

ALTA VISION: Alberta's future landscapes are rich in biodiversity and have strong ecological integrity

ALTA MISSION: to represent the land trust community and build capacity in land trusts to conserve diverse and ecologically important landscapes in Alberta



Alberta Land
Trust Alliance

Newsletter

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UNDER THE ALBERTA LAND STEWARDSHIP ACT, LAND TRUSTS MUST NOW NOTIFY THE MINISTERS OF INFRA-STRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION ABOUT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MINISTERS:

Department of Infrastructure
3rd floor - Infrastructure Building
6950-113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5V7
Attention: Lyle Markovich,
Director, Land Planning,
Properties Division

Department of Transportation
2nd floor - Twin Atria
4998-98 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6B 2Y3
Attention: Jim Der,
Executive Director,
Planning, TCE
Division

Message from ALTA

www.landtrusts-alberta.ca

It is hard to believe that my 3 year secondment from Alberta Environment to ALTA will be over in July 2010. I will return to Alberta Environment when it ends. I enjoyed working for ALTA and with all of you and wish land trusts in Alberta great success. In addition, Diane Rider, who several of you have either met or spoke to since she joined ALTA in October 2008, will be moving on as of July. On the other hand, I am happy to announce that ALTA has hired Robin Telasky as its new Executive Director. Robin is a seasoned communication professional with over 15 years of fundraising experience. Robin will start with ALTA in July 2010 and will have a 2 week overlap with Laurel. Please join me in welcoming Robin to the Alberta Land Trust Alliance!

Thank you to those who attended the Stewardship Training workshop in April 2010. The final modules will be e-mailed to those who attended in the next couple of weeks. For those who could not attend, the modules will be uploaded to the ALTA website and for a fee, can be downloaded. Also, planning for the Canadian Land Trust conference happening in Banff, Alberta from September 29 to October 1, 2010 is well underway. For a tentative schedule please visit: http://www.landtrusts-alberta.ca/conf_2010.php?PHPSESSID=47odg0n4b4cko8f5v3c0m88533 Registration will open soon.

In March 2010, the Charities Directorate of CRA announced that the 80% disbursement quota will be removed. This will result in changes to the Registered Charity Information Return form (T3010B). For more information about this change please visit: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gncy/bdgt/2010/chrt-eng.html>

Announcements

CCCSA was able to hire two interns through the Federal Youth Eco Internship Program. This program helps build the skills of youth who want to go into the environmental field. The interns have been working on conservation, environmental education and restoration work.

One of BHI's partners, Elk Island National Park, hired two new staff; Hiroo Sawada, a GIS Technician who will dedicate 40% of his time to BHI and Maureen Shenher, Partnering Engagement & Communications Officer, who will dedicate 50 to 60 % of her time to BHI.

EALT hired Morgan Traverse as Project Coordinator in December 2009. Morgan has a degree in Natural Resource Science and a diploma in Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Technology.

LSCC has new staff: Kristina Dembinski, Communications Manager, Michelle Riopel, Alberta Stewardship Network Program Coordinator, Wallis Johnson, Alberta Watershed Stewardship Grant Program Administrator, and Amrita Grewal, Program Research Intern.

Miistakis has hired Rachele Haddock to work on projects related to communication, wildlife management, and market based instruments.

NCC recently hired Colleen McPhee (Conservation Coordinator to work in central and northern Alberta) and will welcome Alissa Wilson in July (Conservation Operations and Development Coordinator in Edmonton). In addition, NCC won an AFGA award in 2009 for partnership support.

The Special Areas Board has received the Order of the Bighorn and the Emerald Award for its commitment to prairie conservation.

WSLT nominated their key philanthropist, David Bissett for a Generosity of Spirit Award for Outstanding Individual Philanthropy. David won the award.

*acronyms are explained on page 2 of newsletter

New Conservation Lands*

AFGA Projects - ACA in partnership with AFGA, acquired the Wild Rose Property (900 acres) near Milk River Ridge. In addition, AFGA received a 20 acre land donation from TransAlta due to the TransAlta plant being decommissioned on Lake Wabamum. The land is prime bird and waterfowl habitat.

City of Edmonton Projects - The City of Edmonton has successfully conserved 6.9% of its area representing 3,715 hectares. 110 hectares of this was secured in 2009. In order to reach their target of 8%, the City created the Natural Areas Acquisition Strategy and are borrowing \$20 million to secure these natural areas in a timely fashion. For more details, please view the 2009 Eco Vision Report which will be online shortly at <http://www.edmonton.ca/environmental/programs/ecovision-edmonton-report-to-citizens.aspx>

DUC Projects - DUC worked with Merrill Thomson to place a "No Break No Drain" Conservation Easement on 1,920 acres of native prairie within the Milk River Ridge of southern Alberta. The easement covers two separate blocks of land. The east block is 640 acres in size and the west block is 1,280 acres (9 miles separates the west from the east block). This large tract of grassland provides valuable habitat for numerous species and is located only half a mile from a recent 960 acre ACA purchase.

EALT Projects - EALT acquired three quarter sections of land in the Golden Ranch in mid May 2010, through an EcoGift donation. The Golden Ranches, 27 km east of Edmonton, is located within the Cooking Lake Moraine at the junction of North and South Cooking Lake, and is the largest working ranch for sale in the entire region. These recently attained quarter sections have good wetland rehabilitation opportunities and EALT would like to partner with DUC on the restoration.

NCC Projects - NCC has acquired 5 quarter sections in the last 6 months and are pursuing another 3 to add to the Golden Ranch partnership project. Partners include ACA, AFGA, BHI, DUC, and EALT. NCC also secured the Hicks (160 acres) and Kallal (320 acres) in the Cooking Lake Moraine area located east of Edmonton, AB.

SALTS Projects - SALTS received a donated conservation easement from 3 landowners on the west side of the Porcupine Hills facing toward the Livingstone Range.

*this is not a full representation of all the lands conserved and is based on information provided by the land trusts to ALTA

Events

AFGA's Annual Conference & General Meeting will be held on February 24-26, 2011 in Edmonton. This summer, AFGA will be holding Conservation Camps for Youth on July 4, 11 and 18, and 'Becoming an Outdoor Woman' Camps on July 12 & 14. Please visit <http://www.afga.org/calendar.html> for more information.

BHI - Strathcona County is hosting the 2010 Provincial Agricultural Service Board Tour on July 12-15, 2010 to showcase the region's innovations in agriculture. They will also be presenting at a luncheon on the value of partnering with municipalities and will be participating in tours of the Golden Ranches. For more information, please visit: www.strathcona.ab.ca/departments/Transportation_and_Agriculture_Services/Agriculture_services/5225.aspx

City of Edmonton hosted a celebration for the International Day for Biodiversity on May 22nd. Please see www.edmonton.ca/naturalareas for further information.

EALT will be holding an event in Sept 2010 which will be both an awareness builder and fundraiser. The event will include a film, presentations and speakers. The film is about the Ivory Billed Woodpecker that was believed to be extinct for over 60 years but was recently sighted. The film highlights how critical conservation efforts are for species. For more information, please go to: www.ealt.ca

This fall, **FLT** will be hosting events at the Cross Conservation Area to highlight their work on baseline/monitoring protocols and the Stewardship Calculator and database they recently had created.

ACA-Alberta Conservation Association

AFGA-Alberta Fish and Game Association

ALTA-Alberta Land Trust Alliance

BHI-Beaver Hills Initiative

CCCSA-Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca

DUC-Ducks Unlimited Canada

EALT-Edmonton & Area Land Trust

ELC-Environmental Law Centre-Alberta

FLT-Foothills Land Trust

LSCC-Land Stewardship Centre of Canada

Miistakis-Miistakis Institute for the Rockies

NCC-Nature Conservancy of Canada

SALTS-Southern Alberta Land Trust Society

SAB-Special Areas Board

WEF-Wild Elk Federation

WSLT-Western Sky Land Trust

New Programs and/or Research

ACA is partnering with AFGA Medicine Hat, the Habitat Stewardship Program, and Pheasants Forever Medicine Hat to secure the Silver Sage Conservation area (SW & SE 6-4-5 West of the 4th). Silver Sage (318 acres) is critical habitat for sage grouse and is located south of Taber and Medicine Hat, Alberta. ACA is partnering with DUC as well on this project to restore a large ephemeral wetland. In addition, ACA is working with NCC to secure lands in the western part of the Crowsnest Pass corridor and continue to work towards securing lands for the Golden Ranch project.

AFGA is working on several projects that include the Operation Grassland Community Project (900,000 acres conserved under volunteer conservation over the last 20 years), the Pronghorn Antelope Corridor Enhancement Project, and the Volunteer Land Stewardship Program (grows as more properties are secured).

BHI has many projects on the go. These include the second consultation and stakeholder engagement for their Transfer of Development Credit Program, a Nature Based Forum Feasibility Study for the BHI area, a wetland and vegetation inventory, and the development of monitoring programs that establish biodiversity baselines and enhancement opportunities for the BHI area. In addition, they are planning to apply in the fall for the BHI to be designated as a Biosphere Reserve (www.unesco.org/mab/brfaq.htm).

The City of Edmonton is continuing with its Master Naturalist Program. Master Naturalists attend 35 hours of training and field trips, and then volunteer for 35 hours in activities that support education, natural areas management, and protection. This year there are 31 people signed up for the program. Please see http://www.edmonton.ca/environmental/natural_areas/master-naturalist-program.aspx for more information.

CCCSA has been doing biophysical survey work in preparation for a watershed report on the Tawatinaw River.

DUC has started a Wetland Restoration Program whereby under a 30 year Wetland Restoration Agreement, they will pay 80% of the fair market value for lands covered by restored wetlands and associated riparian areas and the associated wetland restoration costs (earth work, grass seeding, etc.). This program is targeted to priority landscapes in Alberta. In addition, DUC has also been doing research on the carbon protocol for wetland restoration and when it is finalized, it will be taken to Carbon Central for approval.

EALT is still working on the Culture-Conservation Connection and there have been about 200 works of art submitted by 25 artists. The artwork is in the hands of the jury right now. Please go to www.ealt.ca for more details. EALT has also been working on developing programs such as baseline data recording and monitoring by volunteers in the field, now that they have land. EALT has been doing secondary research on how conservation of land and open space can benefit municipalities and developers with the focus being on economic benefits.

FLT's board is having a board training session on fundraising that will be led by Lorna Visser from Carmanah Strategies. The FLT board will also host Tracy Lee from Miistakis who will be talking about the results of the Sustainability Project that FLT and Miistakis worked on together (see Miistakis entry below for more details). These results will also be made available to the land trust community.

LSCC is exploring the development and implementation of a Transferable Development Credit Project for the BHI in partnership with Agriculture & Agri-food Canada, the Alberta Government, Alberta Research Council, Miistakis Institute, and Strathcona County.

The Miistakis Institute and the **FLT** have been working on a project that has three components: reviewing and developing baseline document reports and monitoring that can be used by small land trusts such as FLT; developing an internal communication database for FLT that would be available online to Board Members that includes online mapping tools and documentation on existing conservation easements; and identifying the true costs of stewardship and recommendations for a defense fund (see the Stewardship Calculator on the FLT website soon at www.foothillslandtrust.org or you can contact Miistakis at institute@rockies.ca if you are interested in learning about this tool).

NCC is working on a Natural Area Conservation Plan to be completed in Fall of 2010 for the Upper North Saskatchewan River area immediately west of Edmonton.

SALTS, in cooperation with the Hanen Society for Resource Conservation, has created the Pekisko Valley Project to examine the native historical culture, the history of European arrival and start of ranching, and the ecological assets including range health assessment and grazing management for the Pekisko Valley. In addition, SALTS completed the Stonewater movie in early 2010 and created an on-line information tool for staff and directors for easy access to internal documents (e.g. conservation easements, board documents).

SAB has initiated an Access Management Framework Program which will identify unique landscape areas within Special Areas. The purpose is to manage the area for ecological outcomes that will sustain social and economic interests. This program will utilize a cumulative effects strategy that allows commercial or industrial activities to occur within the capacity of the landscape. SAB has also contracted out the development of biophysical inventories for two of their larger Community Pastures south of the Red Deer River. Activity targets and thresholds for the areas will be determined by a Project Team, who will continue this process over a number of years as resources are allocated.

WEF is looking into funding an initiative in the Crowsnest Pass, doing a conservation easement, and working with Parks Canada to move as many as 100 elk from Elk Island National Park into the wild (expected winter 2010/11).

WSLT has completed the Agrium-Nodwell Nature Preserve and is now continuing to conserve land on the stretch of the Bow River from Calgary to Siksika through the Bow and Beyond Initiative. There are 3 goals associated with this Initiative: conserve and restore natural areas, increase watershed awareness, and develop community-based watershed stewardship.

Funding Successes

ACA has received funding from corporate and/or industry partners, the Government of Canada (see http://science.natureconservancy.ca/federalprogram_en.html), the Habitat Stewardship Program, and the Natural Areas Conservation Program (administered through NCC).

AFGA received funding again from ACA and the Alberta Ministers Special License Program to work on Antelope Fencing, the Operation Grassland Community Project, and the Wild Rose Property.

BHI received funding for the Transfer of Development Credit Program from an anonymous source.

CCCSA received an ASN grant of \$7500 for a series of workshops and a conference on drinking water and groundwater in the Athabasca basin, an EcoTrust grant for \$7500 for the Lower Tawatinaw/Little Pine Watershed Assessment and Restoration Project, and Federal Youth Eco Internship Program & Eco Trust Grant money for co-sponsoring the Tawatinaw Watershed Stewards Field Workshop.

EALT has received funding from TD Friends of the Environment for some of the professional fees for fair market value appraisals and for legal fees.

FLT received funding from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation and the Calgary Foundation for their sustainability project.

LSCC received funding from Alberta EcoTrust, for 'On Farm Stewardship Planning for Small Acreage Owners', a project on the development of a stewardship planning tool for rural residential and recreational property owners.

NCC has received funding from TransCanada for the implementation of the Red Deer River Natural Area Conservation Plan for \$2.4 million over 3 years.

SALTS received some preliminary funding from Mountain Equipment Coop to develop the concept of creating a wildlife corridor from the Waterton/Crown wilderness across Highway 3 and up Rock Creek to the open ranchland to the north and west of Lundbreck.

ALTA Members

Alberta Conservation Association
 Alberta Fish and Game Association
 Beaver Hills Initiative
 City of Edmonton
 Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca
 Ducks Unlimited Canada
 Edmonton & Area Land Trust
 Environmental Law Centre
 Foothills Land Trust
 Land Stewardship Centre of Canada
 Miistakis Institute for the Rockies
 Nature Conservancy of Canada
 Rockyview County
 Southern Alberta Land Trust Society
 Special Areas Board
 Western Sky Land Trust
 Wild Elk Federation

Funding Opportunities

ACA is seeking funding for the wildlife corridor in Crowsnest Pass and will be seeking funding to purchase the Tanghe property (5 quarter section on the Edson River, Edson, Alberta).

AFGA is working with the Ecogift program to see if the Golden Ranch Project will qualify.

BHI and Strathcona County are looking for funding for initiating fire smart principles in the Cooking Lake Moraine Area that are at high risk. This could involve establishing sample plots to test fire smart principles in Strathcona County Wilderness Centre area.

EALT is currently seeking funding for costs that come with accepting land donations as well as for stewardship.

NCC is seeking stewardship endowment funding on an ongoing basis.

SALTS continues to make Conservation Easement granting applications where possible, including to the Alberta Community Spirit Program, the Canadian Land Trust Alliance, and Mountain Equipment Coop.

WSLT is seeking \$500,000 funding for the Bow and Beyond Initiative for projects, outreach & awareness building activities and general programs.

Please feel free to forward the ALTA newsletter to others who you think may be interested.

If our newsletter was forwarded to you and you want to be added directly to our e-mail distribution list, please email us at info@landtrusts-alberta.ca