



Annual Report 2010-2011

CPAWS Northern Alberta

 **CPAWS**
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY
NORTHERN ALBERTA

Staff and Board, 2010/2011

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amber Nicol, President
Alex Abboud, Past President/Vice-President
Morgan Gauthier, Treasurer
Wally Friesen, Secretary
Stephen Mayor, Conservation Committee Chair
Shawn Gervais, Director
Cathy Cullingham, Director

CHAPTER STAFF

Kelly Sloan, current Executive Director
Helene Walsh, Boreal Program Director
Jennifer Liu, Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper
Katherine Thompson, past Executive Director*
Kate Charuk, past Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator*
George Poitras, past Aboriginal Outreach Project Coordinator*
* Former staff

About CPAWS NAB

OVERVIEW

CPAWS is a national organization dedicated to the preservation of wilderness and biodiversity across Canada. Since 1963, CPAWS has helped protect over 40 million hectares of Canada's most treasured wild places. CPAWS uses a collaborative approach to negotiate conservation goals with governments, First Nations, local communities, progressive industries and other environmental organizations. With chapters across the country, CPAWS creates effective national campaigns that draw upon and support regional needs.

The Northern Alberta Chapter was the society's first designated regional chapter in 1968. We focus on the northern two-thirds of the province for our conservation program. Given the mounting threats from climate change and land use pressures, CPAWS Northern Alberta has three priorities: increase the percentage of protected land, maintain the integrity of established parks and ensure responsible land use.

MISSION

To advance the protection of wilderness and biodiversity in Alberta.

VISION

Alberta has a large protected wilderness network with representative healthy ecosystems, landscape-scale conservation zones and committed land stewardship. The wilderness legacy that always has inspired Albertans is preserved for future generations.

Rocky Mountain Foothills
Alberta Foothills Network



Message from the Chapter President

The past year-and-a-half has been a busy one for the CPAWS Northern Alberta chapter with both its challenges and its opportunities. Throughout it all, the chapter remained committed to advancing the protection of wilderness and biodiversity in Alberta.

Central to the chapter's work over the past year was the Lower Athabasca campaign. The focus in 2010/2011 was on working with aboriginal communities through the chapter's Aboriginal Outreach Project and participating in the Province's Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan process. The chapter's role in implementing the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) in northern Alberta took shape this year as well further supporting our work in the Lower Athabasca.

The chapter also continued to implement its ParksWatch program. An important success in this area was the withdrawal of contentious changes to the Alberta Parks Act. Another area of focus was on providing input to the Elk Island Management Plan process and continuing to advocate for the protection of ecological integrity in Canada's national parks.

As we move into 2012, the chapter leadership is looking forward to implementing a new strategic plan, expanding its new web site and social media presence, and achieving solid conservation results on the ground. The chapter also is welcoming Kelly Sloan as its Executive Director. Kelly brings over 25-years experience working and volunteering in the non-profit sector and her strong management skills and passion for Alberta's wild spaces will ensure CPAWS remains a strong voice for conservation in the years to come.

Thank-you for your continued support of CPAWS Northern Alberta. Together we are working to keep at least half of Canada's public land and water wild - forever.

Amber Nicol
Chapter President
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-Northern Alberta





Lower Athabasca River
David Dodge

Lower Athabasca Campaign

SEEKING PROTECTION OF ALBERTA'S LAST TRUE WILDERNESS

Throughout 2010 and 2011 the chapter continued to conduct its multi-year, multi-faceted Lower Athabasca Region (LAR) campaign in a number of areas. The primary objective of this campaign is to achieve protection of over half of the Athabasca Region – Alberta's last true wilderness. The LAR contains much of Alberta's intact boreal forest and remaining Woodland Caribou herds and is home to the Athabasca River, considered to be one of the most diverse and productive river valley systems in Canada's Boreal forest. This region is under intense development pressure.

WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The aboriginal outreach component of the Lower Athabasca campaign sought to develop partnerships with local communities on joint priorities and support aboriginal communities in engaging in the Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan (LAIRP) dialogue. Chapter staff engaged directly in discussions with members of five first nations communities and supported the work of the Keepers of the Athabasca watershed group. The main outcomes of this project were an improved relationship with communities in this region and a better understanding of opportunities to work together in the future. The chapter also supported participating communities in developing and launching an online petition based on their priorities.

PROVIDING A VOICE FOR CONSERVATION IN THE LAIRP PROCESS

Another major focus of the chapter's work over the past year was to provide science-based input into the LAIRP planning process at a number of stages. This included providing science-based comments on the initial advisory committee recommendations and on drafts of the plan. Chapter representatives also attended a number of open houses and raised awareness about issues and consultation opportunities amongst members and through the chapter's online networks. Input focused on protecting caribou habitat and maintaining the Athabasca watershed as a healthy, functioning ecosystem. While the Province's land use plan for the region is in its final stages, it has not yet been adopted. Major concerns with the draft plan include the low level of overall protection and the lack of protection of caribou habitat. In 2012 the chapter will continue to engage in this discussion and monitor any changes to the larger land use framework.





Clearwater River
David Dodge

ENGAGING CITIZENS

CPAWS Northern Alberta provided citizens with an opportunity to engage directly in protecting the Athabasca Heartland through a petition. In addition to 50 per cent protection, the petition called for the protection of areas that support traditional aboriginal uses, represent the biological diversity of the region, and are large and connected. Supporting this work, the chapter hosted a variety of content and links on its website to help people learn more about the ecological significance of the region and threats facing it. To-date more than 3,000 signatures were collected on-line and through community outreach.

PARTICIPATING IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Reinforcing the CPAWS commitment to collaborating with different stakeholder groups the chapter continued to be an active member of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) and its Sustainable Ecosystem Working Group. CEMA is a multi-stakeholder body tasked with providing recommendations to government on how to best monitor cumulative industrial effects in the Athabasca region. To help frame the discussion, the chapter submitted a report to the CEMA Board of Directors documenting evidence of cumulative effects in the region and expressing concern about the lack of ecological thresholds and appropriate monitoring.

Through its Lower Athabasca Campaign CPAWS Northern Alberta advocated for world-class conservation areas, caribou habitat protection, and aboriginal consultation and shared decision-making.





Peatland Upland Boundary

Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CANADA'S BOREAL FOREST

The Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) is a formal agreement (signed May 2010) by forest companies belonging to the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) and many environmental groups including CPAWS. The CBFA replaces market protests, such as those targeting Home Depot and Victoria Secret in the past, with a collaborative agreement between the forest industry and environmental groups. The main objectives of the agreement are to protect the habitat of woodland caribou and other ecologically valuable areas, and implement better logging practices.

If successful, this agreement will result in Canada being recognized as a world leader in conservation and boreal biodiversity protection. Forest products from FPAC members will be recognized as a climate-friendly choice in the marketplace and the preferred global source of supply of sustainable forest products.

IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

Almost all of Alberta's larger forest companies are part of this agreement and CPAWS Northern Alberta has been part of the Alberta/BC Regional Working Group since its inception. To begin, the Working Group is focusing its efforts on caribou habitat protection and recovery in two areas: the oilsands region of northeastern Alberta and the foothills of west-central Alberta.

The parties are considering using a zoning approach to help determine priority areas for landscape protection. The next steps will be defining appropriate land uses within each of the zones and identifying their location. Through the chapter's involvement with CBFA, it is committed to working with the forestry industry to find solutions that will protect caribou while still being acceptable to other stakeholders, including aboriginal groups, other industries, and the provincial government.





ParksWatch Program

Maligne Lake, Jasper National Park
Peter Walker

EDUCATING LEGISLATORS AND INFORMING THE DEBATE

CPAWS and other conservation groups worked together to raise public awareness and educate legislators about serious weaknesses with proposed new provincial parks legislation. Introduced as Bill 29 in the fall 2010 session, the legislation was withdrawn from both this session and the spring 2011 session due to negative public reaction. Accompanying the withdrawal was a commitment by the government to consult on any future parks legislation. As part of this campaign, the Northern Alberta chapter held an information session with Sierra Club and introduced over 700 letters of concern to the Legislature.

PROTECTING ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Over the past year the chapter remained committed to advocating for ecological integrity in National Parks as mandated by the Canada Parks Act. The proposed expansion of recreational activities in Jasper National Park was one focus area. As part of this, the chapter worked with its southern Alberta affiliate to raise concerns about the proposed Glacier Discovery Walk. Also, the chapter provided input on the Terms of Reference for two wildlife studies associated with proposed expansions at the Marmot Mountain ski hill (mountain goat study and caribou risk assessment). A trend towards an increased focus on visitor experience is being witnessed in the other mountain parks as well. With this in mind, the chapter will be closely watching this issue in 2012 and providing input into new recreational guidelines under consideration by Parks Canada.

Another focus area for the chapter was participating in the Elk Island Management Plan process. CPAWS Northern Alberta provided input on the draft management plan and promoted opportunities for input amongst its supporters. While the close proximity of the park to Edmonton provides opportunities for education and connecting city dwellers with nature, the chapter raised concerns about the heavy bias in the plan's language towards visitor experience in contrast with the previous management plan (2005). The chapter also expressed concern about the inclusion of visitor targets without any connection to maintaining the park's ecological processes.





Caribou Cow and Calf
Karsten Heuer

Caribou Habitat

PROVIDING A VOICE FOR 'BOU'THE CARIBOU

Wildlife protection efforts of CPAWS Northern Alberta over the past year have focused primarily on caribou habitat and awareness. Through participation in the National CPAWS campaign 'Caribou & You' the chapter has raised awareness about caribou herds in Alberta, issues threatening their survival, and opportunities for protection. As part of this campaign, the chapter supported a national petition with the objective to collect 32,000 signatures in support of habitat protection for woodland caribou – one voice for every remaining woodland caribou in Canada. The chapter also provided input on habitat protection for both woodland caribou and foothill caribou herds through its work in its other program areas and campaigns. In 2012 the chapter will be engaged actively in providing input to the Federal Government's Caribou Recovery Strategy with a focus on impacts on Alberta herds.

EXPLORING OPTIONS AND FINDING SOLUTIONS

CPAWS Northern Alberta believes that industrial and forestry development can occur while still conserving habitat for woodland caribou across the province. In fact, this is already being demonstrated through CPAWS work with other conservation organizations and forestry companies in Alberta through the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. Together with other stakeholders the chapter is working to strike a balance between landscape conservation and industrial development.



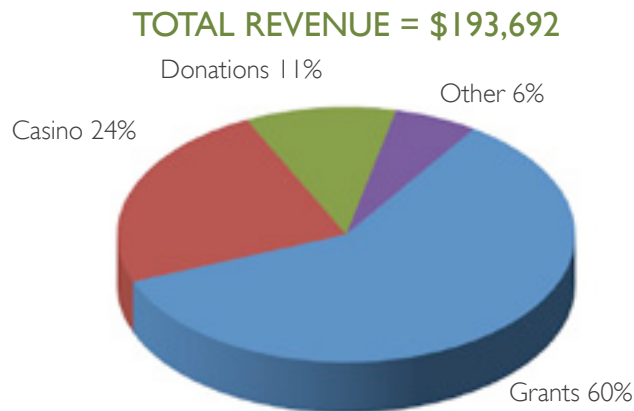
Financial Overview

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2011	2010
ASSETS		
Cash and short-term investments	285,581	256,977
Accounts receivable	6,889	33,611
Prepaid expenses	725	545
Equipment	466	665
Subtotal	293,661	291,798
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	15,033	5,442
Deferred contributions	61,042	78,339
Subtotal	76,075	83,781
NET ASSETS		
Invested in equipment	466	665
Internally restricted	136,000	136,000
Unrestricted	81,120	71,352
Subtotal	217,586	208,017
Total	293,661	291,798

FUNDING SOURCES

CPAWS Northern Alberta relies on a variety of funding sources to do its work. Member donations are a vital component of this funding and provide the chapter with needed flexibility for funding its core programs and staff. In addition to these donations, funding was received from a variety of granting bodies, government sources and foundations.



EXPENSES & ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD

Total expenses in 2010-2011 were \$184,123. The chapter's administrative overhead includes office equipment, bank fees and insurance, and a proportion of rent, administrative professional fees, and the Executive Director's salary, travel, and office supplies. Administrative overhead represented 17% of expenses in 2010-2011. The remaining 83% was spent on the chapter's conservation programs.





Preserving wilderness & biodiversity in Northern Alberta since 1968

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