



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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Alberta Fish and Game Association responds to plan to address Fisheries Management

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Edmonton February 27, 2018)...

Government of Alberta commits to a comprehensive plan to address fisheries management of trout, char, mountain whitefish and arctic grayling.

Alberta Fish and Game Association Response

The Alberta Fish and Game Association wrapped up its 89th Annual Conference on February 24, 2018 in Edmonton. The Alberta Fish and Game Association is the largest and oldest conservation organization in the province. Our 80 affiliated clubs with over 25,000 members can be found in all corners of the province. Our passion is to promote through education and programs, the conservation and utilization of fish and wildlife and to protect and enhance the habitat they depend on. All Albertans benefit from our work.

The cumulative effects of our expanding human footprint on the landscape is negatively impacting our ability to sustainably manage our fish and wildlife resources, regardless of whether they are harvested or not. The impacts occur due to urbanization, industrial growth, agricultural modernization, resource utilization such as forestry or hydrocarbon extraction, and recreational activities. For far too long we have attempted to use hunting and angling regulations only to maintain sustainable fish and wildlife populations despite habitat being the cornerstone. Managers must use all the tools available that include land use planning, education, compliance monitoring, and enforcement. Past activities on the landscape have led to a net habitat deficit that requires enhancement, restoration and protection actions as part of any long-term management plan.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association applauds the Honorable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks and the Government of Alberta for the announcement at our Annual Conference that this message has been heard. The Deputy Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks, Andre Corbould and the Executive Director of Fish and Wildlife Policy, Travis Ripley expanded on the message as well as participating in the conference. The angling closures along the Eastern Slopes that were part of the *North-Central Alberta Native Trout Recovery Plan* are being put on hold until there is further review of the science, assessment of habitat issues, capital costs for restoration determined, involvement of conservation organizations in habitat restoration, angling and environmental awareness education, citizen science and reporting tools developed, and a meaningful collaborative engagement process between the Government of Alberta and hunting and fishing community

established at a local, regional and provincial level. While not directly addressed, there will be further engagement on the *Northern Pike and Walleye Management Frameworks*.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association, other angling, hunting and conservation organizations, biologists and the public have been calling for such initiatives for many years. On January 2, 2018, the Alberta Fish and Game Association sent a letter to the Honorable Shannon Phillips identifying serious concerns with plans and frameworks related to fisheries management in Alberta that were being advanced for the 2018/2019 Sportfishing Regulations which the Alberta Fish and Game Association could not support as envisioned. The announcements over the last several days provide a starting point to reset the agenda and direction. To paraphrase the Deputy Minister from his address, "*the Government of Alberta must not be measured by words but by actions.*" The Alberta Fish and Game Association accepts that challenge as well.

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