

Annual Report

2021 - 2022

You're invited
CPAWS Northern Alberta's AGM

September 28th, 2022
Hybrid: in-person & zoom
(details inside)

You're invited

CPAWS Northern Alberta's AGM

Hybrid: in-person & zoom

September 28th, 2022 7:00 PM MT

Edmonton Public Library, Milner Public Library
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta

To RSVP:

Call (780) 328-3780 or email infnab@cpaws.org for details.
Virtual and call in options will also be available.

We acknowledge that our office and team is primarily based in Treaty 6 territory, Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others, whose stewardship of lands, waters, and resources continues to shape our work both through partnerships and via their leadership. Our work also takes place on Treaty 7, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 lands.

This annual report covers CPAWS Northern Alberta's program from April 2021 – March 2022.

A Message from our Executive Director & Board Chair

2021-2022 was another eventful year for our chapter. After successfully Defending AB's Parks from the Government of Alberta's plan to close or remove protections from many parks in 2020, we remained vigilant on changes to parks and public lands. We continued our fight against coal mining in the eastern slopes of the Rockies and have succeeded in that fight! ... For now. There is still much work to do on that issue. We worked to improve the outlook for species at risk, particularly woodland caribou and wood bison, through collaborations with Indigenous communities, other conservation organizations, and progressive companies. We continued our work on National Park issues, such as caribou in Jasper, and the ecological health of Wood Buffalo National Park. We continue to support Indigenous-led conservation initiatives such as the Dene Tha' First Nation's proposal for an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area and their Wildlife Monitoring Program at Bistcho Lake. We are actively involved in the City of Edmonton and Parks Canada's process to potentially designate a National Urban Park in the River Valley of the Edmonton Region.

We are very proud of the excellent work that our team of six staff members accomplishes and are deeply appreciative of the support we receive from our Board of Directors, other volunteers and our members. In the last year we welcomed a new Communications Coordinator, Elise Gagnon in May of 2021, but otherwise our team composition has remained stable. Our team is such a talented group of individuals who are a force to be reckoned with as a group. We are proud of the team culture we have cultivated. Our Board of Directors has welcomed two new members, who will be up for election at our AGM.

Primarily this report on our work over the last year is an expression of gratitude to all of you, our donors. The messages and donations we receive from Albertans expressing support for our work mean so much to our Staff and Board. Thank you for being an integral part of our organization and our fight for conservation of nature!



Dr. Kecia Kerr
Executive Director



Steve Donelon
Board Chair

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Meet the Chapter Staff



Dr. Kecia Kerr
Executive Director



Tara Russell
Program Director



Gillian Chow-Fraser
Boreal Program Manager



Elise Gagnon
Communications Coordinator



Chris Smith
Conservation Analyst



Ryan Cheng
Conservation Analyst

Carlos Bautista
Financial Controller

Natasha Pentyliuk
Outreach Assistant
(December 2021 - February 2022)



The CPAWS Northern Alberta
Team at Elk Island National Park

The CPAWS Northern Alberta Board

Steve Donelon
Board Chair

Leigh Goldie
Director

Donna Tribe
Treasurer

Kyle Wheeler
Director (joined May 2022)

Ramona Blacklock
Secretary

Tisha Raj
Director (joined Jul 2022)

Anchal Verma
Director

Bryan Adkins
Director (left Fall 2021)



CPAWS Northern Alberta's Strategic Plan

Just in time to close out 2021, the CPAWS Northern Alberta Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 was released. If you have not had the opportunity to read the Strategic Plan, you can scan this code here for the [link to a digital version](#), request a paper copy from infonab@cpaws.org or give us a call (780) 328-3780.

This document guides the chapter's direction and growth. Here is a visual overview of the chapter's goals grouped into 4 categories: Conservation, Supporting Indigenous-Led Conservation, Strategic Partnerships, and Education & Communication with the Public.



scan me

The CPAWS Northern Alberta team is proud to showcase how we have been working to meet the goals outlined in our strategic plan.



Supporting Indigenous-Led Conservation

Saving Wood Bison in Northern Alberta

We continued to work collaboratively with the [ShagowAskee group](#), a group of Little Red River Cree Nation trappers and Elders, who identified the urgent need for conservation measures for wood bison, particularly the critically small Wabasca herd in Northern Alberta. Together, our goal is to see the recovery of wild wood bison herds, and protection of their habitat, with a long-term goal of supporting Treaty rights and traditional harvest.

Proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) for Bistcho Lake by the Dene Tha' First Nation

CPAWS Northern Alberta continued to collaborate with the Dene Tha' First Nation (DTFN) in support of their proposal for an Indigenous Protected & Conserved Area (IPCA) in the Bistcho Lake region of northwest Alberta. One of the main goals of the IPCA would be to protect the habitat of the Bistcho caribou herd. The Bistcho Sub-Regional Plan, a Government of Alberta document intended to guide land-use planning in the region in a way that will allow for recovery of the Bistcho caribou herd, was released in early April 2022. A multi-stakeholder group that included participation by the Dene Tha' First Nation and CPAWS Northern Alberta provided recommendations on the plan, including exploring the option of an IPCA. CPAWS and DTFN were disappointed that the plan includes no reference to an IPCA or a process to consider one.

We also continued to work with DTFN on several community-monitoring programs, with particular focus on monitoring of woodland caribou and wood bison in their traditional territory. We carried out another successful year of remote monitoring of the Bistcho caribou herd, and other wildlife, using motion-triggered cameras, deployed around the Bistcho Lake area with the help of DTFN community members. The program, now three years running, collects images of caribou and other wildlife to guide our understanding of important places, how they use those places, and how land management could help support the survival of caribou calves to adulthood.

Learn more about the Bistcho IPCA and the DTFN community-monitoring programs at: www.bistcholake.ca

Wood Buffalo National Park Collaborative Work

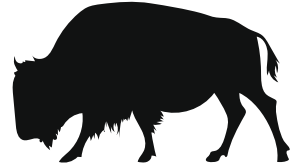
We continued to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities in and around Wood Buffalo National Park, supporting their vision for co-management of Wood Buffalo National Park and urgent action from federal and provincial governments to improve the ecological conditions in the park. We continued to support the potential UNESCO decision to add Wood Buffalo National Park to the list of World Heritage in Danger, and supported the World Heritage Committee decision in July 2021 to conduct an investigation into the state of the Park.

We celebrated an expansion of Kitaskino Nuwenënë Wildland Park along the southern border of the National Park, led by the Mikisew Cree First Nation. The area now stands as the largest contiguous protected boreal forest in the world. We supported Mikisew Cree First Nation throughout this process and look forward to continued collaboration in the northern boreal.

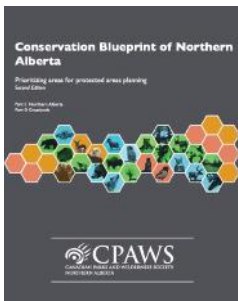


Conservation

Our chapter championed the protection of wild wood bison in Alberta from unregulated hunting, by urging the provincial government to designate them as ‘Wildlife’ and provide them with “species at risk” status, which finally occurred in November 2021. Can you believe that wood bison were not considered wildlife in Alberta? Unfortunately, plains bison still do not have that designation!

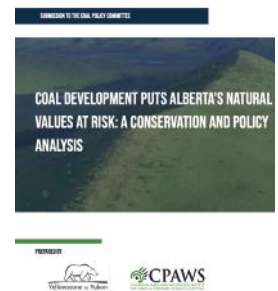


We encouraged the public to put pressure on the Government of Alberta to pause proposed logging plans in Moon Creek caribou habitat near Grande Cache. We published a report “The importance of the Moon Creek area for species at risk recovery: A report on impacts of proposed logging by West Fraser Mills Ltd. (Hinton) in caribou critical habitat”, met with the forestry company and the Government of Alberta, and garnered the support of over 800 letters from members of the public. The message was heard loud and clear, and the Government of Alberta established a temporary no-harvest zone within caribou range in the Moon Creek area while land use planning is completed. Read more about this campaign on page 21.



CPAWS Northern Alberta released the Conservation Blueprint of Northern Alberta: the Grassland Update. This document has complete mapping and analysis of areas that hold high irreplaceability value in Alberta and will be a resource when discussing protected areas with partner organizations, community members, government, and Indigenous communities.

In collaboration with CPAWS Southern Alberta and the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, we presented to the Government of Alberta-appointed Coal Policy Committee on the risks of coal development for Alberta’s natural values. Following the presentation, we submitted a [technical report](#) to the Coal Policy Committee. Over 2900 letters were sent to the government, requesting the committee’s reports to be made public, and for a coal policy that would reflect conservation values. Our work on this issue continues.



In the Fall of 2021, Jasper National Park announced an extension of their winter access closures to protect caribou to last the entire winter season from November 1 to May 15). This decision followed an immense public campaign in the previous winter to extend closure dates to provide necessary safe spaces for the Tonquin caribou herd. At dangerously low numbers, the Tonquin herd will benefit from this access closure by minimizing stress, reducing chances of predation, and ensuring access to good habitat. Jasper National Park is now also considering a breeding program that is necessary to boost herd size, as they are so low in numbers that they cannot naturally increase.



Strategic Partnerships

We are proud to have offered our support to the West Country Sustainability Coalition, a group of citizens concerned with coal development, and other environmental issues in the West Country. The group provided their own presentation to the Coal Policy Committee in the summer of 2021, giving the committee a perspective of the local concerns of development. They continue to be active in protecting the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River.



In June 2021, CPAWS Northern Alberta was a recipient of an Emerald Award with CPAWS Southern Alberta and the Alberta Environment Network for the Defend Alberta Parks Campaign. In the fall of 2021, the Emerald Foundation released their documentary series featuring award recipients.

Defending Alberta's Parks and opposing coal development in Alberta's eastern slopes are two files that we continue to collaborate on with our southern neighbours, CPAWS Southern Alberta. This provides a unified front on these issues, allows us to pool resources, and connects Albertans across the province.

- CPAWS Northern Alberta is proud to have helped bring together groups to form a coalition focused on oil sands tailings management, particularly the potential for treated tailings releases into the Athabasca River. The group brings Indigenous environmental groups and environmental non-governmental organizations together from Alberta and the Northwest Territories.
- CPAWS Northern Alberta continues to collaborate with AI-Pac, Mistik, CPAWS Saskatchewan and Ducks Unlimited Canada on a northeastern Alberta/ northwestern Saskatchewan Conservation Areas Network project. Over the past year, we have completed the conservation areas model to identify priority sites and have developed tools for communities to assess potential areas for protection. We are eager to continue work with the project team, and the Indigenous communities to move some conservation proposals forward.
- In the summer of 2021, we led a joint letter that was sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee urging serious action on Wood Buffalo National Park. Over 30 Indigenous Communities, scientists, and Environmental Organizations signed onto the joint letter.



Photo: Global Forest Watch Canada



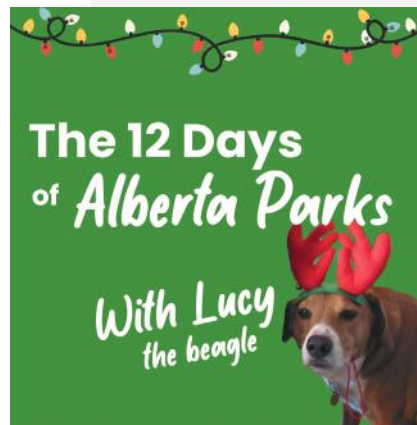
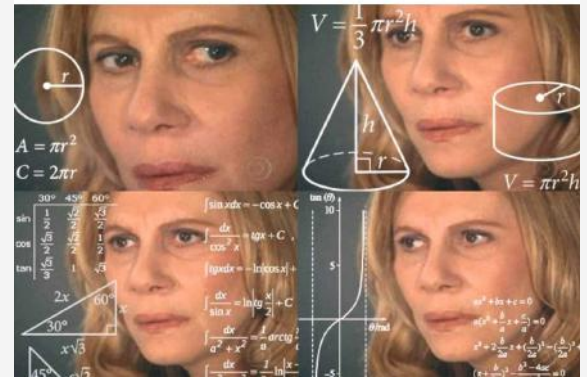
Education and Communication with the Public

Over the past year, our chapter has continued to refine and expand our brand through our social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and now, TikTok. Our online communication strategy remains a core piece of communicating with the public.



To reach the public about our conservation work, our chapter has been putting out more creative communication pieces and social media series. One is the 'Delta Feud' in collaboration with CPAWS Saskatchewan, a playful Twitter feud that shared facts and information about each of the province's river deltas through memes. CPAWS Northern Alberta put out its first [Summer Reading List in 2021](#), titles that featured nature, Indigenous teachings, and conservation were featured through the summer to deepen our community's understanding of a diverse range of topics related to our work. Over the Holidays, we released the social media series '12 Days of Alberta Parks', a play on 'the 12 days of Christmas'. For each of the days, we introduced a new designation that existed in the Alberta Parks system with examples within the province. Although technical, the series was well received, and partners have requested copies of the graphics.

Whooping crane flocks trying to make it safely across kilometres of tailings ponds



How can urban parks help us through climate change?



SOURCE:

Our chapter released our video on potential new coal mines in the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan in June 2021. It featured the beautiful Clearwater Country region, with stunning drone and helicopter footage from Luma Labs and Locke Stock Creative. Thank you to our supporters and donors that made it possible to send reporters and videographers to capture and cover the jarring cumulative impacts of industry on the landscape.

Photo: Andrew Russell



In 2021-2022 we saw an increase in the number of people opening our newsletter emails and clicking through the links provided. We continue to find that email is one of the most effective and direct ways to get our members to take action! We have seen great results from our letter-writing campaigns for specific, place-based wildlife campaigns. In our campaign to halt logging in Moon Creek caribou habitat over 850 letters were sent, and over 1600 letters were sent demanding greater protections for wild wood bison herds. If you do not yet receive our monthly digital newsletter, you can [sign up](#) on our website!

Following our 2020-2021 year, our chapter was well versed in pulling together online events to engage with our supporters. We were thrilled to partner with Caitlin Bodewitz, an artist local to Edmonton, for a viewing of her film 'Mothers of the Mountains'. We felt lucky to host our own viewing to engage our audience in our caribou campaigns. In June 2020, we held an event named "Why does coal in the Rocky Mountains matter to #YEG", presenting on the current state of events with coal development and how it could impact the watersheds on which Edmontonians' depend. Leading into the holidays, we held a Coal Townhall with CPAWS Southern Alberta in December focusing on remaining threats to Alberta's eastern slopes and unreleased reports from the Coal Policy Committee.



Artwork: Caitlin Bodewitz

2022 Highlights

by the numbers



8,987 letters sent



27 press releases

3 events hosted





24 Media Interviews

26 Talks/lectures 

**All 6 CPAWS Northern Alberta
staff are now permanent!**



*Yup - that's right! We're a small
but mighty team of only six!*

The Future of Coal in Alberta

A Timeline of Coal from the Beginning - a recap of how it all started

In June 2020, without any public consultation, the Government of Alberta cancelled a longstanding provincial policy on coal development that had been in place since 1976. Consequently, much of the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies were opened to the prospect of devastating impacts of coal development. This change allowed coal mining companies to acquire new coal leases throughout the Alberta Rockies and applications for exploration and development in areas where this activity was previously restricted. More than 186,100 hectares of land previously unavailable for coal mining (known as 'Category 2' lands under the Coal Policy) were leased to mining companies, and hundreds of kilometers of roads were developed.

The cancellation of the Coal Policy removed land zoning that restricted open-pit coal mining and coal exploration in some of Alberta's most environmentally sensitive alpine and foothills regions. These areas provide Albertans, and much of the prairies, with most of the water we use in our day-to-day lives and are crucial habitat for species at risk such as grizzly bears, caribou, and native trout.

In response to rising concerns from Albertans across the province, the Coal Policy was reinstated in February 2021. In the months between the policy cancellation and re-instatement it became obvious that the existing policy was no longer sufficient to protect the environmental, social, and cultural values of Alberta's Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains. These crucial areas needed much more protection.

2021-2022

The Coal Policy Committee was appointed by the Government of Alberta in May 2021 and tasked with gathering public input for developing a new coal policy. The committee first released a brief survey on coal in Alberta, which only focused on the narrow question of how to regulate coal developments, while excluding the broader conversation about the long-term management of the Eastern Slopes and our mountain watersheds. We produced a survey guide to help the public participate that highlighted where the government's public survey fell short.



25,000 people completed the survey, with the results showing that the overwhelming majority of the Alberta public did not support new coal development.

Over the summer and early fall of 2021, CPAWS Northern Alberta was among a number of organizations, community members, and experts invited to deliver a presentation to the Coal Policy Committee. Subsequently we were asked to provide a written submission, which we prepared jointly with CPAWS Southern Alberta and the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative.

In the submission we had five core principles that a new coal policy should implement to reflect conservation values in Alberta:

1. No further coal exploration or development will be permitted on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta, including expansions of existing operations. The new coal policy should cover the entire area previously covered by the 1976 Coal Development Policy and prohibit new exploration and development in this entire area.
2. Existing thermal and metallurgical coal mining operations in this region will be permitted to reach the end of their lives but must meet all provincial and federal guidelines and regulations, including water quality guidelines, for the duration of operations, post-closure and post-reclamation.
3. Reclamation of lands disturbed by coal exploration activities with coal exploration permits must be reclaimed by the company no later than December 31, 2025. Reclamation costs should be covered in full by the companies and not fall to the taxpayer.
4. Closure and reclamation of mines no longer in operation should occur as soon as possible. Re-opening of mines in Care and Maintenance should be considered as 'new mine operation' and not be permitted.
5. Comprehensive land-use planning, including cumulative effects assessment and threshold planning, should be conducted across the Eastern Slopes to address the impacts of all other land-uses and activities in the region as soon as possible. The Land Use Framework contains the tools for Regional Plans and/or subregional plans that take this comprehensive approach.



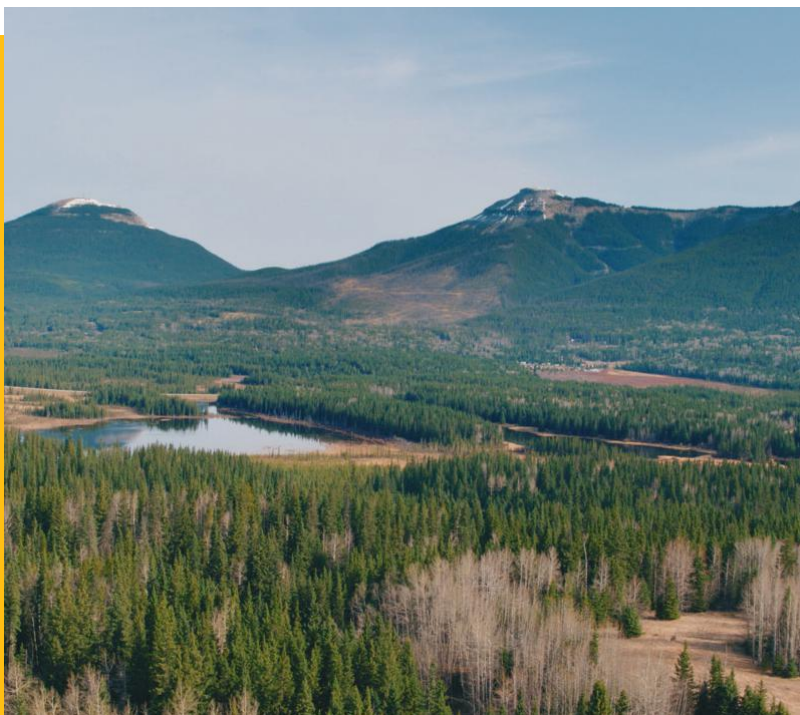
West Country Sustainability Coalition (WCSC) Participation

CPAWS Northern Alberta was successful in supporting the creation of the West Country Sustainability Coalition (WCSC), a voluntary group of ~30 residents, recreation users, and organizations working together to prevent new open-pit coal mines and promoting environmental sustainability in the Bighorn Backcountry region. CPAWS Northern Alberta staff provided coordination and administrative support which resulted in the development of Terms of Reference for the WCSC, and the appointment of a steering committee. With this structure in place the WCSC has been able to effectively engage with the Coal Policy Committee consultation and public discourse around the future of coal in the Eastern Slopes. The WCSC was invited to present to the Coal Policy Committee as a stakeholder group from the region and arranged to meet with committee members on their visit to Central Alberta.

The WCSC has presented to six regional municipalities regarding coal and written three letters to the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment. Effectively raising the profile and voice of the environmentally concerned locals in the region. Additionally, the WCSC has been supported in the creation of a website which continues to be developed to act as an information resource for the region. learn more: <https://westcountrysc.com/>

Engaging and communicating with the public on coal

- In the summer of 2021 and leading to the end of the calendar year, our engagement and public outreach focused on having Albertans understand that although the coal policy had been reinstated and no activity would be permitted in Category 2 lands, there were many avenues remaining for coal activity to go forward in Alberta. CPAWS Northern Alberta focused on educating the public about the risks to our waters, the ecological integrity to our landscapes, and bringing forward that the risks these projects hold would outweigh the short-term economic benefits.
- Our chapter provided detailed information for the public to participate in the provincial Coal Policy Committee's engagement process. The public was provided with the context they needed to know what the remaining concerns were for the future of coal in Alberta, who the Coal Policy Committee was, what the committee's role in the process was and, what the most up to date government decisions were on coal and what the implications of those orders may be.



CPAWS Northern Alberta filmed and released a West Country focused [“Say No to Coal” video](#), reaching over 5000 people on social media. Our social media posts for our press releases received the highest engagement and traction, showing that CPAWS Northern Alberta was a trusted source for updates on coal in the province.

Over the last year, the CPAWS Northern Alberta website ranked in the top 10 for the following key words and phrases: “open pit mine in alberta”, “the rockies mining”, “alberta land use planning resource”, “coal in alberta mountains”, highlighting the importance of the information we were providing to the Alberta public on this issue.

Engaging with Government and other Partners on coal

CPAWS Northern Alberta representatives met twice with Environment and Climate Change Canada to provide feedback on the draft federal Coal Mine Effluent Regulations, and submitted joint feedback and recommendations on the draft regulation with CPAWS Southern Alberta in February 2022. Additionally, we solicited advice from EcoJustice Canada to engage on the federal review process of the Vista Coal Spur Mine expansion, who is seeking to expand their existing open pit coal mine project in Hinton, Alberta. The Vista Coal Mine Expansion currently faces several challenges, including a shortage of investors interested in coal, a renewed federal review of its proposed expansion of its existing coal mine, and a federal government that says it wants to stop exporting thermal coal.

The Government of Alberta's Coal Policy Committee Releases their Reports

In March 2022, the Government of Alberta released the two reports produced by the Coal Policy Committee. The first report, [‘Engaging Albertans about Coal’](#), outlined the major concepts and themes that emerged from the public engagement process. The report noted that there are several significant policy issues that need to be addressed before any new major coal developments should be embraced by governments, such as greater use of cumulative effects management, improved engagement and respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples, and the need for enhanced water monitoring and management. The Committee also highlighted that the majority of survey respondents felt affected by the management of coal, that the environmental impacts of coal, and where it happens, are top of mind issues for Albertans, and that there is a general lack of confidence in how coal development is currently regulated in the province.

The other report released was the [‘Recommendations for the Management of Coal Resources in Alberta’](#), which contained eight principal recommendations for the long-term management of Alberta's coal resources. Of note was the recommendation that land use guidance for coal exploration and development be articulated through planning under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, as the Government of Alberta announced on the same day the reports were released that all new coal-related exploration and development activities in the Eastern Slopes would be restricted until direction on coal activities had been embedded in new or updated land-use plans.

While land-use planning is long overdue for most regions in Alberta, we do not need to go through land use planning to understand that there is no place on the eastern slopes that is appropriate for coal; this was made quite clear in the public consultation process. The recent announcement to re-instate the 1976 policy and push the decision to individual land use plans was a missed opportunity to address the environmental risks and prohibit coal permanently through a new legally enforceable Coal Policy or legislation.



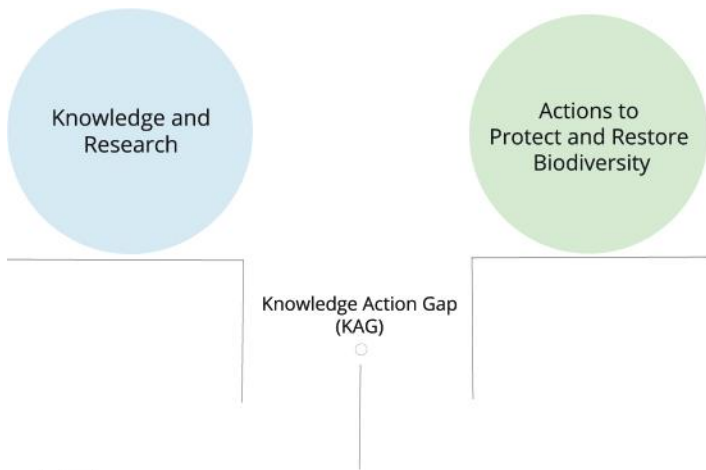
In collaboration with organizations across the province we were successful in eliminating the immediate threat of coal in Alberta's headwaters!

The decision to move forward with coal mine development has been postponed to future land-use planning, making our other achievements, such as elevating the profile of the issue, and a base of educated and engaged Albertans that much more meaningful.

Academic features



Did you know that the CPAWS Northern Alberta team also contributes to, and is involved in, academic research? Our connections to academia and the best available science are important tools that guide our conservation work.



Information is difficult to access

Scientists, practitioners, and policy makers are charged high fees to access paywalled journals.



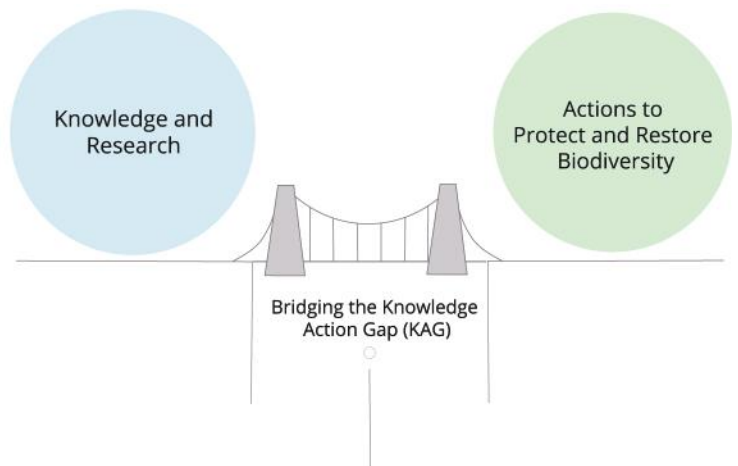
Information is difficult to interpret

Research results lack sufficient detail for stakeholders to assess a study's methods, data, and relevance to their work.



Information and tools are difficult to use

Even when information is accessible, knowledge/expertise is needed to put it into practice.



Open Access Publishing

New publishing models allow authors to publish information at low or no costs and readers to access it freely.



Open Materials

Making data, code, software, and protocols public helps stakeholders assess the quality and relevance of information.



Open Education Resources

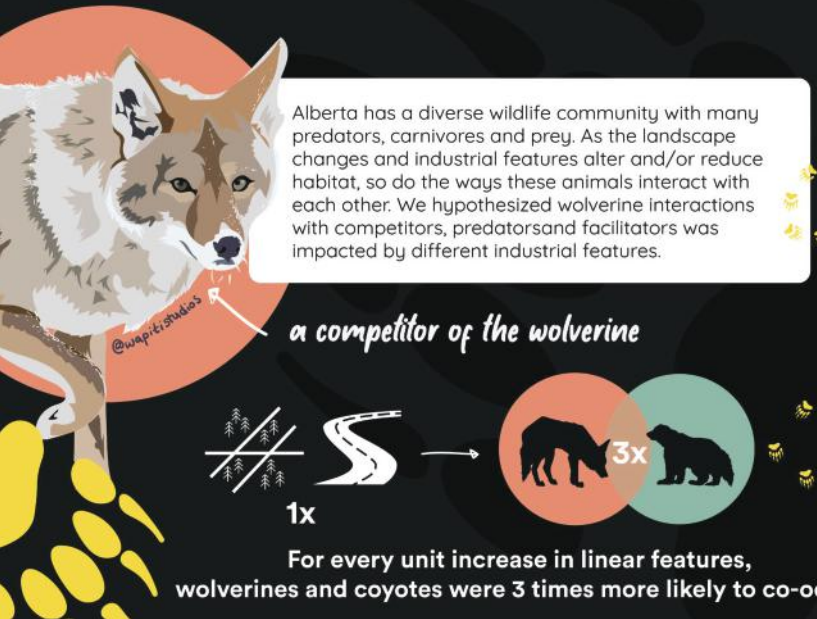
Free educational resources help conservation professionals (scientists, practitioners, policy makers) acquire the knowledge needed to use scientific information and tools

All icons designed by OpenMoji – the open-source emoji and icon project. License: CC BY-SA 4.0, Padlock has been modified from original.

Kecia co-authored a paper that was published in *Conservation Biology*. The research focused on barriers that exist between conservation researchers and practitioners (practitioners in this scenario can be policy makers looking to implement conservation science findings, professionals in the non-profit sector, and industry, to name a few.) Elise made an infographic for the submission, that will also be used in future academic presentations explaining the research. Roche et al. 2021. Closing the knowledge-action gap in conservation with openscience. *Conservation Biology* <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/cobi.13835>

Landscape change shifts competitive dynamics between declining at-risk wolverines and range-expanding coyotes, compelling a new conservation focus

Gillian Chow-Fraser, Nicole Helm, John Paczkowski, John P. Volpe, Jason T. Fisher - Biol Cons, Feb 2022



Wolverine are a species in decline across North America--in Alberta, they are disappearing from areas with high levels of industrial disturbances. In order to better inform conservation actions, we examined the potential mechanisms driving wolverine range contractions.



Linear features (roads and seismic lines) increased likelihood of wolverine and coyote co-occurrence-- suggesting wolverine are being outcompeted from heavily disturbed areas due to increased overlap with numerically-abundant coyotes. This could be why wolverine populations are struggling in parts of their native range where linear disturbances are dense and coyote populations are high.

Conservation Implications

- Conservation actions should consider species interactions in their management. In this case, **linear feature restoration and management might help mitigate wolverine declines or range contractions.**
- In Alberta, wolverine are listed as "Data Deficient" based on an assessment done over 20 years ago. Studies have looked at the threats facing wolverine in Alberta and a clearer picture of necessary management actions exists. A re-assessment of the status of wolverine is needed.

Gillian published research on wolverine in the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains, contributing to the knowledge on wolverine declines in the region. Her research showed that industrial features, such as roads and seismic lines, could be driving wolverine declines by increasing competition between wolverines and coyotes.

Under Alberta's Wildlife Act, wolverine are listed as "Data Deficient" based on an assessment done over 20 years ago.

Since then, many studies have looked at the threats facing wolverine in the province and a clearer picture of necessary management actions exists today. The researchers strongly encourage a re-assessment of the status of wolverine in Alberta.



The Twin Crises and our Species at Risk Work

When we refer to the twin crises, we are referring to the climate and biodiversity crises. At the core of CPAWS Northern Alberta's mission, we work to increase the protection and integrity of our public lands and waters. Working towards increased protected areas has been shown to halt and reverse the twin crises. The biodiversity crisis specifically refers to the loss of species, and overall, the rapid decline of species populations.

Species decline can be indicative of the overall health of ecosystems and looking at species decline can be an indicator that land and water management practices are failing our ecosystems. We advocate for measures that protect species habitat, which is a challenge with competing interests in the area (like industry and recreation.)

We've highlighted some of our work for two species at risk in Alberta: wild bison and caribou.

Bison

Did you know that before 2021, wood bison were not legally considered "Wildlife" in Alberta? Without legal protections under the province's Wildlife Act, wild wood bison were vulnerable to threats like unregulated harvest. Working with the Indigenous group, ShagowAskee, and bison experts, CPAWS NAB campaigned to have Alberta rightfully designate wood bison as a species at risk.

We led a public campaign which garnered over 1,600 letters of support, launched our "[Bison in Alberta](#)" webpage on the CPAWS website, and attracted media attention to the issue.

In November, 2021, the Government of Alberta announced they were listing Wood Bison and providing them certain protections as a species at risk. This included designation as "Threatened" in areas across northern Alberta, a stop to unregulated hunting of dwindling wild herds, and a new Bison Protection Area for the Wabasca herd.

Updating the legal protective status for wood bison was an important first step in ensuring their recovery in Alberta. It means there is now strong underpinning for more action, which must include habitat conservation and protection for the most imperiled herds.

Photo: Martin Prentice



Photo: Gillian Chow-Fraser



Photo: Martin Prentice

Woodland Caribou

Photo: John E. Marriott

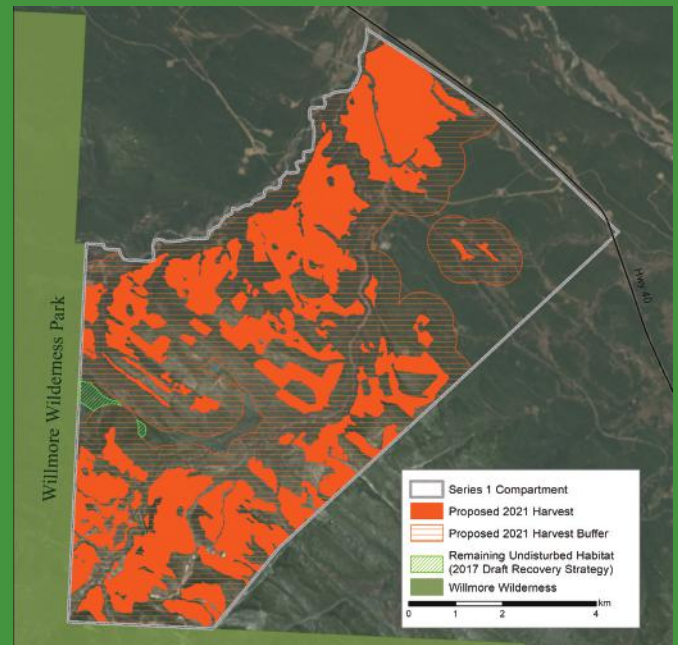
Woodland caribou are an “indicator species”, because they are so sensitive to human activities and depend on old-growth forests and carbon-storing wetlands. Their declines indicate that the boreal forest is not being managed in an environmentally sustainable way. Our work on recovering woodland caribou in Alberta focuses primarily on improving habitat-based conservation measures, like habitat protection, and improving land management where caribou roam.

This is exemplified by our campaign to stop harmful logging plans in caribou habitat near Grande Cache. In August 2021, CPAWS NAB became aware of imminent plans to log over 2,600 hectares of timber, of which 900 hectares was caribou critical habitat in the A La Peche herd range. This would have been a significant loss to the A La Peche herd and would contradict recovery objectives under the Species At Risk Act (SARA).



CPAWS NAB collaborated with several other environmental groups and land users to oppose the logging plans. A public campaign garnered over 800 letters sent to the forestry company and Alberta, immediately urging the logging plans be deferred. CPAWS NAB produced [an analysis report](#) that mapped the proposed cut blocks and calculated impacts to caribou, old-growth forests, and Athabasca Rainbow Trout habitat.

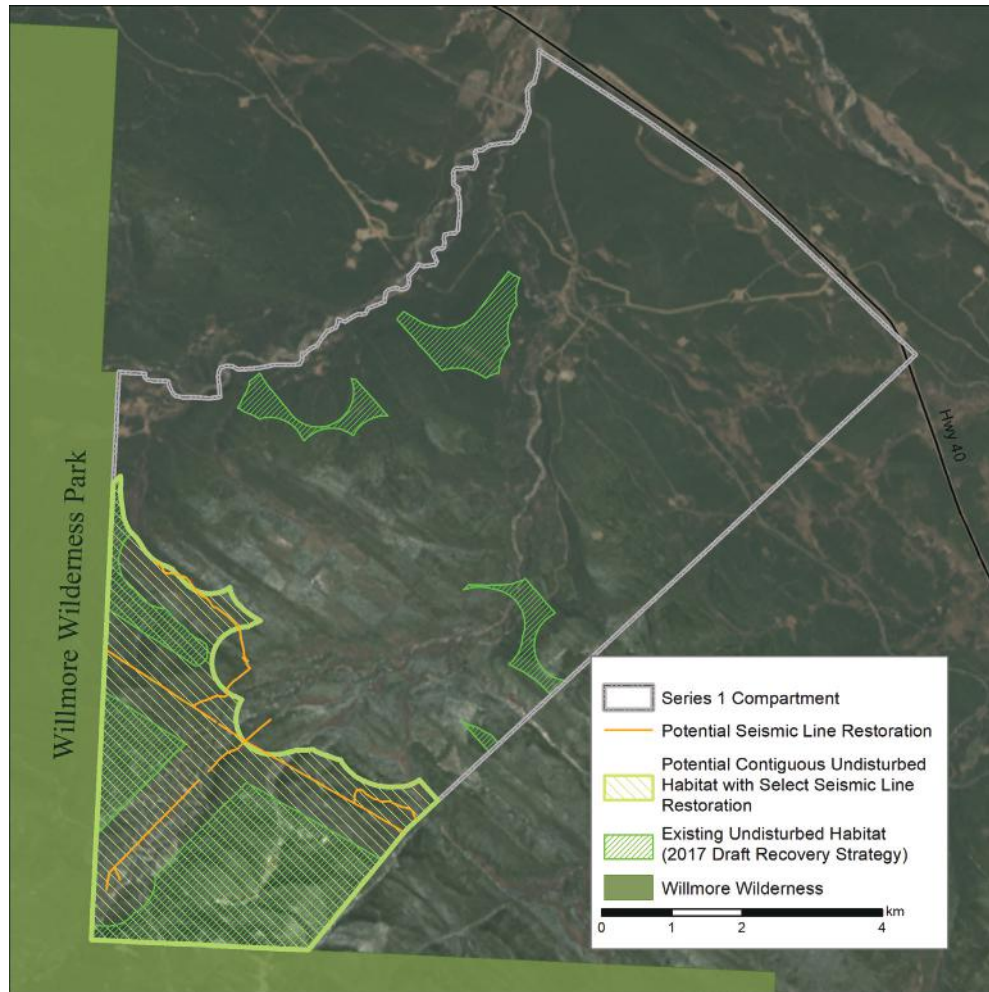
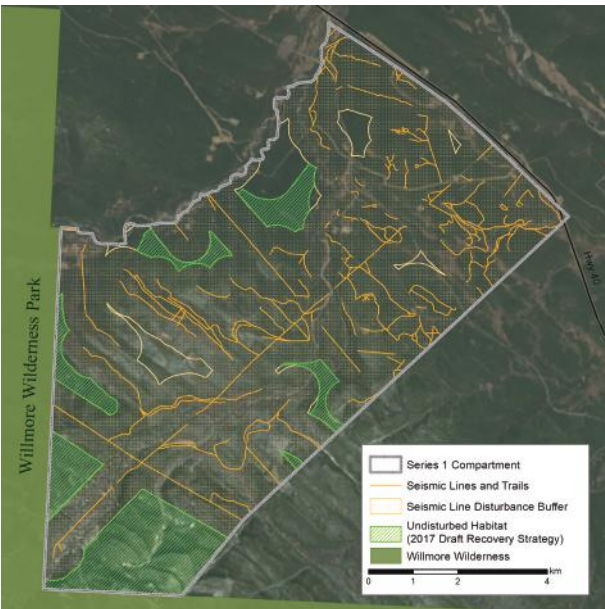
The logging did not occur in the Fall, as scheduled. And, ultimately, the Government of Alberta provided new direction to forestry companies identifying a new “No Harvest Zone” in a portion of the caribou range. Shortly thereafter, the forestry company confirmed to CPAWS NAB they would seek timber elsewhere and defer logging until land use planning occurred in the region.



It should be noted that Alberta’s first caribou range plans were released shortly after this fiscal year (April 2022), and CPAWS NAB will be reviewing the plans to assess whether they provide effective critical habitat protections for caribou.

The Importance of Spatial Analysis

CPAWS Northern Alberta has a long history of using spatial analysis and mapping in our campaigns. The importance of spatial analysis was showcased in the Canadian Press article “High-tech tools let environmentalists monitor remote development of coal exploration projects” which explained the use of spatial datasets and satellite imagery to locate and identify coal exploration activities in the Bighorn area of the Eastern Slopes. In addition to **identifying areas of future industrial development**, our chapter also uses spatial analysis to **identify areas for potential restoration**.



We have chosen to feature a map from 2021 that shows an example of how mapping can be used to prioritize restoration efforts for the biggest impact.

The featured map for 2021 is from the Moon Creek report – the final map of that report highlighted areas that have high caribou habitat gains for low restoration costs. Through our analysis, we were able to identify a small number of seismic lines that, if restored to natural conditions, would result in a significant increase in the extent of undisturbed caribou habitat. The restoration of these seismic lines would be a great “bang for the buck” as restoring 13 km of seismic line could result in over 800 ha in habitat. This would create a contiguous block of over 1500 ha! The restoration potential for this area was so significant that the Government of Alberta subsequently established a “No Harvest Zone” that covered this area until further land use planning could take place.

Financial Overview

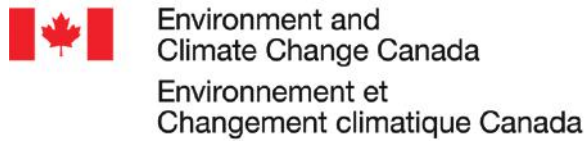
Financial Status

CPAWS Northern Alberta is incorporated as a non-profit society in Alberta and governed by a board of directors. CPAWS Northern Alberta shares a charitable number with our National office and other chapters of CPAWS across the country (106865272 RR0001). Individual donors, granting foundations, the provincial and federal governments, businesses, and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) financially support CPAWS Northern Alberta. **Please note that if you received a printed copy of the report it will have included an unaudited summary of our revenues and expenses. Below is the draft summary of our audited finances 2021-2022 prepared by Peterson-Walker LLP Chartered Professional Accountants.**

Summary of Revenue & Expenses

	DRAFT Audited 2021-2022	Audited 2020-2021
Revenue		
Grants & Contracts	\$ 377,304	\$ 337,178
Gaming (AGLC Casino Funds)	\$ 6,203	\$ 39,749
Donors & Supporters	\$ 72,909	\$ 108,179
Other	\$ 960	\$ 16,135
	\$ 457,376	\$ 501,241
Expenses		
Salaries, Benefits & Contracts	\$ 381,334	\$ 406,891
Professional Development & Fees	\$ 11,565	\$ 5,763
Insurance, Bank Fees & Amortization	\$ 4,371	\$ 5,193
Outreach, Advertising & Travel	\$ 41,156	\$ 50,388
Rent, Office Supplies, IT	\$ 13,700	\$ 14,640
	\$ 452,126	\$ 482,875
Revenue (Under) Over Expenses	\$ 5,250	\$ 18,367

Thank you to our Funders



& many individual donors, like YOU!

How to support us



Photo: Tara Russell

[Contribute to our Edmonton Community Foundation Endowment Funds](#)



Photo: Gillian Chow-Fraser

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Photo: Gillian Chow-Fraser

[Volunteer](#)

Can you guess which ungulate
these antlers belong to?

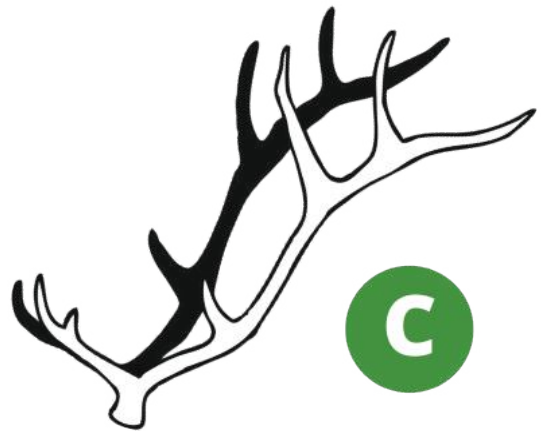
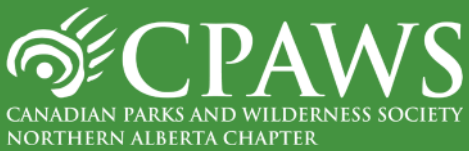




Photo: Gillian Chow-Fraser



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