



Annual Report 2011-2012

CPAWS Northern Alberta



Credit: Clearwater River
David Dodge



Staff and Board, 2011/2012

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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 one of CPAWS' first designated regional chapters 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.

Jasper - Mount Athabasca
Travel Alberta



Message from the Chapter President

The last several months were a busy time for CPAWS Northern Alberta. Throughout it all, the chapter remained committed to advancing the protection of wilderness and biodiversity in Alberta.

On the conservation front, the chapter continues to be engaged in a number of areas. Core activities over the past year include:

- advocating for the protection of ecological integrity in the Mountain Parks by providing input on proposed recreational guidelines and campaigning against the Glacier Discovery Walk development;
- providing a Northern Alberta perspective to CPAWS National's coordinated response to the Federal Caribou Recovery Strategy;
- continuing to participate in multi-stakeholder discussions through the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement – Alberta Working Group, the Boreal Leadership Council, and the Cumulative Environmental Management Association to encourage the creation of protected areas and better land management;
- supporting research into the effects on grizzly behavior from human use of their habitat;
- participating in the national BlackOut SpeakOut campaign launched by thirteen environmental organizations (this campaign was designed to draw attention to changes in the federal budget that undermined environmental laws and civil society's ability to speak out), and;
- participating in large-scale provincial land-use planning initiatives (dominated the last several years by the chapter's Lower Athabasca Campaign).

As we move into 2013, the chapter leadership is looking forward to continue building its organizational capacity and implementing its new strategic plan. The chapter also is identifying potential campaigns for the Lower Peace and North Saskatchewan planning regions and seeking funding for a new core conservation planning and outreach program

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
President - Board of Directors
CPAWS Northern Alberta





Medicine Lake, JNP
Peter Walker

ParksWatch Program

PROTECTING ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY IN ALBERTA 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 past year showed a number of troubling trends in parks management across the country. These include greater commercialization within parks, increased threats from industrial activity, more focus on visitor experience within management plans/decisions, and cuts to Parks Canada staff and overall budget.

CPAWS Northern Alberta also continues to keep an eye on trends in provincial parks management. The chapter is now working to develop relationships with key people within the Redford government and watching to see whether new parks legislation will be reintroduced.

CAMPAIGNING FOR JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Jasper National Park (JNP) was the main focus on the chapter's ParksWatch program during 2011/2012.

As part of this, the chapter launched a campaign against the Glacier Discovery Walk at Sunwapta Canyon. Concerns with this development include:

- the long-term impact on wildlife is unknown;
- the decision to move the project forward sets a precedent for greater commercial development within the mountain parks and is not consistent with Parks Canada's own regulatory and policy framework, and;
- there is no evidence that this type of infrastructure-based development connect people with nature or is the type of development Canadians want in their national parks.

In addition, to raising awareness about the issue through media and supporter engagement, the chapter supported local Jasper residents and the Jasper Environmental Association in holding a rally on this issue at the Columbia Icefield Centre in JNP. In addition, CPAWS generated over 2000 letters of support.

The chapter also worked closely with CPAWS Southern Alberta to monitor and comment on proposed changes to recreational guidelines for the mountain parks. New guidelines for JNP are anticipated to be released in late 2012 or early 2013.





Boreal forest (aerial)

Boreal Forest Protection

IMPLEMENTING THE CBFA IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

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 main objectives of the agreement are to protect the caribou habitat and other ecologically valuable areas, and implement better logging practices.

Almost all of Alberta’s larger forest companies are part of this agreement and CPAWS Northern Alberta has been part of the Alberta Regional Working Group since its inception. For the past two years the Working Group has focused its efforts on caribou habitat protection and recovery in the oilsands region of northeastern Alberta. It is anticipated its focus will shift to the foothills of west-central Alberta in 2013.

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CANADA’S BOREAL FOREST

In addition to its work with the CBFA, CPAWS Northern Alberta continues to be active in other areas of multi-stakeholder dialogue. This includes active participation in the Boreal Leadership Council and the Cumulative Environmental Management Association. The chapter remains committed to working together to find solutions that will protect caribou while still being acceptable to other stakeholders, including aboriginal groups, industry, and the government.

Did you know?
Every year CPAWS releases its ‘State of Canada’s Parks’ report in advance of Canada Parks Day. Review the 2012 report at www.cpaws.org.





Conservation Voice in Land Use Planning

SEEKING PROTECTION OF ALBERTA'S LAST TRUE WILDERNESS

For the past several years CPAWS Northern Alberta has conducted a multi-year, multi-faceted Lower Athabasca Region (LAR) campaign. 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.

The main focus in recent years was on providing input to government on land conservation opportunities through the Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan process (LAIRP). As part of this, the chapter worked to develop relationships with First Nations communities and identify potential areas of collaboration. The final LAIRP was released in August 2012. While the chapter believes the LAIRP demonstrates some progress towards conservation, it is disappointed that the final plan did not focus more on environmental considerations, and in particular, the cumulative impacts of development on the boreal ecosystem. Main issues raised by CPAWS were:

- the amount of land protected is inadequate and not representative of the diversity of the boreal ecosystem;
- major watercourses, source areas, and riparian zones were not designated as protected areas (the plan defers to other pieces of legislation for waterway protection);
- protected areas cover only a small portion of caribou ranges in the region and there is no strong commitment from the Government to halt leases in this habitat;
- greater aboriginal consultation and shared decision-making is required in future planning.

LOOKING FORWARD

The CPAWS campaign in the Athabasca region is now winding down. The chapter however will continue to be involved in implementing the LAIRP and asking for more caribou habitat protection as well as clear standards to limit landscape disturbance. The chapter is now identifying strategies and potential campaigns for the Lower Peace and North Saskatchewan planning regions and seeking funding for a new conservation planning and outreach program.





Grizzly Bear
Corel

Habitat Protection

LEARNING MORE ABOUT GRIZZLY BEARS & ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The primary recommendation laid out by the Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (2008) is the reduction of human-caused bear mortality through human access management in high quality bear habitat. To learn more, CPAWS Northern Alberta is participating in a research project with University Alberta researcher Andrew Ladle (supervised by Mark Boyce). With funding from Mountain Equipment Coop, Andrew is researching human access management in Central Western Alberta and its implications for movement and behaviour of grizzly bears. The two main objectives of this project are:

- to identify thresholds for human-use (of various types) of recreational trails, and;
- to learn recreational users' attitudes to access management in grizzly bear habitat.

This project, in its initial stages, will be based on three-years of field data. The outcomes of this research will improve the ability of landscape managers to implement species recovery actions.

PROVIDING A VOICE FOR CARIBOU

Working to protect caribou habitat and raise awareness about the status of Alberta's remaining woodland and foothill caribou herds continued to be a major focus of CPAWS Northern Alberta in the past year. A multi-pronged approach was applied which resulted in protecting caribou habitat acting as a guiding principle in the majority of the chapter's initiatives.

In addition, the chapter collaborated with CPAWS chapters across the country to provide input on the Federal Government's Caribou Recovery Strategy. In many cases this work saw results; the strategy now requires that all remaining caribou populations be restored to self-sustaining levels, an improvement from the earlier draft which excluded this requirement for some of the most imperilled populations, particularly in Alberta and British Columbia. It also includes provisions to treat all herds equally, which was one of CPAWS' key recommendations. Additionally, the final strategy clarifies that predator management can only be used as a last resort, in combination with habitat restoration efforts and only in the short term after other tools have been applied. In 2013, the chapter will be monitoring provincial efforts to implement range-specific action plans for the remaining Caribou herds.





Athabasca River
Peter Walker

Capacity Building

CREATING A STRONG FOUNDATION

As an organization, chapter staff and volunteers have been busy working together to build a strong foundation for the future. Activities in the past year include adopting new strategic, conservation, and fund development plans, launching a conservation committee, and initiating a government relations strategy in conjunction with the Southern Alberta chapter and National CPAWS. Supported by Mountain Equipment Co-op, the chapter is now implementing an IT-based project which includes updating its software/hardware, completing training in core areas, developing associated policy, and increasing the effectiveness of its approach to social media. The chapter also recently restructured its financial records staff position and has since welcomed Carlos Bautista in the role of Financial Controller. In addition, the chapter relocated and is now sharing office space with the Environmental Law Centre.

MOVING FORWARD WITH A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The chapter's new strategic plan was the result of several months of discussion and reflection. Its focus includes conservation and internal operational priorities based on the chapter's mission, vision and guiding principles. Four conservation goals are articulated:

- increase the amount of protected Boreal Forest in Alberta;
- restore/maintain ecological integrity as a priority for government in national and provincial parks/protected areas in Alberta;
- build a conservation blueprint for Northern Alberta, and;
- promote the value of conserving wilderness and biodiversity through effective community engagement.

Its overarching objective is to ensure the chapter remains a strong voice for Alberta's wilderness for years to come.



Financial Overview

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2011	2010
ASSETS		
Cash and short-term investments	214,292	285,581
Accounts receivable	4,028	6,889
Prepaid expenses	1,007	725
Equipment	1,269	466
Subtotal	220,596	293,661
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	15,818	15,033
Deferred contributions	13,331	61,042
Subtotal	29,149	76,075
NET ASSETS		
Invested in equipment	326	466
Internally restricted	136,000	136,000
Unrestricted	54,178	81,120
Subtotal	190,504	217,586
Total	220,596	293,661

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.

TOTAL REVENUE = \$106,273



EXPENSES & ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD

Total expenses in 2011-2012 were \$133,355. 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 21% of expenses in 2011-2012. The remaining 79% was spent on the chapter's conservation programs.





Preserving wilderness & biodiversity in Northern Alberta since 1968

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