



October 7, 2011

To: Honoured Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (*via email*)

The Alberta Fish and Game Association has had a long-standing policy that does **not** support the sale of **any** publicly owned lands.

The Government of Alberta has deemed fit to sell a major tract of public land worth millions of dollars in a highly sensitive ecological region in southern Alberta.

The land in question is critical to the survival of a number of species at risk that inhabit the area such as the burrowing owl and ferruginous hawk among others. There is less than 5% of native prairie grassland region left and this further destruction will help to seal the fate of these species as well as any outdoors enjoyment by future generations.

To justify the sale of this particular tract as well as others throughout the province justifications such as proceeds from sale will be allocated to secure higher valued land, and value added agricultural projects will increase jobs have been provided. These do not make any sense.

First, with the small amount of natural grassland in existence, organizations such as ours will be hard pressed to find any "higher value" conservation land. Once the land is gone, it is gone and any potential future attempts at restoration would be astronomical in cost if not downright futile. Further, the bio-diversity in the area is irreplaceable. Once irrigation, as prescribed in the issued RFP, is introduced to create an agricultural project, this biodiversity shrinks to minimal levels.

Second, it is difficult to understand how a "value added" agricultural project will create jobs for Albertans especially in light of this province's inability to fill current demands for labour. Some estimates suggest the construction industry alone will need 40,000 foreign workers to keep up with demand! (*Dave Cooper, edmontonjournal.com*
<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Alberta+construction+industry+faces+manpower+shortages/5033313/story.html#ixzz1ZqxgHdya>)

In a province that has an annual budget of \$38 billion dollars an approximate \$30 million realized from this sale will not even be a drop (.079 of 1%) in the bucket yet will serve to annihilate critical habitat forever.

We, as the 21,000+ members of the Alberta Fish and Game Association turn to you as representatives of the people to ensure that no more public lands be sold. Even though the mantra from government is "that's only a small portion of public land" it will all add up until there is none left.

Sincerely,

Conrad Fennema, President
The Alberta Fish & Game Association

Martin Sharren, Executive VP
The Alberta Fish & Game Association

cc AFGA Executive
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~ The Alberta Fish & Game Association is your voice for Conservation ~