



CPAWS Northern Alberta
Annual Report 2016-17 (DRAFT)

Message from the Chapter

Fifty years have passed since our grassroots beginnings, and CPAWS Northern Alberta remains true to our foundation as an Albertan-driven organization that pushes to protect our land and waters for the benefit of wildlife, and people, for generations to come.

Our vision is an Alberta that embraces conservation and has a large, connected, protected area network. In May 2016, we released our three part “Alberta’s Caribou: A Guide to Caribou Range Planning, and we continue to pressure the government to include protected areas in the draft range plans for Alberta’s 15 caribou herds. These plans are set to be released in late October.

Our primary campaign of the year has been our *Love Your Headwaters* campaign, our push for protection of the Bighorn Backcountry, headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River. This campaign is in partnership with the Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative (Y2Y). Our goal is to build public support for protection of the area and bring that support to the Minister of Environment and Parks in the form of a petition by the end of the year.

This year saw a large change over in staff. Our Executive Director Alison Ronson started a new position at the CPAWS National Office in Ottawa as National Director of the Parks Program. We brought on Kecia Kerr, a former board member with a PhD in ecology as our new Executive Director. Our Conservation Planner Danielle Pendlebury took a position with the Government of Alberta, and Ellyn Davidson, who was on a temporary contract, has filled her position.

Yours in Conservation,

Patrick Chan, Chair of the Board of Directors

Kecia Kerr, Executive Director



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968

National Parks

We had a busy year working on the three National Parks in Northern Alberta and they continue to be a key focus of our conservation efforts. We continue to oppose the proposed Icefields Trail in Jasper National Park. This proposal is a 109 km separate bike trail through wilderness and species-at-risk habitat from Jasper townsite to Wilcox campground with a price tag of \$86 million. CPAWS Northern Alberta has been engaged on this issue since the beginning. The chapter has attended public consultations and wrote a detailed letter opposing the trail. The chapter has also traveled to Jasper to meet with the Jasper Environmental Association to discuss the trail, and participated in Parks Day to raise awareness.

Wood Buffalo National Park was the focus of a UNESCO Mission to study whether or not the park's ecological values are at risk. Alison Ronson from CPAWS NAB and Alison Woodley from CPAWS National gave a presentation to the UNESCO Mission in Edmonton and worked with the Mikisew Cree First Nation and other ENGOs to support the UNESCO Mission. This mission, resulted in UNESCO providing a list of recommendations that Canada must act on to restore ecological integrity. If these recommendations are not completed the park will be listed as a World Heritage Site in Danger. One of the risks to the park is the proposed Teck Frontier Oils Sands mine. CPAWS NAB has submitted comments on the environmental assessment for this project. In August, the review panel announced that a special environmental assessment focused solely on the impacts of the project on the park will be required before the project can move forward! This is a big win!

Elk Island National Park is working to develop a strategy for the overpopulation of ungulates in the park (deer, moose, elk, and bison). We have been consulting with them and recommending strategies. This past year we delivered a presentation on national parks issues at the Canadian Mountain Symposium, and to numerous university classes and Rotary Chapters.

CPAWS National chapter, with input from chapters across the country released our annual Parks report, this year with a focus on Canada's laggard status compared to other countries. We are dead last among the G7 countries when it comes to percent protected – and are even behind other large land mass countries such as the United States and Brazil!

CPAWS Parks Report made a splash, including a feature in the Globe and Mail's editorial comic



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968

Provincial Parks and Land Use Planning

We continue to push for the protection of the Bighorn Backcountry. This beautiful area is considered one of Alberta's last areas of intact wilderness, is home to many at-risk species, such as grizzly bears, wolverines, and bull trout, and is the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River. This headwaters region is the source of nearly 90% of the water that is used in Edmonton. It is shocking that it remains unprotected. We have partnered with the Yellowstone to Yukon conservation initiative (Y2Y) on the Love Your Headwaters Campaign (loveyourheadwaters.ca), which has the goal of designating this significant wilderness area as a Wildland Provincial Park. Our summer outreach was focused on this campaign. We have delivered many presentations to municipal councils, schools, and community groups, and Stony Plain and Spruce Grove municipalities wrote letters of support for protecting the Bighorn. We presented at the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance Non-Government Organization Forum on Bighorn protection, and we continue to negotiate with forestry companies to support Bighorn protection. We have also been at community events around Edmonton and beyond, discussing this campaign, and have collected over 3000 signatures in support of the campaign. Our Summer Outreach Assistant, Rayleigh Conley, is a true outreach superstar, and even went "rogue" to increase her impact.

As part of this campaign, we have partnered with local breweries to bring attention to our headwaters. Bent Stick Brewing, Alley Kat Brewing, and Blind Enthusiasm are supporting the campaign because "Great Beer needs Great Water"! Bent Stick has labeled 3000 bottles with our logo. These can be found in stores around Alberta, and many restaurants in Edmonton. Co-branded coasters will also be found in Edmonton establishments soon! Alley Kat will distribute 3300 6-packs with our label which will also be distributed around Edmonton. This has been a fun initiative that has even earned us an interview on CBC Edmonton AM.



Label graphic for Alley Kat Beers.



Bent Stick beer meets its headwaters - Stephen Legault.





Planning remains a primary focus in our efforts to work with the Provincial Government. Our chapter continues to use our expertise in science and GIS to promote the protection of wildlife and wilderness areas by mapping the province based on ecosystem values and producing publications that are available for the public. Stephane Bowen took a short-term contact with our chapter as the Conservation GIS Analyst. His work assessed the gaps in current protection in each of our province's natural subregions. This has been a valuable tool in our discussions with Government of Alberta about meeting Canada's Target 1 Goal (protecting 17% of land and inland waters by 2020). He also began important work on disturbance in our provincial parks which will be completed, in partnership with CPAWS Southern Alberta, using funding from Alberta Ecotrust and MEC.

With funding from KEEN, we completed a report building on our conservation blueprint that mapped the conservation and recreation value of Alberta's eastern slopes in the Northwest of the province. This report will be a valuable resource for future conversations about spatial planning for conservation and recreation values, as we saw this year with the announcement of the Castle Wildland Parks,

Boreal Forest and Wildlife

Since the release of our *Alberta's Caribou: A Guide to Range Planning (vols 1-3)* in May 2016, we have used these valuable resources extensively to advance caribou planning and protection. The guides lay out the results of a mapping analysis that combined ecosystem values and industrial footprint. The resources have led to more in depth conversations and sharing of data with Government of Alberta staff. We have since expanded our analysis, and now have recommendations for protection of two important Southern Mountain caribou ranges. This work is currently being used in a caribou planning process with Weyerhaeuser. We continue to work with Tolko, North Peace Tribal Council, and other ENGOs to find conservation stewardship solutions in North West Alberta and the Red Earth Caribou Range.

This past summer has remained busy with the Chapter expanding our reach and engaging northern Alberta communities regarding caribou conservation. Ellyn and our summer student Rayleigh travelled to Grande Prairie to talk to community members about caribou and foothills and headwaters conservation. They attended a local festival, delivered a presentation to the public library, and met with Alberta Environment and Parks staff.

Tara travelled to High Level and Manning to present at an open house hosted by the "North West Species At Risk Committee" regarding their draft report on caribou conservation. This group was a tough crowd as they do not want to see any increase



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968



in protected areas in the region, however Tara was able to have some productive conversations about caribou and boreal forest conservation, and correct some misinformation.

Kecia was invited to be a panelist on Whitecourt Chamber of Commerce's "Caribou, Forestry, & You" Public Panel Information Session, alongside representatives from forestry, oil and gas, the federal government, and the provincial government, including the Government of Alberta's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. This discussion was also very difficult, but Kecia was able to pepper it with good science-based conservation recommendations for caribou conservation.



Kecia Kerr speaks about the importance of protecting caribou in a panel hosted by the Whitecourt Chamber of Commerce.

Government Relations

Our chapter continues to meet and develop relationships with key government personnel and staff in order to advance conservation efforts in Alberta. This past year has seen us schedule regular meetings with Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers in Alberta Environment and Parks department. These provide us with a valuable space to have two way dialogue about conservation issues including caribou protection and parks development and management. We hosted our annual lobby day with CPAWS Southern Alberta staff, and had a great opportunity to discuss conservation issues with many MLAs. We also met with the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada to discuss caribou conservation. Our chapter's attendance at a Government Relations workshop put on by the Alberta Environment Network has been put to good use!



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968



CPAWS Staff and Volunteers talk to kids in Strathcona County about the importance of intact forested headwaters

Outreach

Our staff, board members and many volunteers continue to promote our conservation goals and educate the public at every opportunity. We hosted and attended many events throughout the year. Here is a list of some of those events:

- Our Executive Director presented at AB Ecotrust's 2nd annual Environmental Gathering and a hosted workshop
- Hosted Love Your Headwaters Pop-Up Festivals
- Spoke to members of Rotary Clubs and residents of Seniors homes
- Hosted a Conversation Café at Edmonton Resilience Festival;
- Staffed a water station at the Edmonton Marathon, had a booth at the vendor expo
- Had a table at Edmonton and area Farmers Markets
- Participated in the Edmonton Craft Beer Festival
- Presented in multiple University of Alberta classes
- Participated in University of Alberta's Student Sustainability Summit
- Hosted a booth at Sustainival: The World's First Green Carnival
- Hosted a booth at Parks Day in Jasper National Park
- Hosted a booth at Bison Festival in Elk Island National Park
- Attended the American Bison Society Conference
- Attended the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society Conference



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968

- Supported MEC's South Edmonton Common opening
- Hosted Dax Justin, adventurer and photographer, as a presenter for our fundraising event in November at the Yellowhead Brewery
- Partnered with Track and Trail to host Edmonton viewing of Best of Banff Mountain Film Festival and ran the concession at the event
- Participated in Family Day at the Edmonton Valley Zoo
- Presented at Inside Education's Gener8 Youth Climate Summit
- Took a trip with Junior High Students to the Bighorn Backcountry
- Presented to the public at the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library
- Held our "Big Wild Challenge", board and staff members paddled the North Saskatchewan to raise funds for the chapter and increase awareness about protection of our headwaters



Elmwood Elementary Students Learn about headwaters on a river valley field trip. Our erosion exhibit shows the importance of intact forests for clean drinking water.

Media Highlights

CPAWS NAB increased our media presence this year with multiple print stories in the Edmonton Journal, metro news, Fitzhugh, and features on CTV's Alberta Primetime and CBC's Edmonton AM.

CPAWS Northern Alberta

Board of Directors

Patrick Chan, Chair

Liv Vors, Secretary and Chair of Conservation Committee

Dan Thompson, Director



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968



Marcus Becker, Director
Nick Scott, Director
Matt Dow, Director
Kecia Kerr, Director (now E.D.)
James Early, former Director
Ina Lucila, former Director

Chapter Staff

Current:

Kecia Kerr, Executive Director
Ellyn Davidson, Conservation Director
Tara Russell, Program Director
Carlos Bautista, Financial Controller

Former Staff (2016/2017):

Rayleigh Conley, Summer Outreach Coordinator
Alison Ronson, Executive Director
Danielle Pendlebury, Conservation Planner
Stephane Bowen, Conservation GIS Analyst

Overview

CPAWS believes that wilderness belongs to all Canadians – both current and future generations – and we want to see all Canadians given an equal opportunity to enjoy it. That’s why, since 1963, CPAWS has led the way in helping create over two-thirds of Canada’s protected areas – an overall area that is larger than the Yukon Territory! A nation-wide, charitable non-profit organization, CPAWS is dedicated to gaining greater protection for Canada’s public lands and waters, including the responsible management of our protected areas and responsible land use planning

Vision

We aspire to an Alberta that embraces conservation and has a large protected wilderness network.

Mission

We achieve conservation and legislated wilderness protection in Alberta through research, collaboration, and community outreach.

Core Values

- Wilderness, Conservation and Biodiversity



PO Box 52031, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

www.cpawsnab.org

Keeping Alberta Wild Since 1968



- Collaboration
- Community Engagement
- Evidence-based Decision Making
- Accountability

Financial Overview

A financial statement for the chapter will be included in the final version of our annual report, once our audited statements have been received.

Thanks!

The following organizations have supported our work this year:

Mountain Equipment Cooperative
Alberta Ecotrust
Edmonton Community Foundation
Keen Effect
Alpine Club of Canada
The Schad Foundation
Patagonia
T-Gear
The Sitka Foundation
RBC Bluewater Foundation
Park Power
Allstate
The United Way
Running Room
Track n' Trail
Bent Stick Brewery
Alley Kat Brewery

