



*North American Waterfowl
Management Plan*



ALBERTA **NAWMP** PARTNERSHIP

2019-2020 PROGRESS REVIEW
APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020





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**“WE NEED THE HELP OF REGULAR ALBERTANS
TO REACH OUR CONSERVATION GOALS.”**

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PREFACE: ENGAGING ALBERTANS TO ENGAGE IN CONSERVATION

As part of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), the Alberta NAWMP Partnership is dedicated to conserving wetland and upland habitat to sustain bird populations. But we need the help of regular Albertans to reach our conservation goals.

In Alberta, some of the most valuable wildlife habitat is under the care of rural landowners. So one aspect of our work is to engage with landowners in ways that encourage them to engage in conservation.

As proud stewards of their land, farmers and ranchers want to sustain healthy landscapes. But their land is how they make their living, which means that choices about habitat conservation and restoration are also business decisions. Two articles in this year's Progress Review look at mechanisms to reward landowners for their stewardship.

In *Wetland Restoration Brings Benefits to a Farm Family*, we highlight a project carried out by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), an Alberta NAWMP Partner. Benefits to the farm family from this wetland restoration project include control of spring flooding on their land, continued use of their land for grazing, increased waterfowl habitat, and payment of fair market value for the area covered by the restored wetland.

Such projects are enabled through the Alberta Wetland Policy's mitigation process. Fees paid by proponents for approved wetland impacts are held in a provincial fund dedicated to wetland replacement. Those funds are used by DUC to compensate landowners for voluntary wetland restoration.

In *Rewarding Grassland Conservation*, we learn about progress in developing carbon credits as a market-based incentive to reward Canadian forage and grassland managers for retaining grasslands – despite financial

pressures to convert these lands to cropland. Retaining grasslands means retention of grassland ecosystem services such as storing soil carbon, maintaining habitat, and protecting watershed health.

In 2019-20, Alberta NAWMP provided funding and technical support toward developing this grassland carbon credit concept. Now in 2020-21, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, another Partner, and DUC are continuing to support this work through a multi-stakeholder pilot study to see how grassland carbon credit projects could work in conserving grasslands. And two other Partners, Alberta Environment and Parks and Environment and Climate Change Canada, are observing the pilot to see if grassland projects might be suitable for their carbon market initiatives.

This Progress Review also looks at other creative ways our Partnership worked toward NAWMP goals in 2019-20. Very Visual Guidebook for Wetland Conservation describes a new technical tool developed by DUC. This guidebook makes it much easier for wetland practitioners, land managers and others to properly classify wetlands, which is the first step to avoiding or minimizing wetland impacts.

Targeting Research Dollars to Key Needs profiles Alberta NAWMP's Science Fund. This fund focuses on research studies that help answer important conservation questions. The Human Dimensions of Wetland Conservation showcases a Science Fund project that is examining factors influencing waterfowl hunter recruitment, retention and re-engagement. Waterfowlers are key supporters of wetland and waterfowl conservation, and the project's results will help the Partners engage more effectively with this group of Albertans.

On behalf of Alberta NAWMP, I thank the diverse agencies and individuals, including many Alberta farmers, ranchers and hunters, who worked with the Partners in 2019-20. Your participation is a measure of our success. I am pleased to present the Alberta NAWMP Partnership 2019-2020 Progress Review.

Travis Ripley

*Chair, Board of Directors
Alberta NAWMP Partnership*

NAWMP IN ALBERTA

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) is a landmark partnership between Canada, the United States and Mexico for habitat conservation to sustain continental waterfowl populations.

Created in 1986, NAWMP defines and prioritizes geographic regions across the continent based on their biological values for waterfowl and other wetland-associated birds. Its initiatives address regional and continental priorities, using a collaborative approach at local, regional, national and international levels.

NAWMP achieves its goals through voluntary regional partnerships that implement local actions. The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) is the regional NAWMP partnership with responsibility for prairie, parkland and boreal landscapes in western Canada. Combined, these landscapes are the most important waterfowl breeding areas in North America. They contain some of the most productive waterfowl areas in the world. Conserving these landscapes is crucial to the maintenance and recovery of mid-continent waterfowl populations.

Since its inception in 1986, the PHJV has developed a series of science-based Habitat Implementation Plans to guide its activities. The 2013-2020 plan has continued the PHJV's long-term focus on conserving waterfowl populations and their key habitats, plus it has added a heightened emphasis on engagement with hunters, other conservationists and the general public. The plan has also formally added the Western Boreal Forest Region to the PHJV's longstanding focus on the Prairie and Parkland regions. And this plan has increased the PHJV's attention on other types of birds, while maintaining its enduring commitment to waterfowl conservation. The PHJV has recently started development of its next implementation plan.

The PHJV includes provincial NAWMP partnerships in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Alberta component of the PHJV's implementation plan provides the foundation for Alberta NAWMP's activities.

The Alberta NAWMP Partnership is composed of three government and two non-government organizations. It is directed by a Board of Directors and a Management Committee, which are advised by Policy and Communications committees. The board and committee members are mainly drawn from the five Partner agencies.

Alberta NAWMP coordinates joint projects, communications, planning and policy support, and facilitates funding options among the Partners. It supports Partner activities through technical and logistical assistance and by advancing innovative ideas through facilitation, funding support and capacity building.

ALBERTA NAWMP (PHJV)

VISION

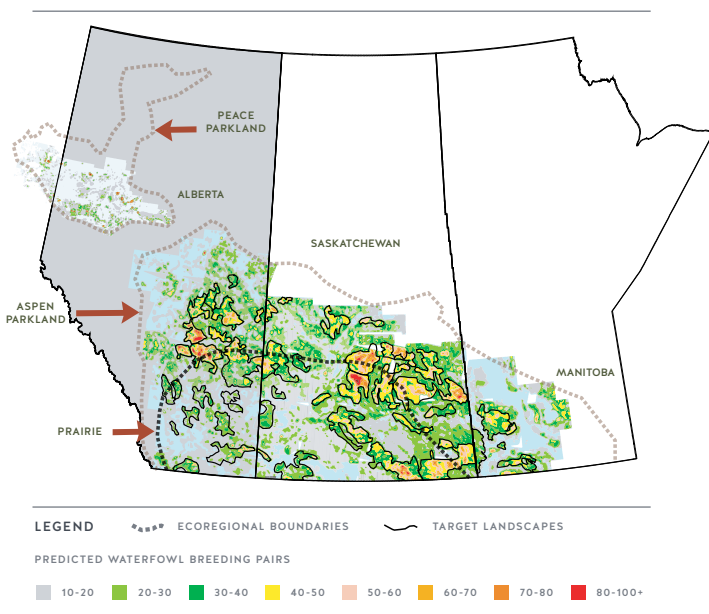
HEALTHY PRAIRIE, PARKLAND AND BOREAL LANDSCAPES THAT SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE BIRD POPULATIONS AND PROVIDE ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO SOCIETY.

ALBERTA NAWMP (PHJV)

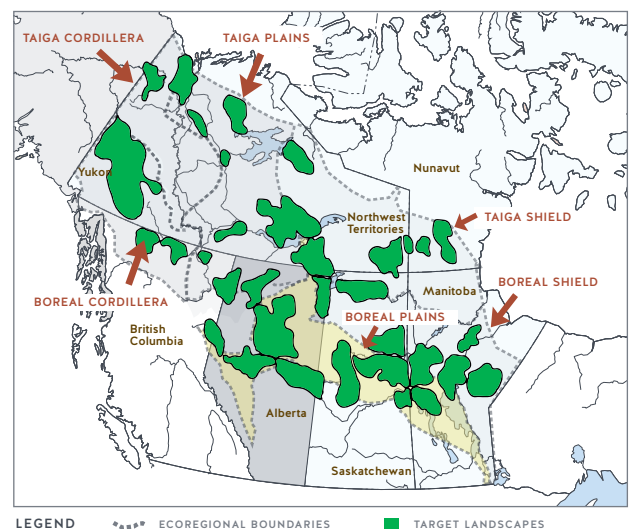
MISSION

PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO ACHIEVE HEALTHY AND DIVERSE WATERFOWL AND OTHER BIRD POPULATIONS THROUGH CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS. THESE PARTNERSHIPS STRIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS.

PRAIRIE/PARKLAND TARGET LANDSCAPES



WESTERN BOREAL FOREST TARGET LANDSCAPES



WHO IS ALBERTA NAWMP?

The Alberta NAWMP Partnership's successes in wetland and waterfowl conservation spring from the synergy of working together. The Partnership is composed of one federal and two provincial government departments and two non-government organizations that all have a responsibility for Alberta's wetlands as part of their mandates.

The five Partners continually seek opportunities to work with each other and with regional and municipal organizations and other stakeholders. These collaborative networks enhance existing wetland stewardship efforts, launch innovative initiatives that otherwise might not happen, and build interest in and capacity for wetland conservation.

Together, the Partners and their collaborators are making exciting progress on shared conservation goals.

HOW WETLAND LANDSCAPES RELATE TO EACH PARTNER AGENCY'S ROLES, OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

GOVERNMENT

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is the lead provincial agency responsible for the stewardship of Alberta's air, land, water and biodiversity. AEP administers the Alberta Wetland Policy, the objective of which is to conserve, restore, protect and manage Alberta's wetlands to sustain the benefits they provide to the environment, society and economy.

The Alberta Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry includes the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and a number of agencies, boards and commissions. Among the ministry's core business activities are: providing the framework and services necessary for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of forests; and enabling environmentally responsible and economically competitive forestry, agriculture and agri-food industries in Alberta and its global marketplaces.

Environment and Climate Change Canada strives to preserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment, including water, air, soil, flora and fauna, conserve Canada's renewable resources, conserve and protect Canada's water resources, and coordinate environmental policies and programs for the federal government.

PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is a registered charity that has over 80 years of experience in wetland conservation and restoration. DUC partners with government, landowners, industry, Indigenous peoples and non-profit organizations to conserve wetlands for the benefit of society, waterfowl, other wildlife and the environment.

Nature Conservancy of Canada, in partnership with corporations, governments, individual donors and landowners, works to achieve the direct protection of Canada's most important wild spaces through property securement and long-term stewardship of these properties. This work maintains critical lands and waters for wildlife and ensures clean air and water for our future generations.

ALBERTA NAWMP PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEES, 2019-20

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Dave Mussell (Chair), Alberta Environment and Parks
Carys Richards, Nature Conservancy of Canada

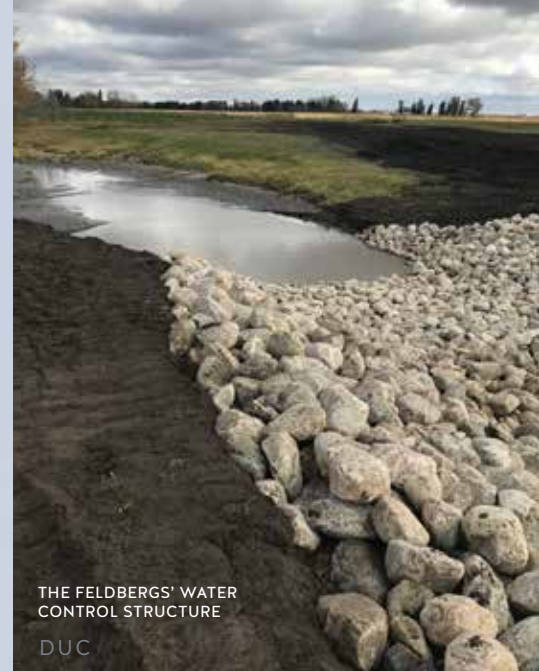
COORDINATOR

Greg Hale, Alberta NAWMP Partnership

**"ALL IN ALL, THIS PROJECT WAS A
VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE."**



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THE FELDBERGS' WATER
CONTROL STRUCTURE

DUC

WETLAND RESTORATION BRINGS BENEFITS TO A FARM FAMILY

For Leroy and Mary Feldberg, their wetland restoration project provides better control of spring flooding on their land, continued use of the land for grazing, increased wildlife habitat, and financial compensation. This great project is one of many wetland restorations enabled through the Alberta Wetland Policy.

"If Ryan Pocza hadn't dropped by, my parents would have never known that this project was a possibility," says Lisa Ayres, the Feldbergs' daughter.

Pocza, a Conservation Program Specialist with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), has been actively targeting drained wetlands in Wetaskiwin County that could be restored. Restoring such wetlands enhances the habitat base that DUC has already protected in the area through conservation easements, purchases and restoration projects.

In 2019, using satellite imagery and other tools, Pocza determined that a wetland basin on the Feldbergs' land had been partially drained years ago. So he approached Leroy to see if he might be interested in a project to restore that wetland to its pre-drainage level.

"We have two quarter sections – a south pasture and a north pasture. Both pastures have natural slough wetland areas, which are connected by a creek. In the spring, a lot of water comes into the south pasture in that slough area. And when ice breakup happens, we typically see flooding through the creek, over our driveway, and into the north pasture's slough area," explains Ayres.

"What really sparked Leroy's interest in the project was having more control of the water flow."

Under its Wetland Restoration Lease Program, DUC works with the landowner to develop a project plan. If the landowner and DUC decide to proceed with a proposed project, they sign a 10-year agreement.

"Under these agreements, DUC takes care of all the work and costs related to restoring the wetland," explains Pocza. "We also pay the landowner 100% of the fair market value for the area covered by the restored wetland. Half is paid upfront, and half is paid in 10 payments over the 10 years. We put a caveat on the title for those 10 years, which allows us to access the wetland to check that everything is functioning properly."

The landowner retains ownership and management of the restored area. The only restrictions are that the landowner must not remove the wetland control structure or till the land within the wetland's boundary.

"This project doesn't change how we manage the land; we can still pasture cows there," notes Ayres. "The only change is that we now have controlled water flow and a new area for wildlife and waterfowl. My parents are both avid bird watchers, and Leroy is a photographer."

This land has been in the Feldberg family for generations. Leroy, who has lived on this farm all his life, told Pocza that as kids they used to canoe in the slough and watch the cranes, ducks and geese.

Controlling the water level in the south slough required a rock chute and dam, which DUC built to withstand a 1-in-100-year flood. Pocza adds, "The Feldbergs were awesome to work with, and everyone was happy to see this project come to fruition."

"All in all, this project was a very positive experience," says Ayres.

Funding for these restoration projects is available to landowners as a result of the Wetland Policy mitigation process. Fees paid by proponents for approved wetland impacts are held in a provincial fund dedicated to wetland replacement. Those funds are used by DUC to compensate landowners like the Feldbergs for voluntary wetland restoration.

"The Alberta Wetland Policy has created a mechanism for paying landowners for the ecosystem services [such as wildlife habitat, flood and drought management, water quality improvement and biodiversity] provided by their restored wetlands," explains DUC's Tracy Scott.

"As a rough estimate, this policy is putting almost \$4 million a year into landowners' pockets through the compensation payments in DUC's restoration projects. It's really a win-win-win for the environment, society and landowners."

REWARDING GRASSLAND CONSERVATION

Carbon credits are emerging as another potential way to reward Canadian landowners for retaining healthy grasslands, thanks to pioneering work that includes several firsts for Canada.

“Canadian grassland soils are well known as large carbon sinks. But Canada is losing an average of about 50,000 hectares of grasslands per year due to conversion to cropland, especially where crops could make more economic sense for the landowner,” says Karen Haugen-Kozyra, President of Viresco Solutions Inc., an environmental consulting firm.

Grassland conversion to cropland releases stored carbon to the atmosphere. It also reduces the landscape’s ability to supply other ecosystem services such as providing wildlife habitat, maintaining biodiversity, and protecting watershed health.

So Viresco and the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) are working on the ‘Avoided Conversion of Grassland to Cropland’ carbon offset protocol. An offset protocol establishes procedures to measure, monitor, report and verify the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions associated with a specific practice. Such protocols ensure the market value of carbon credits sold to companies wanting to offset their emissions.

Some carbon markets are voluntary, like the Climate Action Reserve (CAR), a North American carbon registry. Others are regulatory, like Alberta’s market where companies can meet regulated emission reduction requirements by buying offsets.

Viresco and the CFGA have developed a Canadian grassland protocol for the CAR system, with an eye on the Alberta system in the future. The protocol is based on a successful U.S. grassland protocol in the CAR system. In 2019, with funding from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership’s AgriAssurance Program and Alberta NAWMP, Viresco, the CFGA and a multi-stakeholder working group completed the Canadian protocol’s development. Members of Alberta NAWMP’s Policy Committee participated in the working group, including representatives from Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and Alberta Beef Producers. In October 2019, CAR approved the protocol.

CAR has mainly U.S. protocols and some Mexican ones. This grassland protocol is CAR’s first-ever Canadian protocol.

This protocol will also be the first opportunity for Canadian forage and grassland managers to participate in a carbon market. “We need various tools to encourage grassland conservation, including economic tools because people make decisions on the landscape based on financial considerations,” explains Tracy Scott, Policy Committee Chair and Management Committee member.

“This protocol would be a way for landowners who manage grasslands to receive payment for the ecosystem services they provide.”

Work on the Alberta protocol is ongoing so all the pieces will be in place if Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), which oversees Alberta’s system, gives the go-ahead. Alberta NAWMP is helping with this work. In 2017, DUC, an Alberta NAWMP Partner, commissioned a series of reports on carbon in wetland and grassland ecosystems, in part to help AEP assess the possibility of nature-based carbon credits. In 2020, the Policy Committee commissioned a peer review of these reports. That review confirmed the scientific merit and relevance of the reports, which are available at abnawmp.ca. In 2019-20, Alberta NAWMP provided funding and conducted technical work toward the Alberta protocol’s development.

With AgriAssurance funds, Viresco and the CFGA are now leading a pilot study to fine-tune how the CAR grassland projects would work. “This is the first-ever ‘avoided conversion’ protocol in Canada,” explains Haugen-Kozyra. Carbon credits can only be generated from practices that are ‘beyond business as usual’; all other Canadian protocols involve undertaking a new practice. However for grasslands, ‘beyond business as usual’ means the lands are not converted to cropland, despite financial pressure to do so.

“The pilot is important to help us all learn,” she says. The pilot includes representatives of the many players needed to conduct grassland projects, such as: interested landowners with land that meets the eligibility criteria; land trusts; land appraisers; project developers; verifiers; and offset buyers.

Alberta NAWMP Partners DUC and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), as well as other land trusts, are playing a central role in obtaining projects for the pilot through their landowner conservation easement programs. These easements provide the necessary level of security to ensure the carbon credits are verifiable, and the land trusts have the means to deliver and hold these easements. AEP and Environment and Climate Change Canada – also Alberta NAWMP Partners – are observing the pilot.

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“WE NEED VARIOUS TOOLS TO ENCOURAGE GRASSLAND CONSERVATION, INCLUDING ECONOMIC TOOLS.”



VERY VISUAL GUIDEBOOK FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION

“AN EASY-TO-USE REFERENCE TOOL AND A HANDY RESOURCE FOR TRAINING ON WETLAND CONSERVATION”

“We’re really excited about the difference the new Alberta Wetland Field Guide can make for helping to conserve and minimize impacts to wetlands in Alberta,” says Catherine Brown, Wetland Stewardship Specialist with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC).

DUC is developing this guide as an easy-to-use, quick reference tool and a handy resource for training and outreach on wetland conservation. Alberta NAWMP, the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture, Alberta Innovates and DUC are funding the guide’s development.

The guide is a companion piece to Alberta Environment and Parks’ Alberta Wetland Classification System. This system, which is tailored for Alberta wetlands, is the standard for classifying wetlands in the province.

“Being able to classify wetlands is that first step to avoid or minimize potential impacts to wetlands when working on the landscape. But we’ve had a lot of feedback that it can be quite challenging for people in the field to properly classify wetland ecosystems,” explains Brown, who is currently leading the guide’s development.

“Our field guide takes that classification system and puts it into a plain-language, very visual guidebook that can be used in the field.”

The guide is particularly intended for wetland practitioners, land managers and others whose decisions or actions can impact wetlands. It will help them meet regulatory requirements and take informed actions so Alberta’s wetlands can continue to provide vital ecosystem functions, such as flood and drought mitigation, improved water quality, groundwater recharge, and wildlife habitat.

But she adds, “Really, we hope the guide can be used by anyone keen to learn more about wetlands and wetland plants.”

DUC’s Kristyn Mayner led the guide’s initial development. The first step was to consult with stakeholders on how to make the guide an effective field tool.

“The stakeholder engagement kicked off in 2019 with an online webinar presentation on the guide and what we hope to accomplish,” says Brown. “We followed that with a survey so people could provide input. The process also included in-person engagement sessions at Grande Prairie, Slave Lake, Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge.”

Anyone with an interest in the guide’s content and format was welcome to provide input. That included municipal representatives, industry members, watershed associations, Indigenous community members, and landowners, as well as DUC’s Alberta NAWMP Partners.

All of that input has gone toward the creation of the 160-page, practical field guide. It provides a clear, step-by-step process for classifying wetlands, including factsheets about the different wetland types and plant species profiles. The user-friendly guide has an amazing array of informative images of wetlands and plants, including 259 photos and multiple diagrams and charts.

Brown notes that the guide has been field tested to ensure its effectiveness. “Thanks to Alberta NAWMP funding, we were able to hire a contractor to rigorously test the guide. And then our own DUC staff also went out and tested it.”

The Alberta Wetland Classification System Field Guide is on track to be completed by March 31, 2021. Free downloadable copies will be available online. Hard copies can be purchased from DUC; the price has not yet been set. In the spring and summer of 2021, DUC will offer training on how to use the guide, including webinars and possibly field demonstrations.

THE HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF WETLAND CONSERVATION

Waterfowl hunters are key supporters of waterfowl and wetland conservation. But the number of waterfowlers in North America has seriously declined since the late 1970s. This decline is hampering conservation efforts in many regions, including Alberta.

To better understand and address this issue, a project is diving into the human dimensions of waterfowl hunting in Alberta.

“Increasingly there is the perspective that if we are going to see real advances in conservation management, we have to be engaging regular folks. That’s where the human dimensions approach to conservation comes in,” explains Dr. Howard Harshaw, an associate professor at the University of Alberta who is leading this project.

The Alberta NAWMP Partnership’s Science Fund and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada are funding this project, and Wildlife Habitat Canada is providing in-kind support. Alberta NAWMP’s interest in the human dimensions of conservation springs in part from NAWMP’s heightened emphasis on this aspect. In 2012, NAWMP added a human dimensions goal to its longstanding goals to conserve waterfowl populations and their habitats. The added goal is: to grow the numbers of waterfowl hunters, other conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetland conservation.

Harshaw emphasizes, “The success of NAWMP depends on NAWMP’s ability to maintain and increase its relevance to stakeholders and all of society.” That requires an ongoing effort to understand changing trends in the human dimensions of wetland and waterfowl conservation.

Harshaw’s project, which started in 2019, aims to improve understanding of the issues that influence waterfowl hunter recruitment, retention and re-engagement in Alberta. This project builds on the findings from two of his earlier studies

that have shed light on attitudes about waterfowl hunting in Alberta and on Prairie programs for recruiting new waterfowlers. The principal funders of these earlier projects were the Alberta Conservation Association and Delta Waterfowl Foundation.

In his current project, Harshaw is continuing to collaborate with his colleagues Dr. Lee Foote at the University of Alberta and Dr. Farhad Moghimehfar at Vancouver Island University.

“The main focus of our project is to really dig into some of the key issues and sort out the social perspectives around waterfowl hunting. Why are current hunters able to continue to hunt? What are the reasons why people have stopped waterfowl hunting? And why are some people opposed to the idea of hunting?” Harshaw explains.

The project’s web-based survey involves three different questionnaires: one for active waterfowlers, one for lapsed waterfowlers, and one for non-waterfowlers. Some of the same questions are asked in each of the surveys, so the researchers will be able to compare the motivational and constraint issues across the three groups.

Harshaw and his team plan to complete the work in 2021. The goal of the project is to develop detailed, data-supported profiles of the motivations and preferences of the three groups.

This information about their behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and values will help Alberta NAWMP’s Partner agencies, as well as other natural resource management agencies, to enhance their engagement with Albertans on wetland and upland conservation. And improved engagement is a vital part of achieving the Partnership’s goals.

More information about this project and Harshaw’s other NAWMP-related human dimensions research is available at abnawmp.ca.

“DIGGING INTO THE ISSUES THAT INFLUENCE WATERFOWLER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RE-ENGAGEMENT.”

DUC



PINTAIL NEST

DUC



“... SOMETIMES WE COME ACROSS A RESEARCH QUESTION THAT JUST NEEDS A SMALL KICK TO IGNITE PEOPLE’S INTEREST IN TACKLING IT.”

DRAINED WETLAND

DC

TARGETING RESEARCH DOLLARS TO KEY NEEDS

Alberta NAWMP is rooted in science, and its Science Fund helps the Partnership nourish those roots through targeted research support.

“Alberta NAWMP is part of the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) [one of the regional partnerships carrying out the North American Waterfowl Management Plan]. The PHJV is the largest and, in terms of waterfowl production, the most significant joint venture on the continent. It has a very strong science-based approach to its work,” explains Ron Bennett, Chair of Alberta NAWMP’s Management Committee.

“The PHJV’s work helps drive how Alberta NAWMP sets its program objectives and its delivery models. So Alberta NAWMP is always science-driven in that way. Then when it comes to delivery, there are often things that may be obstacles or opportunities, depending on your perspective.”

The Science Fund is one of the tools that Alberta NAWMP uses to overcome those obstacles and capitalize on those opportunities.

“For instance, sometimes we come across a research question that just needs a small kick to ignite people’s interest in tackling it and our Science Fund dollars can spark that interest. Or maybe someone has a project that needs a last bit of money to get things going. Or perhaps an issue needs a little extra research to point the implementation people in the right direction,” says Bennett, who is Manager of Conservation Planning and Stewardship with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Each year, the Management Committee issues a call for proposals that identifies key areas where Alberta NAWMP wants to focus research. The Committee reviews the submitted proposals to see how well they fit with those priorities, as well as other criteria such as: Does the proposed project make sense? Is it feasible? Is it cost-effective? Are the people proposing the project able to deliver it?

In 2019-20, the Science Fund supported four projects. Bennett notes that two of these projects are a little outside of what some people might think of as typical waterfowl and wetland research. “Both projects are part of Alberta NAWMP’s efforts to reach out to key constituencies that could help NAWMP to achieve its goals.”

One project aims to improve understanding of the factors that influence whether or not Albertans participate in waterfowl hunting. He explains, “Waterfowlers are one of our key constituencies in terms of interest in conserving waterfowl and wetlands and supporting our efforts.” (See The Human Dimensions of Wetland Conservation in this Progress Review for more information.)

The other project is investigating the economics of retaining wetlands in agricultural landscapes. Wetlands in agricultural areas can provide vital habitat, so agricultural producers are another important constituency. He notes, “Often wetlands are considered an impediment to agriculture. This study turns that perspective on its head by looking at the value to a producer of a functioning wetland.”

The other two 2019-20 projects include: a First Nations project in southern Alberta to conduct a wetland inventory on their 352,000-acre reserve, to help guide their community-based conservation efforts; and a feasibility study examining the use of GPS tracking devices to find nests of the northern pintail duck, a species whose population has been impacted by poor nesting success and other factors.

If you’re interested in learning more about some of Alberta NAWMP’s Science Fund projects, a series of eight articles is available at abnawmp.ca.

The series includes the four 2019-20 projects and four earlier projects: an innovative study that is deepening understanding of boreal duck nesting ecology and the effects of industrial development on nest predation; a tool that maps the areas in a landscape that most need protection to ensure a healthy watershed; a state-of-the-art climate modelling study to predict how Prairie wetland numbers and distribution could alter under climate change; and an investigation that is providing new insights into an elusive marsh bird’s habitat needs and population in Alberta’s oilsands country.

COMMITTEE REPORTS, 2019-20

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Members are director-level executives from each Alberta NAWMP Partner agency. They are responsible for: defining Alberta NAWMP's vision, mission, goals and strategies; directing medium-term implementation plans; approving annual work plans and budgets; and ensuring accountability for work plans and budgets. They also facilitate information exchange and engagement opportunities between their own agency and Alberta NAWMP.

The Board of Directors held quarterly meetings throughout 2019-20, providing guidance to the Management, Policy and Communications committees. The FY20 (fiscal year 2019-20) Work Plan and Budget was successfully implemented, and the final report completed. In addition, the Board developed FY21 Work Plan projections. In November, the Executive Breakfast Meeting was held for senior executive staff of the Partnership and Government of Alberta, with the Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks, attending. The Board actively participated and engaged with the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) Advisory Board and various subcommittees. Support was provided to various grant funding initiatives through the Partnership and the PHJV, and the required progress reporting completed. The Board gave approval to the Management Committee to proceed with participating in development of the next PHJV Implementation Plan. Transition to the new Coordinator for the Partnership was successful. The Chair represented Alberta NAWMP at an international NAWMP meeting in Washington, D.C.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members are senior managers from each Partner agency who facilitate integration of operational opportunities between their own agency and Alberta NAWMP. This Committee shares responsibility with the Alberta NAWMP Coordinator for project-based decision-making and expenditures established in annual work plans and medium-term implementation plans.

The Management Committee met quarterly and held a number of conference calls to address specific needs such as Science Fund applications. A joint meeting was held with the Board in March 2020. The Committee granted funding to four research-based projects related to: northern pintail habitat selection; wetlands and agricultural sustainability; participation in waterfowl hunting; and wetland inventory and values. An independent consultant provided an evaluation of the Wetland Education Network (WEN), with interim coordination of WEN assumed by the Partnership Coordinator. The Committee continued its efforts to integrate human dimensions into Alberta NAWMP programming and participated as a member of the PHJV's new Human Dimensions Committee. The Management Committee provided support to the Policy and Communications committees. The FY20 Work Plan and Budget was successfully implemented.



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COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Members are typically communication experts from each Partner agency. The Communications Committee leads information sharing, event hosting and promotion among the Partner agencies and beyond.

The Communications Committee met quarterly and held several conference calls to address specific issues. Due to the ongoing WEN evaluation, interim efforts on WEN-related activities focused on consolidation of completed works. Alberta NAWMP's Annual Forum, WEN year-end workshops, and participation in the Snow Goose Festival re-start in Tofield, AB were deferred. The Committee completed a new communication strategy, which was approved by the Board and Management Committee. Successfully completed projects included: participation in World Wetland Day; development of two new videos profiling Alberta NAWMP (available at abnawmp.ca); and eight articles on current and past Science Fund projects. The Annual Progress Review for 2018-19 was completed (available at abnawmp.ca).

POLICY COMMITTEE

Members are usually senior policy specialists within the Partner agencies. The Policy Committee members monitor relevant policy, planning and program developments in their agencies and advise on opportunities for Alberta NAWMP support.

The Policy Committee held quarterly meetings as well as several conference calls. A number of key projects were implemented including: peer review of reports related to carbon in wetlands and grasslands; avoided conversion of grasslands carbon offset protocols; assessing knowledge and perceptions about beavers; an intermunicipal collaborative framework; and the Alberta Wetland Field Guide. The Committee identified a number of emerging issues including: understanding the value of working landscapes, the increased risk of conversion of private and public native grasslands to cropland or other land use, and the need for more tools and policy mechanisms to ensure conservation of grasslands.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NAWMP IN ALBERTA, 2019-20 AND 1986-2020

AGENCY TYPE	AGENCY	2019 - 2020 TOTAL	1986 - 2020 ^a CUM. TOTAL
CANADIAN CORPORATIONS		\$833,762	\$24,086,743
CANADIAN EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS		170,427	\$470,706
CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada		\$38,532,523
	Canadian federal - unspecified		\$484
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canada Nature Fund*	\$1,399,017	\$1,399,017
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service	\$485,766	\$41,162,509
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - EcoAction	\$7,397	\$85,571
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Habitat Stewardship Program		\$3,655,828
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Natural Areas Conservation Program		\$28,599,754
	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	\$940	\$3,940
	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada		\$18,761
	Millennium Bureau of Canada		\$1,120,100
	Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada		\$194,736
	Parks Canada		\$54,660
	Public Works and Government Services Canada		\$500
		\$1,893,120	\$114,828,383
CANADIAN NOT FOR PROFIT	Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta		\$275,000
	Alberta Beef Producers		\$ 954,531
	Alberta Conservation Association	\$10,376	\$ 4,333,339
	Alberta Conservation Tillage Society		\$125
	Alberta Ecotrust Foundation		\$22,542
	Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company		\$240
	Alberta Fish and Game Association		\$1,506,348
	Alberta Native Plant Council		\$600
	Alberta Research Council		\$5,000
	Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation	\$374,587	\$1,291,680
	Antelope Creek Habitat Development		\$5,000
	Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation		\$5,500
	Canadian Circumpolar Institute		\$3,500
	Canadian Nature Federation		\$1,800
	Canadian non-government organizations - unspecified		\$180,264
	Climate Change Central		\$5,000
	Cropmasters		\$46,300
	Ducks Unlimited Canada		\$3,375,226
	Eastern Irrigation District		\$75,085
	Edmonton Community Foundation	\$589	\$28,602
	Edmonton Springer Spaniel Club		\$200
	George Cedric Metcalf Foundation		\$50,000
	Imperial Oil Charitable Foundation		\$5,818
	Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research		\$5,500
	Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship		\$2,000
	James L. Baillie Memorial Fund		\$2,000
	Lakeland Industry & Community Association		\$14,051
	Land Stewardship Centre of Canada		\$18,000
	Nature Alberta		\$15,000
	Nature Canada		\$1,128,000
	Nature Conservancy of Canada	\$53,291	\$10,481,307
	North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance		\$234,023
	Peace Parkland Naturalists		\$600
	Pheasants Forever		\$17,400
	Project Second Life Society		\$6,000
	Richard H. G. Bonnycastle Graduate Fellowship		\$15,000
	Richardson Foundation Inc.		\$374,788
	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – Canada		\$4,500
	Samuel Hanen Society for Resource Conservation		\$350
	Shell Conservation Internship Program		\$7,296
	Shell Environmental Fund		\$25,123
	Soil Conservation Council of Canada		\$3,417

AGENCY TYPE	AGENCY	2019 - 2020 TOTAL	1986 - 2020 ^a CUM. TOTAL
CANADIAN NOT FOR PROFIT	Southern Alberta Land Trust Society		\$613,119
	Sustainable Forest Management Network		\$20,000
	The Calgary Foundation		\$35,522
	The Flanagan Foundation		\$29,049
	The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation		\$6,999
	The Kahanoff Foundation		\$701
	The W. Garfield Weston Foundation		\$1,534
	United Farmers of Alberta		\$18,447
	Western Irrigation District		\$673,433
	Wildlife Habitat Canada	\$156,272	\$4,078,683
	World Wildlife Fund Canada		\$36,000
		\$595,115	\$30,039,542
CANADIAN PROVINCIAL & TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS	Agriculture Financial Services Corporation		\$446,527
	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry		\$10,570,726
	Alberta Culture and Community Spirit		\$8,000
	Alberta Energy and Utilities Board		\$8,300
	Alberta Environment and Parks	\$1,223,417	\$37,236,430
	Alberta Transportation		\$9,246
	Alberta Treasury		\$693,685
	Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation		\$45,317
	Saskatchewan Water Security Agency		\$10,000
		\$1,223,417	\$49,028,231
CANADIAN REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	Big Hay Lake Drainage District		-\$34,639
	Bonnyville (Municipality of)		\$22,653
	Calgary (City of)		\$269,669
	Camrose County		\$14,907
	Carstairs (Town of)		\$96,000
	Edmonton (City of)	\$44,460	\$211,005
	Flagstaff County		\$41,337
	Grande Prairie (City of)		\$7,832
	Grande Prairie County		\$2,022
	Greenview (Municipal District of)		\$6,962
	Lakeland (County of)		\$2,800
	Lamont County		\$30,425
	Manawan Drainage District		\$34,750
	Medicine Hat (City of)		\$8,005
	Minburn County		\$78,080
	Newell County		\$28,750
	Ponoka County		\$2,310
	Red Deer County		\$1,811
	Rocky View County	\$374,148	\$721,759
	Special Areas Board		\$325
	St. Albert (City of)		\$17,820
	St. Paul County		\$19,287
	Stettler County		\$2,780
	Strathcona County		\$87,629
	Strathmore (Town of)		\$198,627
	Sturgeon County		\$68,085
	Sylvan Lake (Town of)		\$30,000
	Wheatland County		\$3,200
		\$418,608	\$1,974,191
CANADIAN OTHER	Canadian – unspecified	\$5,340,735	\$46,812,938
UNITED STATES - ALL SOURCES	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. state governments, Ducks Unlimited Inc., Anonymous Foundation, other	\$6,514,069	\$299,733,995
INTERNATIONAL	Conservation International Bahamas		\$59,744
GRAND TOTAL		\$16,989,253	\$567,034,473

a. Includes data from Prairie Habitat Joint Venture - Alberta (Source: NAWMP National Tracking System).

* New contributor in 2019-20

ACTIVITY EXPENDITURES AND HABITAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-20 AND 1986-2020

AGENCY	ACTIVITY	EXPENDITURES 2019-20	HABITAT ACRES 2019-20	NET HABITAT ACRES 1986-2020
ALBERTA AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (includes Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, a former Alberta NAWMP partner)	Securement			425,195
ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS	Securement			10,507
DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA	Communication and education	\$231,867		
	Conservation planning	\$1,231,668		
	Habitat Joint Venture science	\$353,055		
	Habitat restoration	\$6,493,674	147,183	1,135,109
	Habitat retention (≥10 years through permanent)	\$1,977,185	31,202	2,381,469
	Habitat retention (<10 years)	\$806,639		96,602
	Land and water policy support	\$14,560		175,320
	Management (habitat assets)	\$3,036,153		2,561,112
DUC TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$14,144,801		
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA - CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE	Communication and education	\$2,944		
	Conservation planning	\$4,000		
	Habitat Joint Venture science	\$113,333		
ECCC TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$120,277		
NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA	Conservation planning	\$137,989		
	Habitat restoration			73,017
	Habitat retention (≥10 years through permanent)	\$779,079	269	354,546
	Management (habitat assets)	\$557,652	269	356,658
NCC TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$1,474,720		
OTHER AGENCIES	Communication and education; Conservation planning; Habitat Joint Venture science; Land and water policy support	\$148,788		4,133
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 2019-20		\$15,888,586		
TOTAL HABITAT RETENTION ACRES (≥10 Years through Permanent), 2019-20 and 1986-2020			31,471	3,171,717

NOTES:

This table shows expenditures and habitat activities for the Alberta Prairie and Parkland eco-regions (Source: NAWMP National Tracking System). Variable timing of funds both contributed and received under NAWMP may result in differences between total funds received versus expended by Partners each fiscal year. Related habitat retention or restoration acres are similarly affected.

ACTIVITIES:

- Communication and education: communications specific to activities in approved proposals under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). NOTE: all other communication activities are not eligible for NAWCA funds.
- Conservation planning: biological, agrological and engineering planning and targeting activities that occur prior to actual program delivery.

- Habitat Joint Venture science: activities that evaluate the effects and inform future improvement of the NAWCA program throughout the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture.
- Habitat restoration: actions to increase carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.
- Habitat retention (≥10 years through permanent): protection of wetland and/or upland habitat through land title transfer or binding long-term conservation agreements with landowners.
- Habitat retention (<10 years): activities that promote or directly result in the sustainable use of land for the purpose of conserving wetland-dependent birds and their habitats.

- Land and water policy support: activities that identify or support development of policies benefiting wetlands or associated uplands. NOTE: these activities are not eligible for NAWCA funds.
- Management (habitat assets): actions to maintain carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife on habitat retained for ≥10 years through permanent.

HABITAT ACRES:

- Habitat Acres, 2019-20: habitat acres retained, restored or managed between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020. NOTE: total acres are not cumulative.
- Net Habitat Acres, 1986-2020: cumulative total of habitat acres since 1986, less expired agreements.

A HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR COOPERATORS

The Alberta NAWMP Partnership sincerely thanks all the individuals, companies, governments, conservation organizations, charitable foundations, academic institutions, and others who have contributed funds, conducted research, and collaborated with our Partners, to successfully deliver NAWMP programming across Alberta. As a key partner to the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (www.phjv.ca), our motto is Advancing Conservation Together. As a cooperator, you have played a vital part in our progress toward achieving our vision of healthy prairie, parkland and boreal landscapes that support sustainable bird populations and provide ecological and economic benefits to society.

A COMPLETE LIST OF OUR COOPERATORS FROM 1986 TO 2020 IS AVAILABLE AT

ABNAWMP.CA

PHOTO CREDITS

DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada
DC	Darwin Chambers/Ducks Unlimited Canada
SH	Scott Henowitch/Ducks Unlimited Canada

North American
Wetlands
Conservation Act



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada



DC

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