatives to restore and protect habitat along the Beaverlodge River and the Milk River.

From a habitat development perspective we have had less success, in that our projects have been limited to evaluating new waterbodies that may be suitable for stocking, and working on the restoration of waterbodies such as Hasse Lake and Lake Isle. While a few locations for stocking have been identified as possibilities, we continue to work with our AEP partners to determine management plans for these potential sites before stocking can occur. This is an area that we hope to show more on-the-ground success in the coming years.