



## The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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### **AFGA Disappointed in Lack of Equity for Albertans**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Edmonton March 2, 2015) **Alberta's largest conservation group, the Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA)** expresses its disappointment in the manner that the recent elk overpopulation hunt at CFB Suffield was organized. Elk herds have increased to an estimated 8,000 animals in recent years and have had a negative impact to surrounding landholders and the habitat itself thus creating a difficult situation, one that all parties involved agree to the need for intervention.

Hunting is the first and best way to manage wildlife populations regardless of the possible complications and related controversies that this would create. It is the responsibility of Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) to manage wildlife populations within the Province of Alberta and in so doing they set season dates and harvest limits.

AFGA president, Wayne Lowry said, "We do not support a massive cull to correct this overabundance however we do support the longer term elk management strategy of reducing the overabundance first by stopping the rapid growth of the herd, and second by a regulated herd reduction strategy".

He added, "We strongly support the collaboration of both AESRD and CFB Suffield in achieving these herd reduction goals and look forward to the increased hunting opportunity for **all** Albertans on a fair and equitable basis which will create additional opportunity to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends.

However, this was not the case at Suffield and AFGA is disappointed in the way that this particular hunt was managed by exhibiting a level of discrimination towards Alberta resident hunters accustomed to waiting, by way of a priority system, to hunt elk in areas like Suffield in excess of 10 years. To date, only antlerless elk were allowed to be harvested by Alberta residents while First Nations were invited to come and harvest as many elk as they wanted, regardless of antler presence. The preliminary hunt data supports the claim that they were specifically targeting trophy quality antlered elk; 350 antlered elk vs 150 antlerless—a tactic that will not reduce herd size.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization proud to serve Albertans in the promotion of the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources and the conservation of their habitats on an equitable basis keeping the fish wildlife and habitat they depend upon in the forefront. The AFGA has been active since 1908 in working towards these goals and has a province-wide membership of more than 24,500 individuals spread among 90+ Clubs.

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