

Fall 2021



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Conservation Education

The Voice of Conservation Education in Alberta

Magazine



AHEIA's Mission is to Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan



ABHuntLog

You can help conserve Alberta's harvestable wildlife species by voluntarily participating in the ABHuntLog project and through your personal dashboard using the iHunter app.

- Log observations and harvests
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- Promote the value of hunting to Alberta's economy

For more information contact:

Alberta Conservation Association
Sue Peters, Senior Biologist
sue.peters@ab-conservation.com
or Paul Jones, Senior Biologist
paul.jones@ab-conservation.com
or online at [ABHuntLog.ca](https://abhuntlog.ca)



President's Message

“ Conservation Education has always been about supporting those who wish to connect with outdoor activities and pursuits ... ”

By Bob Gruszecki



Bob Gruszecki
President - AHEIA

As we quickly move toward the end of 2021, it is hard to believe that we are almost two years into living with the coronavirus pandemic. Last year at this time we were re-organizing our holiday plans and hopeful that this year the pandemic would be over, that we would be back to “normal”. We have come to realize that our predictions and expectations, both short and long term, are truly just an expression of hope. Yet despite the health setbacks and divisiveness of our society, there is still hope. The world is much closer to understanding and managing this health crisis and we are gaining confidence, if not some resilience, regarding the unpredictability of it all. In my opinion, our focus needs to be shifting toward successes rather than failures, positivity instead of negativity, and support for individuals and businesses, especially in our own communities. Conservation Education has always been about supporting those who wish to connect with outdoor activities and pursuits, and we are pleased that in 2021, despite the restrictions and almost impossible circumstances, we managed to do so.

Throughout the year we continued to assist the many instructors in the province who taught the Canadian Firearms Safety Courses and the AHEIA Hunter Education Program. In spite of a steady onslaught from our suppliers who continue to raise their prices, we have held the line and have not passed on these increases to our members. The online Hunter Education and Alberta Fishing Education Programs, both accessible through our website, have demonstrated a massive increase in enrollment, indicating that the trend to experience hunting and fishing is not slowing down. We continue to, at least for the time being, offer the Fishing Education Program for free, hoping to provide a bit of financial relief to people wanting to learn about angling in Alberta waters. As a sequel to this excellent program, in March we introduced the anticipated *Identification of Alberta's Game Fish Quiz*.



This quiz is aimed towards new and experienced fishing enthusiasts alike and teaches the key identifying features for 21 of Alberta's commonly caught game fish. The quiz is also free and can be accessed through our website, aheia.com.

This summer the Calgary Firearms Centre (CFC) also saw a big increase in traffic, particularly people new to the shooting sports. Due to the adequate spacing of shooters on the trap and skeet fields, the club was able to accommodate the increased visitors while still adhering to COVID protocols. All the scheduled shoots during the summer took place, including the Alberta Trapshooting Championships, as well as several private functions. It was evident by the jovial atmosphere and camaraderie, that people were very happy to be with friends again and enjoying themselves at these events. Looking forward to next year, we are happy to announce that we have been awarded the Canadian Provincial Trapshooting Championships in 2022. It will be an exciting time at the CFC and with luck the pandemic will be in the past, and our friends from across Canada and the United States will be able to join us for the event.

Two of the three scheduled sessions of the Women's and Youth Shotgun Leagues were able to run this summer and they were also very well attended. This fall a new Women's Archery League was introduced. Each Wednesday even-

Continued ➤



President's Message *cont.*

ing in September participants learned and improved their archery skills through target practice and games. The inaugural session was a tremendous success, and the league will resume next spring. If you are interested in joining any of the leagues at the Calgary Firearms Centre, information and registration dates are already posted on our website for the 2022 season.

Once again, we held the annual firearms sale this fall at the CFC, which was a great success. We are hoping to move the sale back to the spring in 2022, if COVID restrictions permit. Make a note of Saturday, April 30, 2022 in your calendar and be sure to attend if you are looking for a new or used firearm at terrific prices!

Provincial Hunting Day was celebrated on September 25 at both the CFC and AHEIA's Alford Lake facility. In conjunction with the Annual Pheasants Forever Novice Fall Shoot, activities at the Calgary Firearms Centre included shotgun coaching on trap, skeet and 5 stand, archery, shooting from a simulated duck blind on the sporting clays field, and a pheasant/dog retrieval demonstration. At Alford Lake, AHEIA and Hunting for Tomorrow introduced participants to crossbow and archery basics, shotgun and rifle shooting, White-tail hunting techniques, trapping basics and much more. It was a beautiful day at both locations and the excitement of people new to these activities always energizes our staff and volunteers, reminding us that what we try to accomplish at AHEIA really matters to Albertans.

During the short window of relaxed COVID restrictions, some events did occur at the Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre for Excellence this summer, albeit with severely regulated and reduced participation. Two of the usual four Youth Hunter Education Camps took place, along with the Outdoor Youth Seminar, Teacher's Workshop and Outdoor Women's Program. We were forced to restrict attendance to these events, allowing only one person or a family group per sleeping cabin, and had limited access to the main hall and indoor washroom facilities. Some outdoor day events, including a Rifle Sight-in Day and the Provincial Hunting Day were quite successful. This fall the Alford

Lake facility saw an increase in AHEIA members utilizing the range, whether it was to sight-in a firearm for the hunting season, or for target practice. The good weather, perhaps along with the desire to spend as much time outside before the cold weather arrived, will certainly have contributed to the increase in visitors.

We are very excited to let you know that tickets are now on sale for AHEIA's next 100 for \$100 Raffle! Thank you to our individual and corporate sponsors who contributed to this important fundraising venture. We cannot emphasize how important this raffle is during these economic times, in helping keep our Association doors open. We hope that you will consider purchasing a ticket to this and the other raffles we have throughout the year. Tickets for the 100 for \$100 Raffle can be purchased online through our website, or by calling our Calgary or Edmonton offices. Check out the details in this magazine outlining many of the exciting raffles we are currently offering and watch our website and social media feeds for new raffles and important draw dates.

As the economically challenging environment continues to plague most non-profit organizations and many businesses, we too have been severely impacted by the pandemic. Financial donations are down over 70% from non-COVID years, and our classrooms are still closed to the public for courses and workshops. As mentioned earlier, all our costs have gone up, from insurance to printing to facility operational expenses and more! We are fortunate, however, through watchful financial management, grants, sponsorships, raffles, and diligence regarding

AHEIA expenditures, that we have not suffered any layoffs. Our facilities are being maintained and upgraded and, due to successful fundraising efforts, we are hoping to make an addition to the Calgary Firearms Centre clubhouse. We continue to work with the Federal authorities in the hope that our range growth and construction plans in Strathcona County can proceed as planned. Planning is always in motion at AHEIA, and by continuing to be a vital part of Alberta environmental stewardship, we are confident that, as we emerge from these troubled times, we will continue be at the forefront of Conservation Education in North America.

It is encouraging to note that AHEIA membership numbers continue to be high. We are still offering reduced membership pricing for families and have profiled corporate sponsors who are offering AHEIA members discounts at their businesses.

Along with the support of all AHEIA members, it is important to recognize our outstanding volunteers and instructors who help deliver our programs, teach workshops, help at events and act as ambassadors of our cause. We simply could not deliver our message of *Making Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan*, along with the important education we provide, without your commitment, expertise, and valuable time. Thank you!

Although we continue to traverse the pandemic, we all have much to be thankful for. Take time and reflect on your many accomplishments over the past 12 months, no matter how small, acknowledge the good that surrounds us and be a champion to those who may need a bit of support to make it through these last few miles of this health crisis, for the end of these difficult times is in sight. As we count our blessings, we wish you health and happiness, and on behalf of all of us at AHEIA, Merry Christmas to you and your families and all the best for a happy new year.


Robert A. Gruszecki
President, AHEIA



AHEIA Raffle Tickets
Make Great Christmas Gifts!

Call or email our offices today:
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info@aheia.com
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Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Conservation Education Magazine


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Front Cover Photo by
Collin Toews Photography
(collintoews.com)





Calgary Boat & Outdoors Show
February 11-13, 2022
BMO Centre, Stampede Park, Calgary, AB
calgaryboatandoutdoorshow.ca

Show Hours:
Friday, February 11 10am - 9pm
Saturday February 12 10am - 7pm
Sunday February 13 10am - 5pm

Edmonton Boat & Sportsmen's Show
March 17-20, 2022
Edmonton Expo Centre, Edmonton, AB
edmontonboatandsportshow.ca

Show Hours:
Thursday, March 17 12pm - 9pm
Friday March 18 12pm - 9pm
Saturday March 19 10am - 7pm
Sunday March 20 10am - 5pm

Firearms Education Report



“ ... Bryant will demonstrate that public safety and a flourishing firearms community are mutually complementary goals. ”

By John Morrissey



John Morrissey
Firearms Education
Coordinator
AHEIA

Collectors Association for the past 16 years and is the president of the Military Collectors Club of Canada. Bryant was an associate professor with the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary on national and international business.”



Teri Bryant
Alberta Chief
Firearms Officer

All is here and as of September 1, 2021, we also have a newly-appointed Provincial Chief Firearms Officer.

As noted on the Alberta Government website:

“Bryant was a member of the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee. She served as the secretary of the Alberta Arms and Cartridge Collectors Association for the past 16 years and is the president of the Military Collectors Club of Canada. Bryant was an associate professor with the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary on national and international business.”

“As Chief Firearms Officer, Bryant will demonstrate that public safety and a flourishing firearms community are mutually complementary goals.

She will ensure that we preserve for future generations a firearms heritage that reflects Alberta’s values of safety, responsibility and respect for individual rights.”

Along with Teri we welcome a number of new staff to the Canadian Firearms Safety Program. I’m confident that once they get their feet on the ground, we will see a very successful, provincially-supervised program that adheres to Federal mandates, while addressing the concerns of Albertans.

With the introduction of the Provincial Chief Firearms office we should not see any changes to the Canadian Firearms Safety Program or the delivery agent.

On the programs side, despite the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the number of students completing the Non-Restricted and Restricted firearms program continues to steadily increase. As of September 20, 2021, we have had a total

of 26,049 students (16,737 non-restricted, 9,312 restricted) that have completed the Canadian Firearms Safety Course. These impressive numbers demonstrate commitment to the delivery of quality firearms education by our instructors despite the ongoing and ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions.

On the topic of CFSC/CRFSC instructors, a reminder to please review your course reports prior to submitting for scanning into the database. Reports that are missing test scores or signatures not only delay scanning, but also delay the student from applying for their Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL). And to answer your question, yes this has been an ongoing concern that can only be solved by taking the extra minute to review the course reports prior to giving the student his or her copy, and prior to submitting for scanning. Also, course reports should be sent in within two weeks of the course completion.

On another note, we have a number of CFSC/CRFSC instructor candidates who have been approved for training. As well, we also have a number of members who will be attending the Range Safety Officer and Shotgun Coaching workshops once we see a reduction in the COVID-19 numbers.



AHEIA’s Fifth Annual New and Used Gun Sale

On September 12 AHEIA hosted our delayed, but highly successful, “New and Used Gun Sale”.

This highly anticipated yearly event was held at our Calgary Firearms Centre in DeWinton and featured over 100 new and used firearms. The selection of used firearms covered the ever-popular Cooney rimfire rifles and shotguns, to target grade Remington’s 540 X and the Anschütz Mark 200 target rifle. New firearms could be found for at least 10% below MSRP and shotgun ammunition was at discount pricing. Where else could you find a Cooney Model 82 RCAF Trainer next to a Beretta Model 690?

To those who attended, or made donations towards the sale, thank you for your support.

Our next sale is scheduled for April 30, 2022. If you have any unwanted firearms that you would like to donate towards our next sale, please let us know. Proceeds from the sale are used to support AHEIA’s conservation education programs. Tax receipts will be provided for the donation value of the firearms.



HUNTER EDUCATION CERTIFICATION



Go to our website www.aheia.com and click on “online training” to launch these programs, view demos or sign up.

BEAR ESSENTIALS



ALBERTA FISHING EDUCATION PROGRAM



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

ONLINE PROGRAMS

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON ANY OF THESE COURSES, CONTACT:

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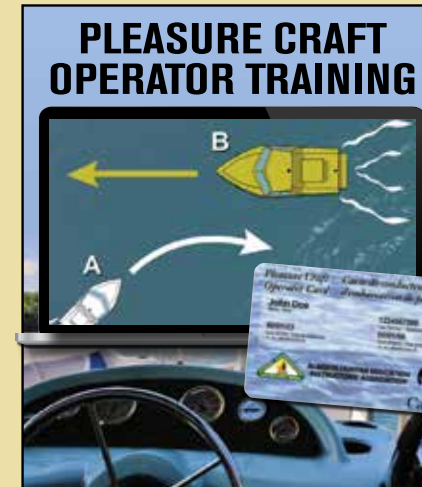
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ARCHERY ESSENTIALS



PLEASURE CRAFT OPERATOR TRAINING



IDENTIFICATION OF ALBERTA’S GAME FISH QUIZ



FIELD TECHNIQUES APP





2021 Youth Camps and Outdoor Youth Seminar

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Recently there was a relaxation of COVID regulations by AHS which opened the door for us to once again offer our Youth Hunter Education Camps and Outdoor Youth Seminar.

The Youth Hunter Education Camp is a five-day event of fun-filled learning activities. Experts share their knowledge and provide instruction in the Alberta Conservation and Hunter Education Program, the Canadian Firearms Safety Course, and much more. Upon successful completion of the appropriate exams, students are certified in the Alberta Conservation and Hunter Education Program and the Canadian Firearms Program. They also then qualify to apply for their Wildlife Identification Number (WIN Card) through any private license issuer and be able to apply for their Minor's Possession Licence for firearms.

We were able to put together two Youth Hunter Education Camps in July. Attendance was a bit less than normal due to the short notice. Most

of the individuals who were on the reserved list were unable to attend due to the fact that their holiday plans had already been scheduled and could not be changed. They will hopefully be back for the July 2022 camps.

To increase awareness of outdoor recreational opportunities, the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association offers the Outdoor Youth Seminar for young outdoor enthusiasts (ages seven and up) and their parent(s) or guardian(s) in mid-August. All youngsters must be accompanied by at least one adult. The seminar is a two-day event filled with fun and learning activities. Numerous experts share information and instruction in various outdoor pursuits. All participants must register for their favourite four sessions from a provided list and will be placed into them as availability permits.

This year the 19th annual seminar was offered on August 20 to 22 and the options available to the attendees was tremendous. The offerings were as follows: Fishing Basics, Fly Fishing Basics, Campfire Cooking, Archery Basics, Crossbow Basics, Introduction to Trapping, Rimfire Shooting, Centrefire Rifle Shooting, Black Powder Shooting, Shotgun for Beginners, Intermediate Shotgun, Survival Walk and Whitetail Hunting Techniques. We also offered some special Saturday evening sessions: Making a Bamboo

Walking Stick, Making Your Own Survival Kit, Waterfowl 101, Introduction to Reloading and Paracord Crafting.

Even with a short notice our very popular Outdoor Youth Seminar filled up in short order. I feel that many people were just waiting for an opportunity to get outdoors and break their COVID blues. We had 90 participants attend the seminar with 35 volunteers and instructors lending a hand.

A great time was had by all. The weather cooperated and one of the highlights of the event was our whole hog roast on Saturday evening. You need to be there next time!

The 2022 Youth Hunter Education Camps are scheduled to run July 3-8, July 10-15, July 17-22, and July 24-29. Our 2022 Outdoor Youth Seminar will run August 19-21. As always, these events will be held at our amazing Alford Lake facility west of Caroline, Alberta.

Our new online registration process makes it easier to get information on these upcoming events and to register for them. Check our website www.aheia.com frequently for updates and new offerings. While you are there sign up for our Bugle Newsletter.



Take care, be safe and enjoy the Great Outdoors!



AHEIA FUNDRAISING RAFFLES

CALL or EMAIL OUR OFFICES TO PURCHASE TICKETS!

You are not required to be present to be eligible to win. Tickets cannot be sold to persons under 18 years of age.

3 GUN RAFFLE

Tickets
\$2
each

1st Prize

Winchester XPR Rifle

Chambered in 6.8 Western cartridge.
Includes a Vortex Crossfire 3-9x40mm scope
with rings and bases.

Retail Value:
\$1050.00

2nd Prize

Winchester Super X Pump Shotgun

12 gauge, 3.5" chamber, Waterfowl Max 5 Camo,
3 interchangeable choke tubes.

Retail Value:
\$600.00

3rd Prize

Winchester Wildcat .22 LR Rifle

Draw Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2022
Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence

License #584080 • 5,000 Tickets Printed

Retail Value:
\$380.00

SPECIALTY SHOTGUN RAFFLE

Tickets
\$5
each

Franchi Aspire Fieldgun

28 gauge, 2³/₄", 28" barrels, over/under shotgun.
Oiled walnut stock, colour case hardened steel receiver,
blued BBLs with case.

Retail Value:
\$3150.00

Draw Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2022
Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence

License #584081 • 3000 Tickets Printed

Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence
911 Sylvester Crescent SW, Calgary, Alberta T2W 0R8
403.252.8474 • 1.866.852.4342
info@aheia.com

SPECIALTY CLASSIC RIFLE RAFFLE

Tickets
\$20
each

Classic Chapuis Rols Rifle

Chambered in .300 Winchester Magnum.
Grade 3 walnut stock with pistol grip, German cheek piece,
hi cap rotating magazine, straight pull action,
capable of 10 different calibres by a barrel change
(no extra barrels included).
Includes quick detachable scope mount.

Retail Value:
\$5500.00

Truly classic firearm with modern engineering!

Draw Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2022
Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence

License #584083 • 1000 Tickets Printed

UPLAND/WATERFOWLER SHOTGUN RAFFLE

Tickets
\$20
each

Browning Cynergy Over/Under

12 gauge shotgun, Wicked Wing Max 5 Camo,
Cerakote finish BBLs,
3 interchangeable extended choke tubes.

Retail Value:
\$3000.00

Beretta A350 Xtrema Semi Auto

12 gauge shotgun, Max 5 Camo,
2 interchangeable extended choke tubes,
comes with drop/cast shims, recoil absorption system.

Retail Value:
\$2000.00

One lucky winner will receive both firearms!

Total Retail Value: \$5000.00

Draw Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2022
Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence

License #584091 • 1000 Tickets Printed



Edmonton Conservation Education Centre for Excellence
#88, 4003 - 98 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 6M8
780.466.6682 • 1.866.282.4342
edmontoninfo@aheia.com

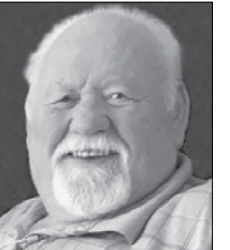
Completed Careers

Joseph Horvath

Passed away August 24, 2021

Joe Horvath, life member, longtime instructor, Quarter Century Club member and friend of AHEIA, passed away August 24, 2021.

Joe was 81 years old and spent most of those years putting smiles on peoples faces as he shared his passion for all things Conservation Education. His happy disposition and knowledge will be missed indeed! On behalf of all of us at AHEIA and the many thousands of students whose lives he touched, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Judy and family.



Recently a member of our organization completed his journey, and our thoughts and prayers are extended to his family and friends. He may be gone, but his energy, friendship and service will not be forgotten.

Alberta Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Updates

Alberta continues to track the occurrence of CWD in wild deer in Alberta. Information pertaining to CWD has been changing at a rapid pace and Alberta Environment and Parks advises hunters can find updated information about the 2021/22 surveillance program at

<https://www.alberta.ca/chronic-wasting-disease.aspx>

including information specific to hunters at

<https://www.alberta.ca/chronic-wasting-disease-information-for-hunters.aspx>

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For more information on
any of these employment
opportunities visit

AHEIA.com
under Employment Opportunities

“Brett Kissel will act as the official spokesman of AHEIA through the duration of the partnership ...”

AHEIA Announces Partnership with Brett Kissel and Backwoods Backstage



Press Release September 18, 2021

Calgary, AB—The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA) is pleased to announce a partnership with Alberta-born country singer Brett Kissel and The Sportsman Channel's *Backwoods Backstage* outdoor hunting and fishing program. This mutually beneficial agreement will see AHEIA promoted throughout Season 2 of *Backwoods Backstage* and through its various social media vehicles. Brett Kissel will also act as the official spokesman of AHEIA through the duration of the partnership, promoting various AHEIA events and activities, as well as bring a whole new audience to the outdoors.

“I believe this partnership will go a long way in showcasing AHEIA and our broad range of conservation education programs and activities. By working with Brett Kissel and *Backwoods Backstage*, both teams see a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the integrity, high level of safety standards and sportsmen-like behaviour that are the core values of AHEIA and the outdoor activities we enjoy here in Alberta and beyond,” says Bob Gruszecki, President of AHEIA.

“AHEIA is excited to have an Albertan, Brett Kissel, part of the AHEIA family and having him as our spokesman. We look forward to our partnership with Brett and working with him at our upcoming programs and events,” adds Gruszecki.

“*Backwoods Backstage* is thrilled to be partnering up with AHEIA, being that they are the benchmark for safety, conservation and a great place for new hunters to learn. All of these things are what the *Backwoods* team wants our show to embody, so how perfect of a matchup is this? With my cousin Brett, we also want to show our audience how fun the outdoors can be. We pride ourselves on filming extraordinary adventures, while prioritizing safety and fun!” Matt Germain, co-host of *Backwoods*, added.

For information on AHEIA, please visit AHEIA.com or call 1-866-852-4342 (Calgary)/1-866-282-4342 (Edmonton).

About AHEIA

AHEIA is a not-for-profit organization that works to educate the public on the importance of protecting the places and wildlife cherished by Albertans. As a registered charity in Alberta, AHEIA provides conservation and outdoor education to the public—and has proudly done so since 1964.

AHEIA is pleased to announce a partnership with Alberta-born country singer Brett Kissel and The Sportsman Channel's *Backwoods Backstage* outdoor hunting and fishing program.

This mutually beneficial agreement will see AHEIA promoted throughout Season 2 of *Backwoods Backstage* and through its various social media vehicles. Brett Kissel will also act as the official spokesman of AHEIA through the duration of the partnership, promoting various AHEIA events and activities, as well as bring a whole new audience to the outdoors.

Brett is not only known for entertaining thousands in arenas across North America or being an 18-time CCMA award winner and two-time Juno winner, but is also an avid outdoorsman who shares AHEIA's core values of demonstrating the importance of protecting the places and wildlife cherished by Albertans.

“ By working with Brett Kissel and Backwoods Backstage both teams see a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the integrity, high level of safety standards and sportsmen-like behaviour that are the core values of AHEIA and the outdoor activities we enjoy here in Alberta and beyond. ”



For more information and interview requests, please contact Bob Gruszecki, President, AHEIA
Telephone: 403-252-8474
Email: robert_gruszecki@ezpost.com

The fourth Saturday of September has been known as Provincial Hunting Day in Alberta since 2007. This day is a reminder to all Albertans of our hunting heritage and the importance of securing a future for wildlife and wild places — especially in our province.

We celebrated Provincial Hunting Day 2021 on September 25 with a free day-long event at both AHEIA's Calgary Firearms Centre and our Alford Lake Conservation Centre in which close to 200 Albertans attended. Both locations offered a wide range of activities for those who wanted to explore the outdoors and try their hand at some, or all, of the sessions.

At Alford Lake, activities included Crossbow Basics, Shotgun Shooting Basics, Centrefire Rifle Shooting, Rimfire Rifle Shooting, Archery Basics, Black Powder Shooting, Making Your Own Survival Kit, Making a Moose Call, Whitetail Hunting Techniques, Trapping Basics and Outdoor Cooking.

At the Calgary Firearms Centre, Provincial Hunting Day was held in conjunction with the 20th Annual Pheasants Forever Youth/Novice Fall Shoot. On-site shotgun coaching, provided by certified AHEIA instructors, allowed participants to try Trap, Skeet, 5 Stand, Sporting Clays/Shooting from a Blind and Hanging Targets. Archery and a hunting dog demonstration were also part of the fun.

The weather could not have been better, and participants had a great time, with more than enough to keep everyone busy while maintaining a focus on safety, on and off the range.

Thank you to our sponsors, the Alberta Conservation Association, Pheasants Forever Calgary, and Hunting for Tomorrow, and everyone who participated in the event, for making it a great Provincial Hunting Day! Join us again next year, on September 24, for Provincial Hunting Day 2022.



2021 Alberta Provincial Hunting Day


and

20th Annual Youth/Novice Fall Shoot





Join us again next year on September 24 for
Provincial Hunting Day 2022!

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Would You Like to be Published in *Conservation Education?*

If you, or someone you know, has an article of outdoors educational content or subject matter related to Conservation Education in Alberta that you would like us to publish in a future edition of our magazine, we would be happy to hear from you. Articles of approximately 1,000 words with accompanying pictures are ideal. We also encourage readers to alert us to news for possible publication.

Contact David Dolph at daviddolph@aheia.com for additional information.



CALGARY FIREARMS CENTRE GIFT CERTIFICATES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE



Gift certificates can be used for:

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Please call our Calgary office as gift certificates are issued from our head office:

403.252.8474

Gift certificates can be picked up in Calgary, at the Calgary Firearms Centre, or mailed.



AHEIA Fundraising Raffle Winners

Specialty Shotgun Raffle

Drawn Sunday, August 22, 2021
at the Calgary Firearms Centre.
Licence #566493. 3500 tickets printed.

Ticket #1981

is the winner of a Beretta 690 Field I
Over/Under 12ga Shotgun.

Blaser Shotgun Raffle

Drawn Friday, September 3, 2021
at the Calgary Conservation Centre for Excellence.
Licence #567461. 1000 tickets printed.

Ticket #287

is the winner of a Blaser F3 Competition/Sporting
12ga Over/Under Shotgun.

Upland/Waterfowler/ Sporting Firearm Raffle

Drawn Friday, September 3, 2021
at the Calgary Conservation Centre for Excellence.
Licence #566437. 1000 tickets printed.

Ticket #436

is the winner of a Benelli Ethos Engraved Nickel-plated
Semi-Automatic 12ga Shotgun


and

a Winchester SX4 Semi-Automatic 12ga Shotgun.

*Thank you to all
who entered!*



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2021

Outdoor Women's Program

By David Dolph



David Dolph
Executive Director
AHEIA

After being unable to hold our annual Outdoor Women's Program (OWP) in 2020 due to COVID restrictions, AHEIA was able to once again host our very popular OWP this past August 7-8, 2021. As there were still COVID protocols in place, this year the camp attendee numbers were limited based on meeting safety guidelines for accommodation spacing etc., and the duration of the camp was reduced from the normal four days of sessions to two days of sessions.

Regardless, with beautiful weather, 41 enthusiastic women and 15 instructors, the two days were packed with a great variety of activities for everyone to enjoy. Over the Saturday and Sunday, the women attending were able to choose from 11 different session options, taking four two-hour sessions each day. A busy two days, but based on the feedback, everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. A big thank you once again to all the instructors who were on hand to introduce the program participants to a fantastic variety of outdoor activities.



**Next year's Outdoor Women's Program
will be held August 3-7, 2022
at the
Alford Lake Conservation Education
Centre for Excellence**

If you are interested in attending the
28th Annual Outdoor Women's Program next year,
and wish to be placed on the email notification list,
please contact AHEIA Calgary at:

info@aheia.com

403-252-8474

Over the years, we have encouraged thousands of women, many of whom had rarely, if ever, been in the backcountry, to experience the outdoors and learn new skills. The following three women, who attended the 2021 camp, are a great representation of what we are trying to accomplish through this program.

Wanda Batog

Wanda is considered the grand dame of the Outdoor Women's Program. At 89 years young, she has attended 26 of the 27 years that it has been offered, only missing the first camp because she didn't know it existed. She learned about the OWP at a Fish and Game booth at the Calgary Stampede and soon afterwards stopped by the AHEIA office in Calgary where she registered for the next camp. Wanda was living in the city and wanted to experience camping and the outdoors. At that time there were less than 50 women who attended, and the camp was very rustic—no showers, a cook shack with meals eaten outside under a tarp, participants bringing their own dishes, and everyone sleeping in tents. That first year it poured rain, her tent and sleeping bag were soaked, but she "learned what not to do when camping". Even experiencing those wet conditions, she enjoyed the program so much that she has been back every year since then. Wanda loves everything about the program, from meeting people to participating in outdoor activities. "There is always something new to learn and the instructors are very knowledgeable and helpful. Even in the evening, during free time, I have learned how to make a rope and sharpen an axe. I would recommend this experience to anyone!" This year, Wanda attended every session available and when asked which was her favourite, she replied that she liked doing everything. Her adventurous spirit and joy for the outdoors was an inspiration to everyone who attended camp this year.



Samantha Hodgson

Samantha has been involved with the OWP as both a participant and a volunteer instructor. She loves everything about the outdoors—in her youth she was in Cadets for many years and also participated in Biathlon. In 2015, Sam attended the Calgary Gun Show on Easter weekend and stopped by the AHEIA booth where she learned about the program. She was looking for an opportunity to get back to enjoying outdoor activities and, although registration is usually full within days of opening, she was lucky to reserve a spot for that year. She focussed on shooting, but also took field dressing, archery and arrow making, all activities which were new to her. The following year she returned and took all of the fishing sessions, including Learning to Fly Fish, Fly Tying and The Science of Fishing, as she had never fished before. It was during this program that she caught her first fish "and took it home and ate it because it was the last day of camp!"

An AHEIA staff member had learned that Sam was a truck driver by profession and asked if she would be interested in leading the Trailing session at the next year's camp. Having attended the OWP several times, participated on an AHEIA mentored hunt and becoming certified as a Range Officer and Shotgun Coach, Sam had learned many new skills through AHEIA and "was happy to give back". In 2019 she instructed both the Trailing sessions and assisted with the Rimfire sessions on the gun range. This past year she led the Trailing sessions exclusively. Having been in the trucking industry for over seven years, she knows how difficult it can be for someone to learn the skill of towing and backing up a trailer. "As an instructor it felt great to see women catching on and learning this skill. It is something that takes practice, and there usually isn't much chance to do so. At camp the women can practice and gain confidence." Sam is still in touch with women she met at her first OWP and they often go camping together. She is looking forward to returning to instruct at next year's event.



More OWP on the following page ➤

Tiana Lie-Hamilton

Tiana attended the OWP for the first time this summer. She grew up in a family that spent a lot of time fishing, but since moving to the city she has found it difficult locating and connecting with women who also appreciate the outdoors. Tiana heard about the OWP through a friend and surprised herself when she decided to register and attend on her own. She was excited to take the rifle and shotgun sessions, as she is interested in pursuing hunting, but thoroughly enjoyed all the sessions that were available. When asked about her experience, she was emotional when answering how empowering the two days had been for her. She not only made connections, but started new friendships and is planning on attending an AHEIA mentored waterfowl hunt this fall with some of the other women. Tiana wished to thank all the instructors for their time, knowledge, and patience. "They were very encouraging when assisting the women, allowing for our successes and the joy that comes with the feeling that I could do it." Tiana was very happy she stepped out of her comfort zone and attended camp and would love to attend again.



2021 Outdoor Women's Program *cont.*

Since its inception in 1994, over 3,000 women have attended AHEIA's Outdoor Women's Program, learning and connecting with Alberta's wonderful outdoors. The Outdoor Women's Program encourages women to value Alberta's wild places by providing opportunities to gain confidence, increase competence, acquire experience, and promote personal growth in skills pertaining to the outdoors. This program is not only educational, but is an excellent way for women to come together and enjoy each other's company at AHEIA's beautiful Alford Lake facility.



2021 Sessions:

- Firearms - Rifle • Firearms - Shotgun • Firearms - Handguns
- Muzzleloading • Fly Fishing • Canoeing
- Gun Cleaning and Maintenance
- Introduction to Hunting Migratory Birds
- Trailing • Archery • Wilderness Survival Skills Walk



“ I had an absolutely amazing time and felt so fulfilled after the weekend.
It was so incredible to get the experiences I did and soak up some knowledge from some truly wonderful people.
I feel blessed to have been a part of this year's OWP and hope to come back again!!
It's a unique opportunity to get to try and learn some things I may never have gotten the chance to otherwise!
Thank you AHEIA and all the OWP staff and volunteers!! ”



“ The instructors were very passionate, and interesting to learn from.
Certainly makes you want to learn and grow more,
and pass the knowledge and interest on to my children. ”



“I can't stop raving about the weekend to any and everyone I meet.”

•
“ I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend!
It was well organized and action packed. ”

•
“ Some of the most wonderful instructors I've ever had the pleasure of learning from!!
So knowledgeable, passionate, patient
and you can tell they love teaching!! ”

•
“ Absolutely wonderful staff overall!!!
Everyone was so warm and friendly
and incredibly organized and efficient!
Very impressive!! ”



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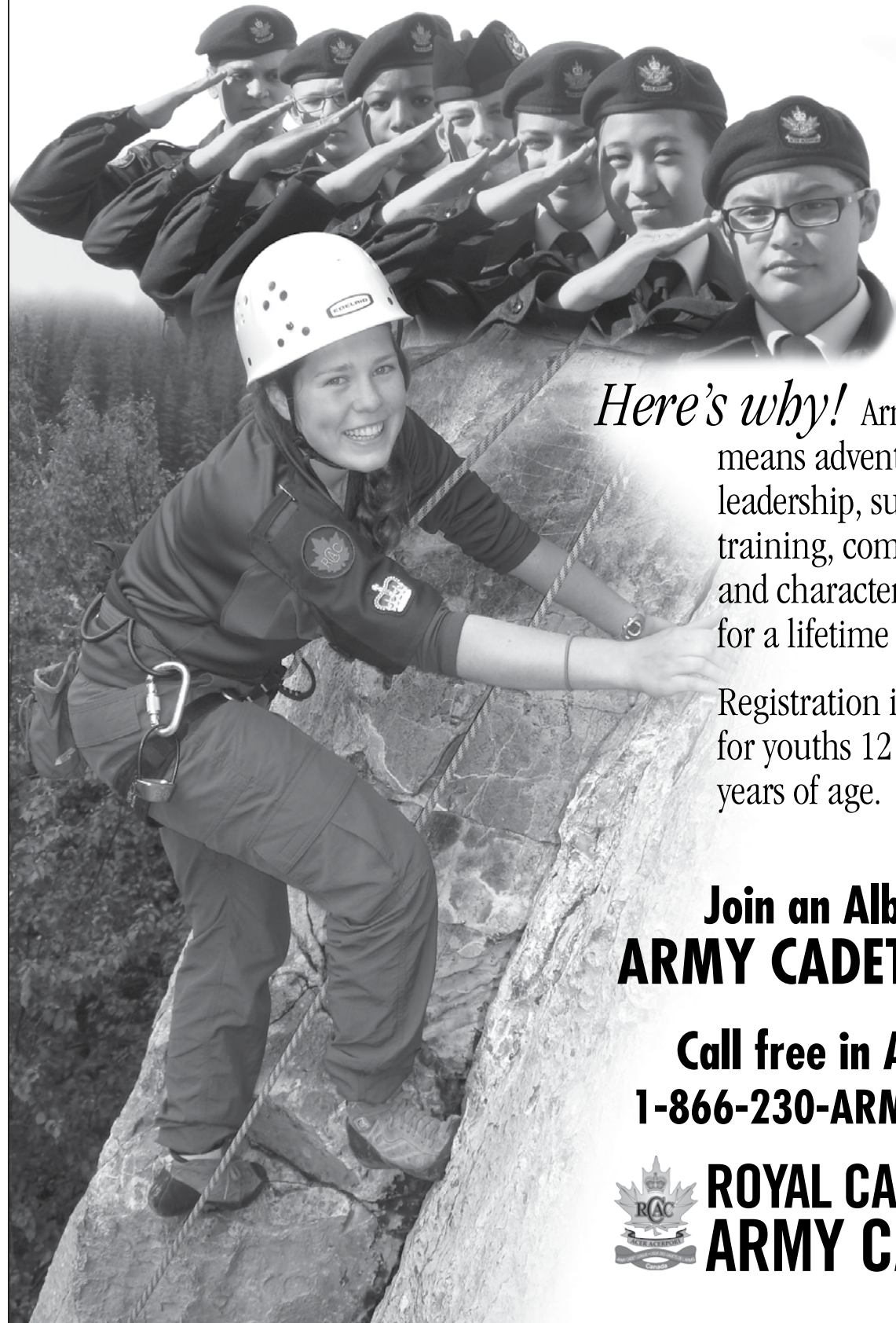
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EARLY BIRD DRAW JULY 12, 2022

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First Time Hunter Education Certification Requirements

By Donna Hansen



Donna Hansen
Administrative Assistant
AHEIA Edmonton

*A*s a first-time hunter, you are required by law to have passed the Conservation and Hunter Education program first. The age limit for hunting is 10 years old (to hunt birds only) and 12 and older for big game and entering the draw system.

AHEIA offers the Conservation and Hunter Education course at our centres in Calgary and in Edmonton. If you live outside these centres, you can access a list of Hunter Education Instructors who teach in your area under "Instructor Lists and Resources". The available Instructors are listed either alphabetically by the city or town they teach out of or by their last name.

Another alternative is to take the program online from your own home. Our Online Conservation and Hunter Education program can be accessed via our website www.aheia.com. Click on "Programs and Courses", then "Online Training". The online course may be completed from a computer, laptop, cell phone or tablet. The program can be purchased with the manual (which is shipped via Canada Post) or without a manual. Before you start, however, you will need to create a username and password. Once you have registered you can begin the online program. The final exam is done online as well. This course is a Provincial requirement for first-time hunters in Alberta and, as such,

How to Purchase a WIN Card

Purchasing a WIN (Wildlife Identification Number) Card and updating your eligibility to hunt is simple. Just visit <http://www.albertarelm.com/>. You will need the number from your Conservation and Hunter Education completion certificate on hand to set up this account. You will also need a piece of government issued ID.

Once you set up your Alberta RELM account, you can manage all of your licences and draws online. If you encounter any problems while using the website, call the RELM Support Line at 1-888-944-5494.

If you do not have computer access at home, WIN, draw and licence purchases can be made at most outdoor sporting goods store such as Canadian Tire, Bass Pro Shop, Cabela's, etc. The Calgary or Edmonton Conservation Education Centres for Excellence are also available to process RELM transactions for you during regular daytime hours (8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday-Friday). To purchase your WIN in store, you will need to have the number from your Conservation and Hunter Education completion certificate and a piece of government issued ID with you.

complete certification is required with an 80% pass mark on the timed (90 minutes) final exam.

Once the final exam is passed, students should wait one business day and contact AHEIA's Edmonton office (1-866-282-4342) and they will be issued a Hunter Education identification number that the student can enter into their AlbertaRELM.com WIN card account to update their Hunter Education Certification. Be sure to fill in section D-1 and D-2 (Eligibility to Hunt), initializing that you have successfully completed the Conservation Hunter Education course. If students do not have a WIN card, or their WIN card has expired, they will need to purchase one. Hard copy certificates, with the same cor-

responding five-digit code, will be issued by AHEIA via mail upon successful completion of the program (within approximately two weeks).

Blank numbered tags/wires are available from vendors for hunters to enter the tag numbers when purchasing a select species of animal online. The number you enter for the species MUST match the tag number. The tag numbers entered are only valid for the current hunting season purchased and cannot be used the following year.

Consult the current Alberta Hunting Regulations for planning your hunt, reviewing the current regulation changes and licence costs. Regulations are available at no charge from the licence vendor or visit mywildalberta.com and click on hunting regulations.

Online Hunter Education Certification

This comprehensive, easy-to-use online hunter education program covers the following important hunting topics:

- Module 1.....Role of the Hunter
- Module 2.....Hunting Ethics
- Module 3.....Wildlife Management and Conservation
- Module 4.....Wildlife Identification
- Module 5.....Clothing and Equipment
- Module 6.....Firearms
- Module 7.....Bow Hunting
- Module 8.....Survival
- Module 9.....Field Techniques
- Module 10.....First Aid
- Module 11.....Hypothermia
- Module 12.....Legal Responsibilities
- Module 13.....Physical Fitness
- Final Exam



AHEIA's Summer Shoots

This year, AHEIA was able to go forward with our scheduled shoots including the Holdsworth-Nattrass Trap Shoot in May, both the Stampede Grand and the Provincial Trapshooting Championships in July, the Rose Bowl Trap Shoot in August, and the Brian Burke's Target for Kids Fund-raiser, National Trap Day Shoot and Provincial Hunting Day in September. Our popular Women's and Youth Shotgun Leagues, our new Women's Archery League, and a Customer Appreciation Day were also held. COVID-19 protocols were implemented with guidance from Alberta Health officials to keep all participants safe. Here are photos from some of these events!



Update Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic



In light of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic, AHEIA may be forced to postpone or change the dates of our programs and events.

Please check with us to confirm any of the program or seminar details you see in this magazine.

Alford Lake Rifle Sight-in Workshop

AHEIA's fall Sight-in Day was held September 11 at the Alford Lake Range. The fine weather brought 26 participants out, joining the three volunteers and two staff members hosting the event.

As usual, the day started with the mandatory safety briefing and range orientation. Participants were separated into two groups: One group who had never sighted rifles (the "25-yard group"), and the other experienced group who wished to tune-up their rifles (the "100-yard group").

The first rounds downrange began right on schedule at 9:30 am with the 100-yard group.

As expected, the 25-yard group had a bit slower pace, as reticle and diopter adjustment were checked and explained. The group was encouraged to write down their adjustments, as those 1/4 adjustments for 1 MOA at 100 yards turn into 16 adjustments at 25 yards. Overall, this group quickly gleaned the knowledge required to get their shots on paper at 25 yards and how to properly set up their optics.

Participants were encouraged to utilize the 1 MOA "Grid Pattern Targets" to aid in calculating their adjustments.

With noon approaching, the group took a well-deserved break and enjoyed a BBQ lunch and good conversation.

After lunch, participants extended the range out to 200 and 300 yards, firing at paper as well as steel targets.

A good day, with experienced shooters ready for hunting season and the new shooters with a better understanding of their rifle and optics' capabilities.



AHEIA's next Rifle Sight-in Workshop is scheduled for April 2, 2022.



We believe youth are the future of the shooting sports. We are doing our part to preserve our future.



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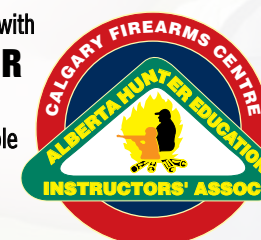
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“... firearms owners must take full responsibility for their actions and always be respectful of private and public property, keeping safety paramount.”

Brighten Up, Idiots!

Gun owners need to police themselves.

By Duane Radford

During a trip to southern Alberta last year, I saw shot-up road signs everywhere I went. Some signs were plastered with holes from high-powered rifles, others were shot up with shotgun pellets or riddled with what looked like .22 calibre bullet holes. Then, there are all the spent casings littering the ground at my local shooting range, not to mention the shot targets (often tattered) left on backstop stands.

There are range rules, but it looks like some of them are ignored. To make matters worse, there's the evidence of big game animals shot and left by parties unknown. Plus, everyone out there who hasn't been "scoped", please raise your hand! Come on, gun owners, it's long past the time when we should be acting responsibly. These dumb acts put all firearm owners in a bad light and fuel the Liberal mantra to disarm Canadians, and they've got to stop! Let's examine the Alberta scene as an example of issues of concern.

I got in touch with an old colleague of mine, former Alberta game warden Bill Peters, and asked him what sort of offence shooting up a road sign would fall under. Peters referred me to Section 430 of the Criminal Code, respecting mischief. Under Section 430(1): Every one commits mischief who wilfully destroys or damages property. The penalty for this is a fine of not more than \$5,000 or a term of imprisonment of not more than two years less a day, or both.

Out of curiosity, I approached the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General's department to see if they had any statistics related to offences under Section 430. Spokesperson Carla Jones replied, "Because of the way our system is set up, we are not able to break down how many of the charges were for this specific situation—only the number of cases under that Criminal Code section." I'm guessing the perpetrators are seldom caught.

When I was a kid, firearms training was all done informally, usually by relatives or neighbours. While that still happens today, there's also a much more formal and structured process where it is provided by certified instructors all over Canada.

Bob Gruszecki, president of the Alberta Hunter Education Instructor's Association (AHEIA), explained in an e-mail what AHEIA is doing to encourage safe and responsible use of firearms. Never one to mince words, Gruszecki said, "Firstly, anyone who uses a firearm without reasonable precautions for safety of other persons, property or the environment is reprehensible. To do so is not only unacceptable and disrespectful, it is also illegal and paints the entire firearms community in a bad light. Everyone who uses a firearm carries a sacred responsibility for the ethical and responsible use of firearms and plays a part in the proud and aged tradition, heritage and culture of the firearms community."

AHEIA produces several items to supplement this training, including but not limited to:

- The Alberta Conservation and Hunter Education Program.
- The Canadian Firearms Safety Program, both restricted and nonrestricted.
- A free publication called *Think! Your Trigger Can't* that's circulated to over 100,000 Albertans of all ages annually.
- Their YouTube channel and social media feeds have numerous free videos and workbooks explaining and encouraging ethical and responsible use of firearms, chief among these being the Think Firearms Safety program.
- KidWise Firearms Safety is a free course and workbook that's directed towards kindergarten-aged children and reaches more than 10,000 children annually.
- AHEIA runs a series of free field seminars annually to teach participants how to sight-in their firearms and how to be continually cog-



Broken clay targets litter the ground on Crown land.

nizant of safety and other people's perception of them while using firearms.

- AHEIA also runs mentorship workshops. Students are teamed with experienced mentors who assist in the student's growth and education in how to enter the fraternity of safe firearms users.

Remarkably, Gruszecki says that the total reach of this training in terms of numbers in 2020, even with the pandemic closures, amounted to over 100,000 Albertans. Overall, 2.2-plus million people have taken the Alberta Conservation and Hunter Education Program. He says AHEIA believes they are influencing positive behaviour, but the work goes on.

Notwithstanding all the foregoing fine work being done by AHEIA, problems still persist, according to Todd Zimmerling, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) president and CEO. Zimmerling said the ACA has implemented a no target shooting restriction on the conservation properties they manage because they were finding shotgun shooters were leaving a huge mess with shell casings, as well as clay pigeons, scattered everywhere. He says that although the clays are technically biodegradable, they do not disappear in one season, which means one day of shooting is littered across a conservation site for a year or more.

According to Zimmerling, "The other issue was the number of people using our conservation sites to sight-in their rifle. I understand that a lack of gun ranges makes it difficult to find suitable locations to sight-in firearms, but conservation sites are not designed for this purpose." He said, consequently, they were concerned first for the safety of others using the conservation site, but they were also concerned about push-back from their neighbours. "Most people living close to our conservation sites are fine with an occasional shot fired during hunting season," he said. "But few are okay with the idea of constant

shooting for hours at a time as people sight-in a rifle or check their latest handload."

Zimmerling went on to say that some people don't seem to realize if a landowner (in this case, ACA) is allowing their property to be used as a gun range without proper approvals (federal, provincial and municipal) there can be serious consequences, particularly if there are complaints from neighbours.

Zimmerling also said that the ACA has dealt with numerous cases of signs and outhouses being shot up. He advised that often the damage is not severe, but it certainly leaves a bad impression of gun owners when someone else comes along and sees a bullet hole in the middle of a foot access only sign. He added, "We all know the saying that one bad apple spoils the bunch, and this

is certainly true for gun owners. One guy shooting a sign or target shooting in an inappropriate location creates a bad image for all of us. The public does not differentiate between the 99 per cent of gunowners who are respectful and ethical in their use of firearms and the one per cent who believe it's still the wild west. It really is time for the 99 per cent to ensure we are shutting down the one per cent before our opportunities to use firearms are further eroded."

It's not just Alberta where there are issues with reckless use of firearms. The province of British Columbia has restricted gun use areas of the Fraser Valley where indiscriminate shooting was damaging habitat and creating serious safety concerns. BC has updated their Wildlife Act regulation to create no-shooting zones within 400 metres of select roads on non-municipal Crown land within the Fraser Valley Regional District. The changes apply to recreational shooting and target practice and don't affect licensed hunting or trapping, or impact First Nations' traditional rights. People who ignore the restrictions face fines of up to \$50,000 and six months in jail for a first offence, and as much as a \$100,000 fine and a year in jail for subsequent convictions.

Regarding game animals found shot and left by poachers, game warden Larry Bergeron told me Alberta's Fish and Wildlife officers always appreciate such tips. Although they may not be able to apprehend the perpetrator immediately, such information may help them connect the dots, revealing a pattern and resulting in targeted surveillance and enforcement going forward.

At the end of the day, firearms owners must take full responsibility for their actions and always be respectful of private and public property, keeping safety paramount. Those owners who are irresponsible are a black mark on all responsible users. They should be held accountable to do the right thing. If they are found guilty of non-compliance, they should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Report any unlawful incidents to local law enforcement agencies.



A mule deer buck carcass. Note the antlers cut out of skull; was it poached?

“... there are steps that you need to follow in order to properly access it.”

Know Before You Go:

Accessing Agricultural Crown Land for Hunting

Submitted by Alberta Environment and Parks

Hunting heritage runs deep in Alberta and is a tradition family and friends have taken part in for many years. Whether you are hunting on private land or on Crown land, hunters play an important role in wild-life management. However, figuring out where to go and how to access the land isn't always easy. Every year Alberta Environment and Parks receive many variations of the same question: how to access agricultural Crown land for hunting purposes. Agricultural Crown land is land that



is leased out for cattle or cultivation, and it may seem like private property when it's surrounded by fences and gates. This land is available for recreation; however, there are steps that you need to follow in order to properly access it.

Once you've determined that the land you wish to hunt on is agricultural Crown land, you need to contact the leaseholder prior to accessing the land. Contact information can be found online in the Recreational Access Internet Mapping Tool. Fall is a busy time for both hunters and leaseholders, so make sure you contact them early on to plan your hunt. This conversation is a great time to build a relationship with the leaseholder, learn about hazards or sensitive areas on the land, and where to park when you arrive. You need to be prepared to provide them with your contact information, when you would like to access the lease, how many people are in your hunting party and the license plates of your vehicles.



Every lease is different and may have special conditions put on by the leaseholder or government to help facilitate access. There are times when the leaseholder will deny you access under the Recreational Access Regulation. These include if livestock are present, their crop has not been harvested, you wish to discharge a firearm or hunt unreasonably close to livestock in a fenced pasture. You may also be denied access if you are not on foot, you want to camp or there is a fire ban in effect. Some leases in southern Alberta also have user limits, which only allow a certain number of hunters on the land each day. These limits are put in place to ensure public safety, animal health and proper land management.

If you are denied access, make sure to first politely ask the leaseholder under which condition of the Recreational Access Regulation they are denying access. If it is outside of the regulation, you can contact a local agrologist to facilitate a discussion around access. There is a formal dispute process if this discussion doesn't result in a conclusion; however, this process will take at least seven days. It is in your best interest to try to settle access disputes with the leaseholder.

While agricultural Crown land provides over five million acres of hunting opportunity, there is 100 million acres of Crown land that provides unique hunting opportunities. Not all Crown land is managed in the same way, so make sure to check the restrictions for wherever you are going. It is your responsibility as a hunter to know the laws and regulations, and do your part to maintain the integrity of reputation of hunters and hunting in general. For more information on accessing agricultural Crown land, please visit alberta.ca and search "Recreation on agricultural Crown land".

Be respectful of landowners, leaseholders, the public and other hunters. Enjoy your season!



Accessing Agricultural Crown Land

Before entering onto agricultural leased crown land, you must contact the leaseholder.

Detailed maps, leaseholder contact information and access conditions for leased land are found on the Recreational Access Mapping Tool through the Environment and Parks website.

Leaseholders may limit or deny access if:

- You are not on foot
- Livestock are present in the field
- A crop has not yet been harvested
- You wish to discharge a firearm or use explosives near livestock
- A fire ban is in effect
- You wish to camp
- You wish to hunt unreasonably close to livestock in a fenced pasture

When on agricultural crown land, be courteous and remember to:

- Pack out litter and do not damage land or property
- Park vehicles so they do not block lease access
- Leave gates as they were found
- Ask leaseholder permission before lighting a fire

Failing to follow these regulations can be costly, with a penalty of up to \$500.

For more information, please visit alberta.ca and search 'recreation on agricultural crown land' or call 310-3773.



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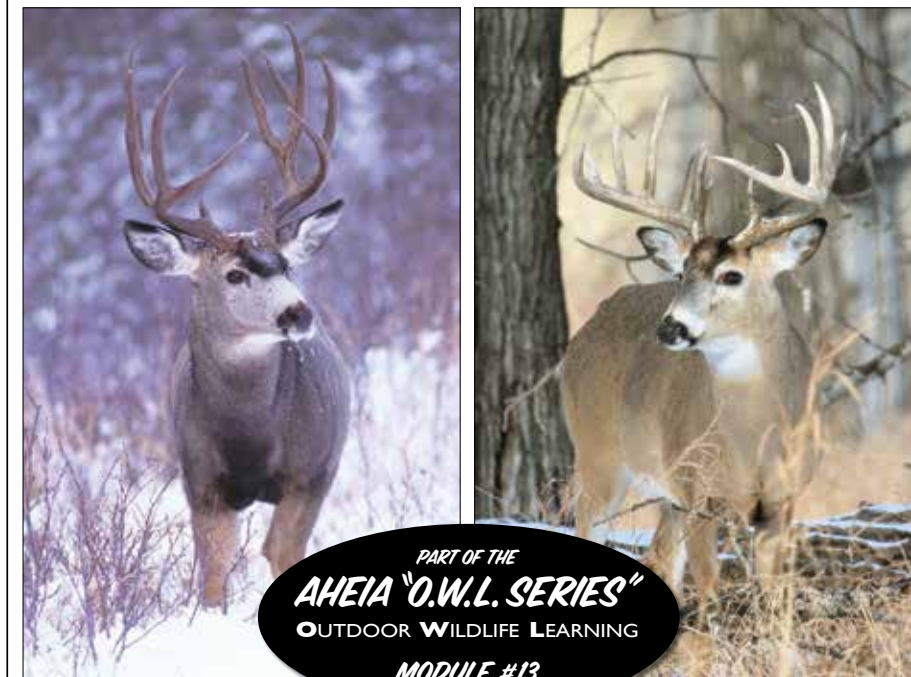
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OUTDOOR WILDLIFE LEARNING
MODULE #13

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“By the numbers, the Bow River is now the province’s busiest fishery, offering enjoyment for some 200,000+ hours of summer angling effort ... ”

The Bow River: Alberta’s ~~Best~~ Worst Kept Secret

Paul Christensen
Senior Fisheries Biologist
and

Dr. Michael Sullivan
Provincial Fish Science Specialist
Alberta Environment and Parks

Unless you are a *Plectropteran* or *Ephemeropteran* living under a rock, you have no doubt heard of Alberta’s renowned Bow River, which has been the subject of countless books and fly-fishing magazine articles. It supports a vibrant economy of guides, outfitters, specialty fly shops and countless other businesses than benefit from the crowds that flock to the Bow. It is known on the international stage as one of the world’s best dry fly fisheries, but has recently become the subject of concern for anglers and biologists due to declining fish populations.

In 2018, a study by the University of Calgary and Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) looked at historical population estimates and concluded that rainbow trout populations declined 30 to 50% between 2003 and 2013. Current fish population assessments indicate that populations are not improving. So, what’s causing the decline? While it would be nice to finger point at one specific factor, there are multiple factors that are threatening fish populations that need to be considered in a collective manner.

Cumulative Effects Modelling

In late 2020, AEP assembled a few stakeholders to develop a Bow River Cumulative Effects Modelling group tasked with identifying and understanding what factors are affecting trout populations and, most importantly, **to what degree.**

The latter statement is the key to identifying which factors are affecting the fishery the most and developing a series of actionable management and policy options to reverse the declining trend. It is critical to understand that all threats are not necessarily actionable and successful management of the fishery depends on taking the right management action at the right time.

In initial stages of modelling, we will be looking at approximately 20 threats that might influence the Rainbows in the Bow; the big five appear to be flow, nutrients, temperature, angling and whirling disease. Other threats like road salt and bird predation are in the model, but the data suggests they are minor or negligible compared to the big five. Additional factors, like fish entrainment into irrigation canals will also be analyzed. If the big five are having the greatest impact, we need to prioritize action towards threats we are able to most influence to have a positive impact on Bow River fish populations.

Alberta Environment and Parks Fisheries Biologists electrofishing the Bow River in Fall 2021.



Standardized techniques are used to measure the fish population. Fish that are collected are identified, measured, weighed, and tagged with a PIT (passive integrated transponder) tag.

Numbers Matter

By the numbers, the Bow River is now the province’s busiest fishery, offering enjoyment for some 200,000+ hours of summer angling effort (measured in 2018). This surpasses even Lesser Slave Lake from an angling pressure perspective. This increase of 15 per cent since it was last measured in 2006 corresponds almost perfectly with the City of Calgary’s population growth rate over the same period; this rate of population increase (and corresponding angling effort) is expected to continue unabated into the future. While no angling effort surveys were completed in 2020, AEP saw sportfishing licence sales increase by 30 per cent due to COVID-19, resulting in increased angling pressure on Alberta fisheries.

Angling, or more specifically overfishing, is the one threat that AEP biologists and anglers can tackle by developing innovative solutions. How can overfishing happen in a catch-and-release fishery? We call it “recycle rate,” or the number of times a fish is caught per summer. In popular catch-and-release trout fisheries, each fish might be caught several times. Based on hundreds of angler interviews during creel surveys on the Bow River and extensive population mark-recapture work by biologists, we estimate that anglers are catching more than 60,000 trout each summer ... out of a trout population of less than 15,000 fish. Modelling shows that a sustainable recycle rate would be 1 or 2 (resulting in one fish being caught 6 to 10 times in their lifespan if they live to age 8). The recycle rate is

instead now above 4, which might be part of the reason why fishermen see so few big and old Rainbows in the Bow.

With all of the positive attention the Bow River fishery has received for decades, this increase in angler pressure has many anglers and biologists wondering what the future of the Bow River will look like in the coming years, as more anglers compete for fewer trout. After all, it is still a “working” river with conflicting objectives, all supplied by a complex series of dams upstream of Calgary. The tall order the Bow River is expected to fulfill includes irrigation water supply, hydroelectric power generation, municipal drinking water supply, sewage treatment dilution, other industrial uses, recreation (including fishing and boating) and, most recently, flood mitigation for the City of Calgary.

Involving Anglers

The advice of knowledgeable anglers is critical to understanding which methods or rules might help reduce the recycle rate. Two main areas of action are obvious: reduce the number of fishermen and reduce the number of trout each fisherman can catch. Other ideas include shorter seasons or time limits on a fishing day, like on Montana’s famous trout rivers. Ideas from fishermen have included looking at gear restrictions like dry-fly only or single-lure only regulations. These and other innovative or tried-and-true methods are all on the table for discussion and analysis. There are two key features of any successful action: Bow River anglers must accept it as reasonable, and it must be effective in reducing that high recycle rate.

These changes might appear drastic, but doing nothing leads to even more drastic consequences. If the Bow River fishery collapses, everybody—from anglers to fly shops, to hotels and restaurants—loses. Thousands of Bow River anglers will need to go fishing somewhere else, like the Crowsnest, Oldman or Red Deer rivers, which could launch a cascade of overfishing issues. Our Bow River is a critical keystone fishery in Alberta.

This project will involve ongoing conversations around the current state of the fishery on the Bow and management options that are being considered, prior to a public engagement opportunity in the winter.

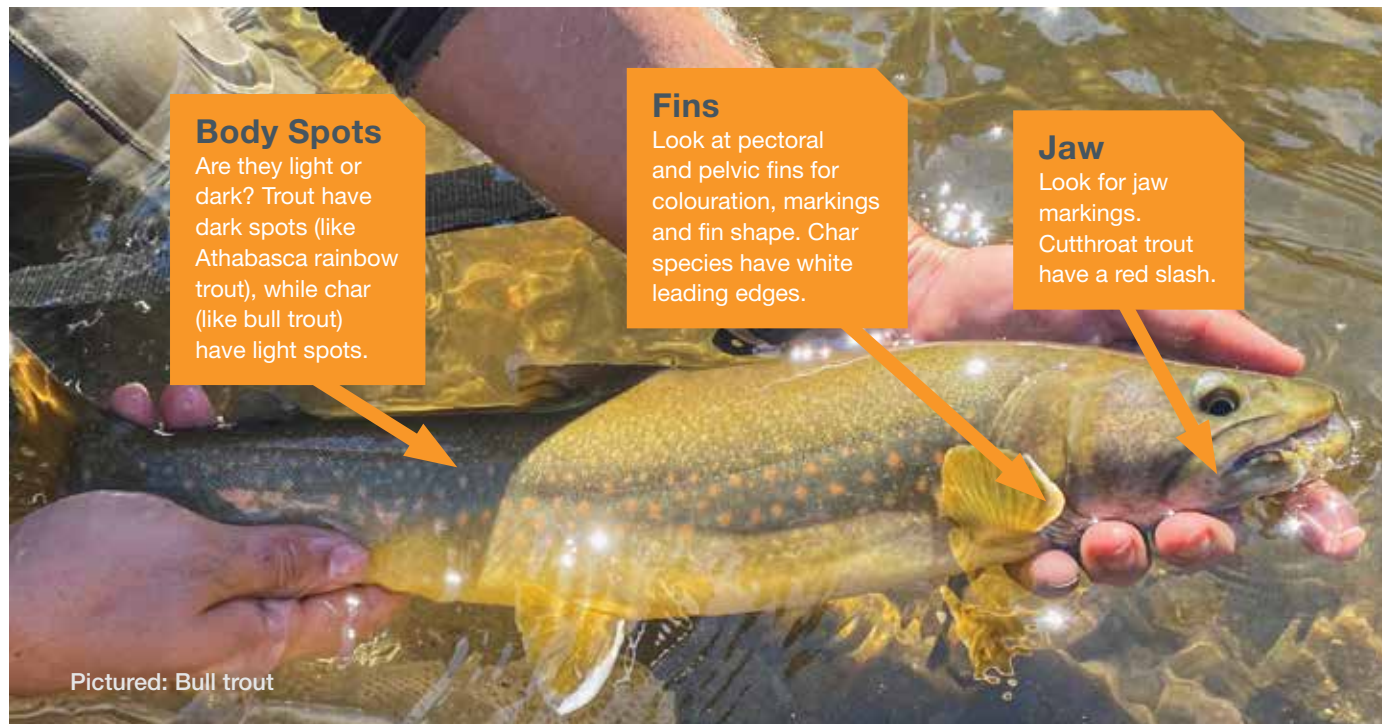


**Join us for an
education session to
learn more and ask
questions you have about
the Bow River fishery
on November 3 at 7:00pm.**

To register for this session and find additional resources regarding the Bow River fishery, search

**Fisheries Management
on mywildalberta.ca**

All fish are released back into the same stretch of river they were collected from during sampling.



Pictured: Bull trout

Alberta's native trout have been in the cold, clean, clear and connected waters of the province for thousands of years. They are an important part of healthy ecosystems, supporting diverse food webs and acting as indicator species of high quality habitats. We all play a role in protecting native trout populations while fishing in the east slopes. As an angler, there are easy steps that you can take to keep fish in our future.

Before heading out onto the water, check local sportfishing regulations, such as catch and size limits, for the waterbody you want to fish. Regulations are in place to help protect Alberta's native trout, including Athabasca rainbow trout, bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. Be prepared to release your catch quickly and safely.

Fish Identification

It's hard to predict what will bite the end of your line, so it's important to be able to identify your catch in order to follow the regulations. There are three key features (see above) to look for while trying to identify native trout. Remember, if you don't know, let it go!

Keep Fish Wet

Be ready to release your catch quickly and safely to give the fish the best chance of survival.

- 1. Minimize air exposure** – Keep the fish's mouth and gills fully submerged in the water as much as possible. Lifting the fish fully out of the water for even short durations where the fish is unable to breathe is harmful.
- 2. Use wet gloves and a net** – Fish are covered in a protective mucus layer that prevents bacteria and diseases from entering through their skin. Every time the fish comes in contact with a dry surface this layer is removed.
- 3. Limit handling time** – Consider using barbless hooks for quick removal and have your pliers or hook removal tool at the ready! Keep the fish in the water as much as possible when removing a hook, taking a photo and releasing it. When a fish is kept wet and released quickly, it is less stressed from being caught and has the best chance of survival.

Four Rules for Winter Fishing Safety

By Paula Shearer
PS on the Fly Guiding

Winter is coming. As we all know from personal experience, it can be a time to stick to the warmth of the indoors. As an outdoor enthusiast it can be difficult to stay housebound for too long, which is why I try to brave the elements when possible. Winter conditions can be challenging, but they can also be dangerous and because of this we need to be much more aware of where and how we approach fishing rivers during this season. This is the reason why I follow four rules to keep myself as safe as possible on the water when there is ice.

1. Don't go where you don't know.

It is extremely important to know your surroundings in the area where you are fishing. How deep is it? Are there any obstacles under me? How fast is the water flowing? By knowing the answers to these questions, I can make sure that I choose an area that I am familiar with and am confident with the conditions.

2. Inspect the ice.

Ice, no matter how thick, can crack and break away at any time. I try to minimize the risk by checking the thickness and making sure it is at

least 4" thick. You should also look at the ice to see if it is cracked or breaking away. When inspecting ice, it is important to know that if the ice is white, it usually has more air bubbles, which can make it less safe, whereas ice that is clear tends to be stronger.

3. Where can you get out if you were to fall in?

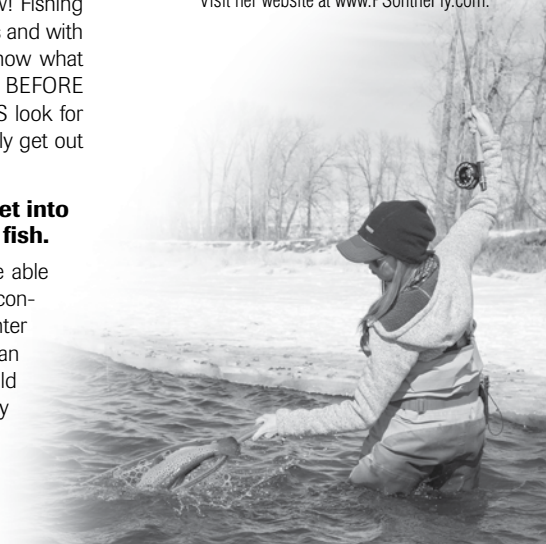
This is the most important rule I follow! Fishing from the edge of ice can be dangerous and with this it is EXTREMELY important to know what you would do if you were to ever fall in. BEFORE you begin to fish, you should ALWAYS look for an area where you can safely and easily get out of the water if you were to fall in.

4. Find a spot where you can get into the water and safely handle fish.

As anglers it is our responsibility to be able to properly handle fish so that we can continue to enjoy our fishery. The cold winter air can be very harmful to fish and so can dragging them up onto the ice. We should handle fish in the water and ensure they are properly revived and released.

These are four rules I never break to ensure myself the safest experience possible when fishing a river or stream in the winter. As with many things, we are never 100% safe, and therefore we should always be aware of the risks and be well prepared in case something does happen.

Paula Shearer is a FFI Certified Casting Instructor. Visit her website at www.PSonthefly.com.



AHEIA Staff Appointments



Allison Selsing

It is my pleasure to announce that effective Tuesday, August 3, 2021, Allison Selsing joined the AHEIA team as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator.

Allison grew up in south Okanagan, moving to Calgary when she attended the Applied Business & Entrepreneurship Program at Mount Royal University. While at school, she interned with the Western Hockey League and upon graduation was hired to their marketing department. She also worked part-time for the Calgary Sport & Entertainment Corp. (Calgary Flames, Calgary Stampeders).

Allison enjoys camping and fishing with her boyfriend Kole, and they are presently training their eight-month-old Black Lab, Moose, to be a hunting dog. She is also interested in trying the shooting sports at the Calgary Firearms Centre.

Allison can be reached at the Calgary Office at 403-319-2286 and via email at allison@aheia.com.



Sarah Marthaller

Effective Tuesday, August 3, 2021, Sarah Marthaller joined AHEIA as an Assistant Conservation Education Program Coordinator.

Sarah has lived her entire life in the Nanton area and still resides on her family farm with her husband Kris and four daughters. Her parents were avid outdoors people, and she spent a lot of her childhood in the backcountry, hunting, fishing and helping with their guiding company, Misty Mountain Outfitters. She also worked as a backcountry cook for Brewster's. For the past 10 years Sarah has worked from home running her business, Mosquito Creek Game Birds, with Kris.

Sarah was introduced to AHEIA three years ago when she joined the Women's Shotgun League at the Calgary Firearms Centre. Since then, her husband and daughters have all taken up the shooting sports, which they continue to enjoy together.

Sarah can be reached at the Calgary Office at 403-319-2288 and via email at sarahm@aheia.com.

Please join me in welcoming Allison and Sarah to the AHEIA family. (Robert A. Gruszecki, President - AHEIA)

Learn more by searching native trout recovery on alberta.ca

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A Big Fish

and AHEIA's Alberta Fishing Education Program



Now and then we here at AHEIA get some messages passed on to us that confirm what we do is all worthwhile. This summer we received an email from Brett Latter, along with a picture of his proud 14-year-old son holding a large northern pike he had caught on Canada Day in a river in central Alberta. The fish was 40" long and was safely released back into the water after a few photos. It was Brett's son's first northern pike and, according to his dad, "my son's fish of a lifetime".

In 2020, Brett's son was "skunked" on 10 consecutive fishing trips. He then took AHEIA's online Alberta Fishing Education Program and became even more anxious to get out fishing in 2021. This past summer they managed to catch over 50 fish, including his large pike, and build a father-son bond that will last forever. Brett's son has mounted the Len Thompson Five of Diamonds spoon he used to catch his giant pike amongst his hockey medals on his wall, and this fall is in BC where he continues to successfully catch salmon and sturgeon in the Fraser River.

Thank you for the feedback Brett, and many more happy fishing days with your son!



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Great Meals

from the Harvest

with Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Fried Venison Backstrap

2 pounds venison backstrap, cut into 1/4" thick slices
2 cups 2% milk
1/2 cup 2% milk
2 tablespoons salt
1 tablespoon garlic powder
2 tablespoons of your favourite hot sauce

2 large eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
3 cups canola oil for frying

Place the venison slices in a shallow bowl or pan, pour in the 2 cups of milk and hot sauce. Stir to coat, cover and marinate for 1 hour.

Heat the canola oil in a skillet (electric style works well) to 325° F.

In a shallow bowl or pan whisk together the eggs and 1/2 cup of milk. In a separate bowl stir together the flour, salt, garlic powder and pepper. Dredge the drained venison slices in the flour mixture, then into the egg mixture and back into the flour mixture. Shake off excess flour.

Fry in the hot oil until both sides are lightly browned (about 3 minutes). Remove and drain on paper towels.

Serve as an appetizer with your favourite dipping sauce or add a salad and starch of your choice to make it a meal.

Pheasant Stir Fry

1 boneless/skinless pheasant breast, about 3/4 pounds, cut into strips
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, peeled and minced
2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
1/2 cup fresh cauliflower florets
1 cup carrots, julienned
1 cup celery, julienned
1 cup snow peas, frozen

2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon chicken bouillon granules
1/2 cup fresh broccoli florets
1 1/3 cups water
1/4 cup parsley, chopped
1 cup onion, halved and sliced thinly
1 tablespoon sesame seeds

In a small bowl combine the cornstarch, soy sauce, ginger and bouillon. Mix until well incorporated. Add the water, stir and set aside.

In a skillet or wok stir fry the pheasant in 1 tablespoon of oil for 3-4 minutes until no longer pink. Remove, cover and keep warm. Add remaining oil to the skillet or wok. Stir fry the broccoli, carrots and cauliflower for 2-3 minutes. Add the celery and pea pods and stir fry for about 5 minutes until the vegetables are crisp-tender but not hard.

Stir soy sauce mixture and add to the skillet or wok. Bring to a boil, reduce to medium-high and cook for 2 minutes. Add the meat and stir to warm through. Add parsley and sesame seeds, stir and serve over your prepared rice.

Enjoy!



Conservation Education Points of Contact

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Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
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1-866-852-4342
Fax: 403-252-3770
info@aheia.com

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Conservation Education Centre For Excellence
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Edmonton, AB T6E 6M8
Phone: 780-466-6682
1-866-282-4342
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edmontoninfo@aheia.com

Alford Lake
Conservation Education Centre For Excellence
Box 369
Caroline, AB T0M 0M0
Phone: 403-722-2423
Fax: 403-722-2445
alfordlake@xplornet.com

A.H.E.I.A.
Calgary Firearms Centre
242 Avenue & 32 Street SW
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