



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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OPEN SPACES PILOT REJECTED BY ALBERTA FISH & GAME MEMBERSHIP

(Edmonton February 26 , 2008)... The membership of the **Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA)** unanimously rejected the controversial Open Spaces Alberta (OSA) pilot project at its annual conference held February 21-23 in Edmonton.

The OSA project proposal came about to address the issue of decreasing habitat and reduced access for hunters. Landowners bear the cost of production of wildlife (a public resource) and are frustrated by hunting pressures from the public and the associated damage to their land and improvements as a result of providing access. There is decreased opportunity to access private land, resulting in competition for hunting space, and ultimately fewer quality hunting opportunities. There is increasing pressure from landowners and hunters and anglers to improve the situation.

The Pilot Program proposes two components:

1. Recreational Access Management Program (RAMP)
2. Hunting for Habitat Program

Landowners have the option of enrolling in one of the components. Both programs will be evaluated annually to measure results of the pilot program for future consideration.

In both instances landowners would be entitled to receive monetary benefit.

In Alberta it is illegal for a landowner to charge money for access to his/her land for the purposes of hunting or fishing.

“The Fish & Game membership views the Open Spaces Project as privatization of Alberta’s wild resources, something the Association vehemently opposes. Just as we opposed the ill fated decision to allow privatization of wildlife, game farms, no good could come of it, and now our wild ungulates face huge health risks. The AFGA is not opposed to landowners being recognized for good habitat stewardship, and providing sportspeople access to their lands. We would suggest that tax incentives could be one of the tools by which this happens”, said Maurice Nadeau, AFGA President.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization that has been active in habitat conservation since 1908 and has a province-wide membership of 17,000 individuals keen on maintaining Alberta’s natural heritage.